

that it is possible, using acupuncture, to stimulate insulin production and thereby to normalize blood sugar levels. Mastitis, retained placenta, impotence, digestive and behavioral disorders, and skin conditions are a few of the many maladies that respond favorably to acupuncture.

We see firsthand the remarkable nature and effectiveness of these alternative therapies when we ride along for a day with Dr. Seagren. Our first stop is a Thoroughbred farm, where we see a three-year-old filly in race training with a recurrent lameness. X-rays tell us nothing, so Dr. Clare goes into the stall with the filly and, starting with her poll, runs her hands over the animal from front to back, applying pressure to various points. She carefully notes those points to which the filly reacts, gently applies one of the specially designed photonic lasers to a place on the filly's left haunch, where she reacted most negatively. Because the procedure is painless, the filly rolls her eyes apprehensively a time or two, then stands quietly while the monochromatic light penetrates the sore tissue.

"That should get the healing under way," says Dr. Clare. "The pain on this rear left side may be because the original source of the problem is in her right front, and she has compensated with more wear and tear on the opposite side." She takes out an assortment of sterile, flexible, 26-36-gauge acupuncture needles.

"I don't sedate the animal because the sedative reduces the effectiveness," she tells us, "nor do I use restraints. Depending on the animal's response, I sometimes use 'Rescue Remedy,' a natural, herbal relaxant, if an animal is especially anxious. I also use only photonic therapy if the animal reacts adversely to needles – which isn't too often."

We see immediately what she means. She puts in the first needle, wiggles it gently, and the filly visibly relaxes. As the doctor moves around the filly, inserting and gently manipulating needles at those specific points to which she reacted during the exam, the filly

sighs, closes her eyes and stands quietly, completely at ease. In fact, she never moves a muscle. She waits patiently, seeming to enjoy the procedure, which lasts about 20 minutes. In this case, which appears to be muscular, the doctor prescribes three treatments, three days apart.

We drive to the farm where the next



Photonic therapy is painless and non-invasive – a horse will stand quietly during treatment.

patient is a seven-year-old Thoroughbred gelding. Used primarily as a hunter, jumper and beginning dressage mount by a junior exhibitor, his problem is undiagnosed. As Dr. Seagren examines his entire body, looking for clues, he reacts visibly to a number of key "chi" points. Dr. Clare notes, "When there are so many compensatory reactions, it's sometimes hard to identify the central problem." Her hands linger over the horse's withers and back, just behind his shoulders. He raises his head sharply as she palpates the area gently. He is particularly sensitive on the right side.

"You have a saddle fit problem," she tells the rider and her mother. "His discomfort has been caused by a saddle that doesn't fit properly, and by not wearing enough padding. You need to start using a mounting block. When you pull yourself on, it hurts him on the opposite side. Your horse stands over 16.3, so don't feel embarrassed by using a mounting block – at least until he's comfortable again."

She takes out a photonic laser and applies it to several points along the

gelding's obviously sore back. Because this is a non-invasive, painless procedure, he stands quietly as the healing rays do their stuff. Dr. Seagren then unwraps another assortment of needles in several gauges and begins placing them in various acupuncture points – different ones from those she used on the filly. "Each horse needs an individualized treatment," she explains. "This isn't 'cookbook' acupuncture, where you use one single 'recipe' on every horse. Every horse is different."

She looks at the gelding standing at her side, relaxed and serene, while the acupuncture needles work their healing power. "Alternative medicine is so exciting!" she admits. "With acupuncture and photonic therapy, we see immediate results, and the long-term effects are so gratifying. These particular alternative therapies are not only successful, but they mean minimal – if any – trauma or discomfort to the animal. Also, because there are no drugs involved, photonic therapy and acupuncture are now

widely used for performance horses in competitions of every kind.

"It's not advisable to use any acupuncture treatment 48 to 60 hours before a show," Dr. Clare advises, "because of the sedating effect as the healing process is activated. However, you can count on, about 48 hours later, a bounce-back effect of vitality, vigor and well-being."

We learned today that the two horses have improved significantly, with the prescribed repeat treatments, since our ride-along last month. The filly is back in race training and doing well, and the gelding and his young owner are once again a happy, comfortable team. **as**

For more information about these highly effective alternative therapies, you may contact Dr. Clare Seagren at 859.421.6395, e-mail DrClare10@aol.com; visit Dr. McClaren at brian@photonicttherapy.com; or contact Dr. David Gilchrist, another equine acupuncture specialist, at atgilk@ozemail.com.au, or visit his Web site at <http://www.ozemail.com.au/~gilk/>.