

August 20, 2010

Mr. Peter W. Ogden  
Director, Maine Bureau of Veterans Services  
117 State House Station  
Augusta, ME 04333-0117

Re: Treatment for those with Gulf War Illness

Dear Mr. Ogden,

I am contacting you with the hope that you will share the opportunity below with your Gulf War Veteran population. There is no cost at all to participants and a modest travel stipend is offered.

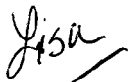
The New England School of Acupuncture (NESA), under the direction and guidance of Dr. Lisa Conboy, a Harvard University instructor with the Osher Research Center, is currently conducting a three-year Department of Defense study testing the effectiveness of acupuncture in the treatment of Gulf War Illness. We are actively recruiting participants.

The study will provide free acupuncture to all participants. We are looking for Gulf War Veterans from New England suffering from Gulf War Illness or similar symptoms. Veterans will be treated at NESA-affiliated clinics by licensed acupuncturists with over five years of clinical experience and additional extensive training in the diagnosis and treatment of GWI symptoms.

**Veterans who are interested in this program can call our study line at 617-558-1788 x269.** Please feel free to copy and share the enclosed information sheet.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me at 617-558-1788 x145

Sincerely,



Lisa Conboy MA, MS, ScD  
Instructor, Harvard Medical School, Osher Research Center  
Co-Director of Research and Dean of Biomedicine, New England School of Acupuncture

# **The Effectiveness of Acupuncture in the Treatment of Gulf War Illness:**

## **Participant Study Information Sheet**

**Title of Study:** "The effectiveness of acupuncture in the treatment of Gulf War Illness".

**Location of Study:** New England School of Acupuncture, Newton, MA and in private acupuncture practices throughout the state.

**Researchers:** We are researchers and acupuncturists at the New England School of Acupuncture, the oldest college of acupuncture and Oriental medicine in the country. While we are not part of the military, the US Army is providing funds for this research.

**Purpose of Study:** The purpose of this research study is to evaluate the effect of acupuncture in the treatment of Gulf War Illness.

**Procedures:** At NESAs, we will explain the study in detail. We will ask you to sign a written statement of informed consent. You will take part in up to 52 study visits over a 6 month period.

Study visit may involve:

- **Acupuncture treatments – The frequency of acupuncture will depend on what study group you are randomized to.**
  1. Twice per week for 2 months
  2. Once per week for 4 months
  
- **Blood sampling and completion of questionnaires**
  1. Before you begin the study
  2. After the completion of two months of acupuncture treatments
  3. After the completion of four months of acupuncture treatments
  4. After the completion of six months of acupuncture treatments

**Time Commitment:** The study will take 6 months. There will be a blood sampling just before you start the treatments, at the 2 month follow-up and then at 4 month and 6 month follow-ups. The initial acupuncture study visit will take 1.5 – 2.0 hours. Each acupuncture treatment visit will take 1.0 – 1.5 hours each. Re-evaluation visits will take less than 1.0 hour.

**Reimbursement:** We will pay you \$6 per visit up to \$312 to reimburse you for parking.

**Contact Information:** If you wish to learn more about the study, please contact: us at 617-558-1788 x 269.



NEW ENGLAND  
SCHOOL OF  
ACUPUNCTURE



July 6, 2010

# BUSINESS TODAY

## Military points East for aid with Gulf War illness

At first glance, it seems like the oddest of couplings: The New England School of Acupuncture and the U.S. Department of Defense, working on a project together?

But the collaboration has been great, said the school's chief researcher, Lisa Conboy, who is heading up a six-month study of acupuncture's impact on Gulf War illness.

"Within the scientific community, there's a range of belief in acupuncture," said Conboy last week.

But with the military, she added, "our conversations have been about, 'Let's, together, find something that works.'"

Public opinion about the centuries-old Eastern treatment — which involves manipulating thin needles into specific body parts to alleviate certain conditions — has come a long way since the nation's first acupuncture clinic opened in Washington, D.C., in 1972.

Today, hospitals offer acupuncture, and some insurers pay for treatments.

Still, the acupuncture school's \$1.2 million Department of Defense grant marks the first time that the military has earmarked funds to study the still-mysterious therapy's impact on people with Gulf War illness.

The complex diagnosis impacts the lives of about some 100,000 Gulf War veterans, and sufferers say the symptoms can linger for years.

Symptoms include fatigue, joint pain, headaches, dizziness, memory problems, indigestion, skin problems, shortness of breath and mood disorders, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The list is familiar to U.S. Army National Guard Lt. Col. Thomas Devine, a 43-year-old from Surrton who served in Iraq and Saudi Arabia in 1990. Later, in 2007, he served in Afghanistan.

Devine is not sure if his ailments are from Gulf War illness, or just 20 years of military service. He first turned to acupuncture last year, after seeing a veteran friend looking par-



STAFF PHOTO BY CHRISTOPHER EVANS

**DEEPER LOOK: The New England School of Acupuncture's Lisa Conboy will head up a study on Gulf War illness.**

ticularly fit.

"I told him, 'You look good. What's going on?'" Devine recalled. Days later, Devine was lying on a table in Newton, needles sticking out of his skin.

Devine now credits the weekly treatments with lowering his blood pressure, relieving chronic leg and knee pain, and ridding him of annoying allergies.

Like most people, he doesn't know exactly how acupuncture works. Some say it releases chemicals, while others think it has something to do with nerves. Practitioners tend to say that the needles shake up blocked energy, a condition that can put the human body out of balance.

Conboy is hoping the study offers more insight into this mystery. To start, though, she needs to find 120 Gulf War veterans from the New England area who suffer from at least two of the illness' symptoms.

The vets must be able to attend two sessions a week for six months. The sessions are free and offered at clinics throughout the state. Participants will receive a small stipend to cover transportation costs.

Asked whether this is how the military should be spending its money, Devine, who won't be participating in the study, says, "Absolutely, it's money very well spent."

Send tips and news items for *The Pulse* to Christine McConville at [cmcconville@bostonherald.com](mailto:cmcconville@bostonherald.com).

