



New, Expanded 7th Edition of the CNT Manual Is Published

The 7th edition of the CNT Manual, titled *Clean Needle Technique Manual—Best Practices for Acupuncture Needle Safety and Related Procedures* (7th ed. 2015), has just been published by CCAOM. The new Manual starts with evidence gleaned from an extensive literature review regarding the safety and reports of adverse events associated with acupuncture and related modalities. In the past ten years, significantly more information about the safety of acupuncture and related modalities has been published in the English language medical literature. One of the key changes in the 7th edition of the CNT Manual is a review of such literature. This wealth of new knowledge has informed the entire 7th edition.

This new edition of the Manual takes into account both the literature about effects and adverse events associated with AOM modalities and combines that with reports of adverse events and malpractice cases in the US, to clearly identify protocols and practices as “critical,” “strongly recommended,” and “recommended.” Tables of these recommendations have been added to the text to help students and practitioners identify the safety recommendations. Additionally, all critical safety steps are consistent throughout the Manual and identified for a variety of clinical and office procedures.

As in previous editions, the 7th edition updates all of the information on pathogens, but there is expanded information that includes a number of health care associated infections (HAI) not covered in previous editions. These HAI are likely to be encountered in the clinic and many are more commonplace than the blood borne pathogens (BBP), including common skin infections and influenza.

Sections describing standard practices closely associated with CNT have been updated to be in line with the CCAOM position papers on skin preparation prior to

acupuncture needling and the use of gloves during acupuncture. These position papers may be viewed at

http://www.ccaom.org/pdf/CCAOM_Position_Papers_CNT_Protocol.pdf.

Additionally, consideration of the literature about the safety of acupuncture and information about health care associated infections led to an expansion of the section covering CDC and OSHA standards, office and equipment disinfection procedures, and the legal requirements of an AOM practice.

The Manual strives to make clear recommendations on how to implement CNT in a variety of settings, from the clinic, to house calls and public settings. In each section, it is reiterated that the basic steps of CNT do not change (i.e., wash hands, set up the clean field, use single-use sharps only, immediately isolate used sharps in an appropriate sharps container, and follow standard procedures). Implementing these five basic steps in different health care settings takes intention and an eye towards making the process detail-oriented without losing the essential interaction between practitioner and patient or client.

The number of BBP-associated infections linked to acupuncture practice in the US has approached zero since the introduction of the CNT course and exam, and generally, there have been only minor changes in clean needle technique over the years. The CNT Manual has been updated every few years to reflect changing CDC and OSHA standards for the use of medical sharps and blood borne pathogen information. Earlier editions of the Manual focused primarily on needle safety and blood borne pathogens.

One area of change since the publication of the 6th edition concerns the preparation of the skin before needling, which is outlined in a position paper on the CCAOM website (http://www.ccaom.org/pdf/CCAOM_Position_Papers_CNT_Protocol.pdf). Based on evidence in the literature, and confirmed by the CDC, the Council's current recommendation is that the skin does not necessarily need to be swabbed in each and every circumstance.

In addition to the issue of skin preparation, the wide acceptance of acupuncture and use in practice of a number of related modalities led the CNT committee to determine that it was time to expand the content of the Manual. Thus, the new Manual significantly expands the area of safety procedures for modalities other than needling and offers suggestions on best practices for moxibustion, heat lamps, electroacupuncture, cupping, bleeding, *gua sha*, *tui na*, plum blossom needling, and other modalities.

The expanded 7th edition of the CNT Manual is expected to be a focal point for continuing and constructive dialogue among AOM practitioners about best practices to promote AOM safety. Such a dialogue nationally and internationally can only be of benefit to both patients and practitioners.

Potential Impact of the Publication in the U.S. and Worldwide

As with every edition of the CNT Manual, the 7th edition is primarily focused on patient and practitioner safety. The safe practice of acupuncture in the US is expected to continue. Moreover, with increasing interest in the Council's clean needle technique program being expressed by international AOM medical associations and schools, students, and practitioners, it is anticipated that the Manual may have a significant impact on safety standards in other countries as well.

The goals for this new edition of the Manual include encouraging the use of evidence-informed practices in AOM practice. Access to the literature reviews may stimulate practitioners and clinics to set up specific clinic safety procedures and then report how such procedures improved safety and outcomes. It is hoped that the Manual will be an expanded resource for practitioners as it will include links to additional information and resources for practice management documents. The new material in the Manual may also encourage further research in the field. Having significant evidence regarding the various safety procedures should increase opportunities for practitioners in integrative medical settings. Finally, the 7th edition of the Manual is expected to be a more extensive resource

for CCAOM member schools in promoting best practices and safety in their teaching clinics.

Availability of the 7th Edition of the Manual

Access to this material is so important, both for students and practitioners here and abroad, that a decision was made to offer the Manual free of charge through the Council's website (www.ccaom.org). Thus, anyone can download the Manual in PDF format at no cost to a digital device, or have it printed at a print-to-go center from a flash drive, for a cost of \$12-25. Later in 2015, the Manual will also be available in an e-book format for a minimal cost through Amazon, and in a printed version through Booksurge/CreateSpace.

Summary

The CCAOM encourages all AOM practitioners and regulators to either download the Manual from the CCAOM website, or later on, to purchase an e-book or printed version. Familiarity with the latest information concerning the safe practice of acupuncture and related techniques is a personal, ethical, and moral responsibility. The Council is pleased to be able to offer this service to the community of practitioners, both for their benefit and the benefit of the patients they serve, and to continue to enhance and protect the reputation of this profession as one of "doing no harm."