



MACP Level 2 Education & CPD Award-Report 2018-2020

Course Attended- Gunns Intramuscular Stimulation (IMS)

Part 1- April 2019, Part 2 February 2020.

I have recently returned from Gunns IMS course where the MACP Level 2 Education bursary helped support my journey in completing the course. I travelled to Vancouver twice, once in April 2019 for a 4-day course, and then again in February 2020 for a 3-day course. I passed all the course requirements and am now a certified Gunns IMS practitioner.

Gunn IMS is a method of using acupuncture needles in order to treat chronic pain, specifically myofascial pain syndromes and on completion of the course practitioners will be able to practice a comprehensive system of diagnosis and treatment of neuropathic myofascial pain syndromes. I was specifically looking at this approach to study as it looks at expanding a western model of acupuncture alongside a contemporary model of pain science, specifically in the treatment of neuropathic pain. I travelled out to Vancouver in April 2019, where we covered importantly the theory of peripheral nerve dysfunction, and then the clinical signs. Critically this explored more subtle signs of the neurological assessment that extended beyond the standard skills taught at undergraduate level.

This really helped develop patient observation, palpation and handling skills which was valuable and been able to put into immediate practice. We covered the detailed physiology underpinning the effects of needling, and for me (as a trained acupuncturist) a revision of preparing to treat someone with needles (professional responsibilities). The practical component of the neuropathic assessment was to covered practically with an opportunity to practice. This was juxtaposed with needling techniques for key body area which included a thorough review of the relevant anatomy. There were two exams to pass, an anatomy and theory exam which I passed.

The gap between the Part 1 and Part 2 course is normally 6 months, but due to the specificity of dates and travel I had 10-month gap between the courses. In this time, we need to continue to practice the neuropathic assessment to ensure we embedded the relevant theory. I also need to prepare a case study presentation that looked at reviewing the patients' history, neuropathic findings which justified treating with this approach and a discussion of treatment planning.

I attended Part 2 in February 2020. This was a three-day course. This focussed on continue needling practice of more complex areas to ensure a safe and effective technique, but also really focused on sound clinical reasoning, treatment planning and progression. The basis of treatment involved dry needling of affected areas of the body, where the needle sites can

be at the epicentre of taut, tender muscle bands, or they can be near the spine where the nerve root may have become irritated and supersensitive. The goal of treatment is to release muscle shortening, desensitising areas and allowing the promotion of normal movement patterns. The course assessment included close observation of needling technique but also the level of clinical reasoning demonstrated in case presentations to ensure we are able to confidently assess, identify the neuropathic segment and appropriately treatment plan. I passed all these components and am therefore now a certified practitioner.

Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 issues the current opportunities I have had to put these new skills into practice have been a little limited. However not only have I learnt a new skill for the treatment toolbox, and I have also refined my assessment process even further in terms of my neurological and neuropathic assessment that's included observational, handling, and palpation skills and have merged this in within a clinical reasoning process that incorporates neuropathic assessment. I was also fortunate enough to spend an extra CPD shadowing an experience clinician use the technique with patients that helped consolidate my learning further.

I really enjoyed and valued the entire course experience. Sadly, due to the lack of certified instructors in the UK the opportunity to learn the technique is now limited and relies on people attending the course in Canada. During my time there I was able to network with the course instructors and discussed further opportunities to improve the ability to run the course within the UK. This would be a great step forward in enhancing skill development for UK based practitioner.

I would like to thank the MACP for the financial support towards me completing the course. The overall cost of the course, travel, accommodation and sundries was understandably expensive, and without their support through these awards, these learning opportunities would not be possible. Thank you once again.