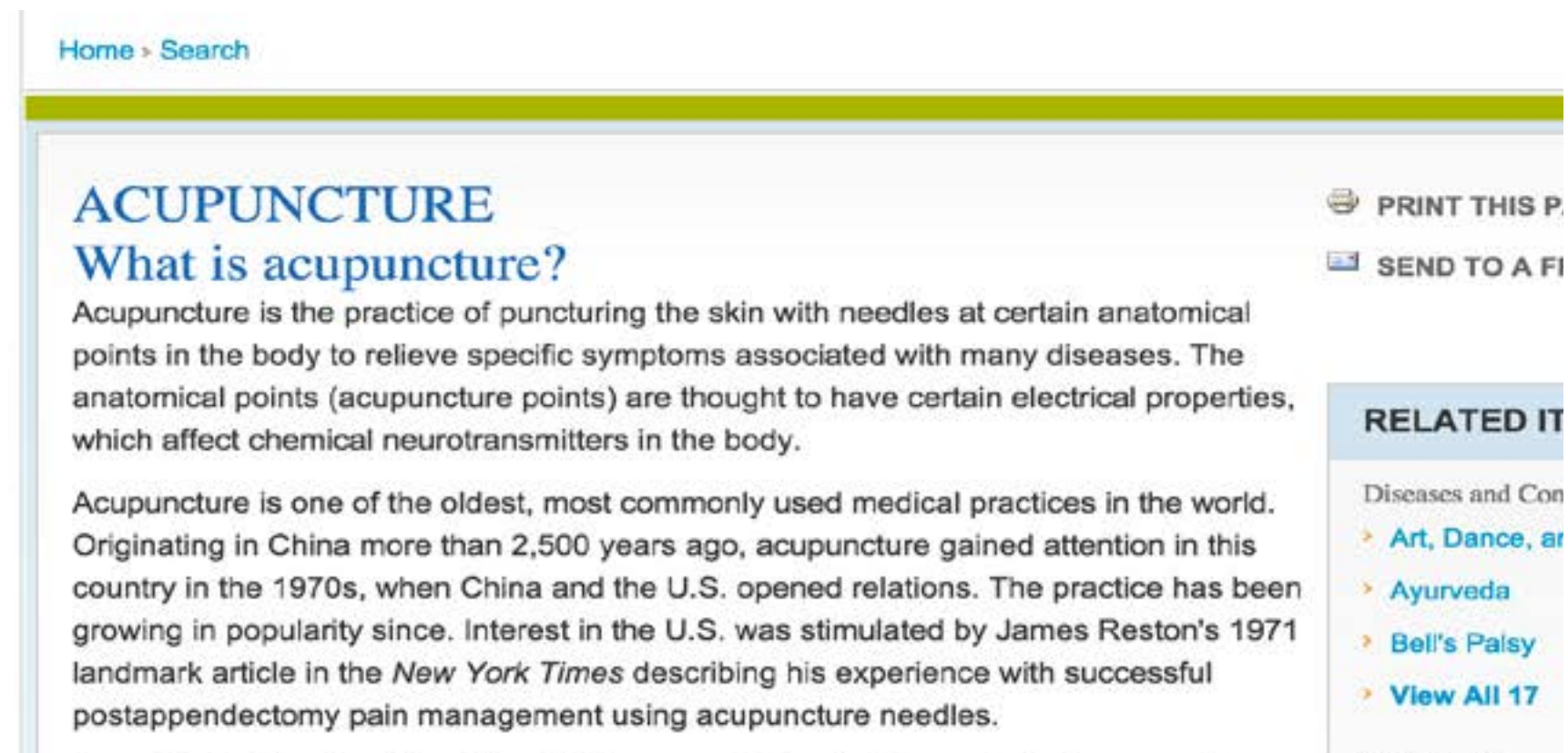


Investigating the Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM) “Communication Gap” in Consumer Health Information (eHealth)

Margaret Meyer
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- Modified a map originally created for developing international technical communication user interfaces (Getto & St. Amant, 2014)
- Created a persona with a chronic health condition using the Technological and Cultural Factors identified for U.S. adults
- Used a case study approach to review health insurance web pages for “Complementary and Alternative Medicine,” “Acupuncture,” and “Traditional Chinese Medicine.”
- Analyzed Cultural findings based on literature review and Subject Matter Experts including a Twin Cities acupuncturist
- Analyzed Technological findings based on AARP heuristics for adults age 50+ (Chisnell & Redish, 2004).



Attention has been focused on the following theories to further explain how acupuncture affects the bo

- Conduction of electromagnetic signals.** Evidence suggests that acupuncture points are strat of electromagnetic signals. Stimulating these points enables electromagnetic signals to be relay than-normal rates. These signals may start the flow of pain-killing biochemicals, such as endorp immune system cells to specific body sites.
- Activation of the body's natural opioid system.** Considerable research supports the claim th releases opioids, synthetic or naturally-occurring chemicals in the brain that may reduce pain or These chemicals may explain acupuncture's pain-relieving effects.
- Stimulation of the hypothalamus and the pituitary gland.** Joined at the base of the brain, th hypothalamus and pituitary glands are responsible for many body functions. The hypothalamus controls part of the nervous system, the endocrine processes, and many bodily functions, such r regulation of temperature, and appetite. The pituitary gland supplies some of the body's needed

Acupuncture is acknowledged to be a helpful treatment for chronic low-back pain (NCCIH, 2014).



Carl B.
RV/motor home autoworker
Quality Control Supervisor
Age: 55
Location: Southern Minnesota, USA

Web literacy and behavior: Has broadband Internet access. Uses social media/Facebook and email
English literacy and reading level: High school graduate; Native English speaker
CAM literacy: Carl only knows acupuncture "is Asian and involves needles"
Health issue: Chronic back pain since a work-related injury 11 years ago

<p>Local and Technological Findings</p> <p>Related to Web literacy and behavior of an online adult age 50+, high-school educated, Midwesterner, semi-rural</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Long pages, requiring scrolling -Dense text -No visuals or audio files -Unclear link labels -Inconsistent use of terms -Reading level beyond high school 	<p>Global U.S. and Cultural Findings</p> <p>Related to CAM literacy and expectations based on prevalence of biomedical dependency model and CAM popularity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Generalized CAM information -Confusing quizzes -Written from Western dependency model; failure to convey patient involvement
<p>Local and Cultural Finding</p> <p>Related to English literacy and psychographic information for chronic health patient, age 50+</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Alarmist tone -Focus on needles -Inappropriate jargon for a Western audience without higher education/cultural exposures 	<p>Global U.S. and Technological Findings</p> <p>Related to web literacy in the U.S.</p> <p>A recent study showed that 43% of adults who have not completed high school used the Internet, versus 71% of high school graduates—and 94% of college graduates (Zickuhr & Smith, 2012).</p>

Chronic medical conditions affect about 50% of the United States adult population (CDC, 2015).

Most health care spending—84% percent—“was for the 50% of the population that have one or more chronic medical conditions” (CDC, 2015).

People with chronic pain and illness are 2 to 5 times more likely to use Complementary and Alternative Medicine (Myers, 2014, para. 9).

Many people don't discuss CAM use with their doctors. (NCCIH, 2011)

U.S. adults who are already online look to the Internet for health information (Cohen & Adams, 2009).

The philosophies and practices of CAM are nontraditional in Western biomedicine and require more explanation to be effective (Personal Interview, April 2015).

“Qi and its movement is the basis of the philosophy of acupuncture, and it is a difficult concept for Westerners to grasp. This is why I always use a visual — a Chinese medicine map or diagram.”

- Christian Fetsch, LAc, MSTCM, FABORM
Natural Health & Fertility Center, Minneapolis, MN

“In my experience, the majority of people don't usually turn to CAM for acute issues. The chronic health population has often exhausted its resources in Western medicine, and I have often found that this patient population is frequently seeking out CAM modalities.”

- Elizabeth Hopfenspirger, DNP, MSN, RN, FNP-BC, PMHNP-BC

Five devils!



“Part of what Chinese medicine is really about is gaining the capacity within yourself to adapt and make appropriate adaptations to an ever-changing world. This requires a shift from the Western biomedical dependency model to a more Eastern perspective.”

- Craig A. Hassel, Ph.D, Graduate Faculty, University of Minnesota
Center for Spirituality & Healing, Cultural Wellness Center Fellow

“I just want the pain to stop.”

- Carl B., persona