NADA Ear Acupuncture Protocol: Opportunities and Challenges for Integrating in Addiction and Behavioral Health Treatment

2017 Psych Retreat
Greensboro, NC
What is NADA

• A nonprofit organization established in 1985

• Multidisciplinary membership
  – 30% acupuncturists
  – Many other specialties including social workers, psychologists, physicians, CACs, mental health technicians, EMTs, MRCs
The NADA Organization

• Educates providers, stakeholders and policymakers
• Provides manual guided certification for NADA trainees
• Maintains bank of official Registered Trainers
• Provides administrative guidance through National NADA Office, Executive Director, and website support
NADA Auricular Protocol

• Is best positioned as adjunctive therapy that “clears the field” for more specific treatment
• Can be administered to individuals but is best used in a (communal) group setting
• Provides balancing (homeostatic) and centering
What is “Clearing the Field”?

In Sanscrit the word “nada” has two distinct definitions: the primordial sound before words are formed and the first step when entering a temple. In Spanish “nada” means nothing. These definitions evoke what NADA trainers and practitioners refer to as “the Spirit of NADA”. The acronym “NADA” (for National Acupuncture Detoxification Association) thus implies that individuals obtain benefit from the NADA protocol by doing “nothing”. Being “still” helps clear and clarifying the diagnostic picture.
Acupuncture Misconceptions: A Case for Communal Treatment
Why the ear?

Embryonic Development

• Embryonic gill plates develop into the external ear and are comprised of tissue from all 3 embryonic layers
  • ectoderm
  • mesoderm
  • endoderm

External ear is the only body structure where all 3 embryonic layers are represented.
microsystem correspondences

- External ear is one of many microsystems used to guide traditional Chinese medicine interventions. Other microsystems include e.g., radial and carotid pulses, tongue, face.
- Microsystems range from very simple to highly complex including the motor cortex and thalamus.
Millennial Chinese texts on ear correspondences

- Su Wen and Ling Shu
  - Both say, “Yin meridian channels converge on the ear, Yang meridian channels pass through the ear”
- Suggestive of the ear as having unique potential for Yin/Yang [Parasympathetic/Sympathetic?] balance
Electrical correspondences

• Paul Nogier—Central Figure
  • France, early to mid 1950’s
  • Systematic exploration and charting of entire ear using ohm meter
  • Inflammation in the body is mapped in corresponding areas on the surface of the ear by measuring decrease in electrical resistance
  • 92% correspondences btw foci of established body pathological and ear measurements
Other mechanisms: specific physiologic effects

- Blood Flow
- Breathing Rate
- Endogenous peptides [e.g., beta endorphin, metenkephalins,]
- Neurotransmitters [e.g., serotonin, norepinephrine, dopamine and cortisol]

Nada Ear acupuncture in practice

1. Sympathetic
2. Shen men
3. Kidney
4. Liver
5. Lung
Description NADA Ear Points

• 1. Sympathetic:
• Related to disruption in both sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems. It has a strong analgesic and relaxant effect on internal organs as it dilates blood vessels.

• 2. Shen Men:
• Regulates excitation and inhibition of the cerebral cortex and can produce sedation.
Description NADA Ear Points

• 3. Kidney:
  • Strengthening point that can relieve mental weariness, fatigue, and headaches.

• 4. Liver:
  • Addresses symptoms associated with poor liver functioning and inflammation.

• 5. Lung:
  • Associated with analgesia, sweating, and various respiratory conditions.
That's odd... my neck suddenly feels better...

Early Acupuncture
Lincoln Recovery Center Adopts Ear Acupuncture

- At first, copied Dr. Wen’s Formula
  - Lung point only - analgesia effect then added
- Shen Men – which was considered “Spirit gate”, mental clarity
- Sympathetic--it has a strong analgesic and relaxant effect on internal organs as it dilates blood vessels.
- Liver—chosen because of detoxification effect and anger identity
- Kidney—added to help methadone patients with edema
- Group process emphasized

Benefits of NADA Protocol

• Improvement in engagement and retention
• Relapse prevention
• Reduced alcohol and drug cravings, and withdrawal symptoms
• Benefit potential is substance and symptom neutral
• Associated with decrease in positive urine tests, increased program completion, improved patient satisfaction, and cost savings
• Opioid pain management

Bullock ML et al, (1989) Controlled Trial of Acupuncture for severe recidivist alcoholism Lancet, 1 (8652) 1435-1439,
Santasiero, RP, Cost-Effectiveness of auricular acupuncture for treating substance abuse in an HMO setting: A pilot Study. Medical Acupuncture vol.16 no.3 2005
Benefits of NADA Protocol

• Help individuals with addiction and co-occurring disorders to better cope with a broad spectrum of behavioral health issues.

• Ameliorating dysphoric states such as depression, anxiety, anger, impaired concentration, decreased energy, and body aches/headaches

• Stress

• Impulsive Behaviors

• Trauma

• Harm reduction

• Individual and Group Psychotherapy (especially Mindfulness Based Therapies)


Benefits of NADA Protocol

• NADA may help modify the risks associated with impulsivity and improve clinical outcomes
• Immediacy of effect makes it especially useful in acute situations- trauma and medical reserve corps [MRC]
• Non verbal, does not require learning curve
• Provided in a calm and supportive group setting to help mitigate impulsiveness
• Balancing experience, general sense of well-being
Recent and preliminary research findings

• 1. Implementation of the National Acupuncture Detoxification Association Protocol in a Community Mental Health Setting.
• 2. Ear acupuncture for co-occurring substance abuse and borderline personality disorder: an aid to encourage treatment retention and tobacco cessation
• 3. NADA Ear Acupuncture: an adjunctive therapy to improve and maintain positive outcomes in substance abuse treatment
• 4. Establishing an animal model for National Acupuncture Detoxification Association (NADA) auricular acupuncture protocol

Acupressure seeds, beads, and magnets

• A single point bilaterally, Shen Men or the point directly behind it on the back of the ear
• Common uses include
  • ADD/ADHD
  • Trauma/disaster situation
  • Anxiety/fatigue
NADA Protocol and State Laws

• NADA policies vary widely from state to state
• Some states are very restrictive, severely limiting who may provide and supervise NADA protocol services.
• NADA availability is accessible with general supervision requirement
• Direct supervision limits access as it requires a physician or acupuncturist to be present on site
NADA Policy Chart (USA)
This chart shows jurisdictions with varying degrees of informed support for the use of NADA auricular acupuncture. The NADA protocol enables addiction and behavioral health programs to operate cost-effectively and conveniently. Data in the chart is based on best available information and is subject to change. Individuals are encouraged to verify facts with local authorities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>A. Legal Status</th>
<th>B. Supervision required</th>
<th>C. Who can supervise</th>
<th>D. Credentials qualifying for NADA practice</th>
<th>E. # of NADA trainees</th>
<th>Authority</th>
<th>Who writes regulations?</th>
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Role of Nursing

• single largest group of licensed healthcare professionals in the United States
• Their education and extensive training in healthcare make them ideal candidates to supervise, as well as administer, NADA protocol treatment.
• Educate and advocate for change in state law requirements
CONTACT INFO, REFERENCES, ETC.