

ASA / NCCAOM Town Hall V Q&A

May 6, 2020, 5pm PDT/8pm EDT

[Video Recording](#)

[PowerPoint Slides](#)

Table of Contents

PROFESSION RELATED QUESTIONS.....	2
Reopening.....	2
Direct, Ethics & Treatments.....	10
Questions for Dr. Li.....	11
ADVOCACY / CARES ACT.....	13
Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) and Unemployment.....	13
General Advocacy Question.....	13

PROFESSION RELATED QUESTIONS

Reopening

Question: In regard to cleaning linens - I do not have a washer/dryer in my office and would have to bring linens home with me to wash. I am not sure if I am comfortable with that. Are there recommendations for cleaning linens, or avoiding using them altogether? Thank you.

Answered on 5/16/20: To reduce the spread of germs, we recommend using paper sheets, paper drape sheets and paper pillowcases.

Question: Does a reusable fabric face mask with N95 filter insert work?

Answered on 5/16/20: Healthcare providers should not use fabric face masks, even with filter inserts. Removal and insertion of the filter can disturb and spread the virus. Fabric face masks can be used by the patients.

Question: Do you know where we can find KN95 or KN94 masks, not N95 or NF 95?

Answered on 5/16/20: KN95 mask can be purchased through many of our acupuncture supply vendors. A web search provides many companies that offer the KN95 currently in stock.

Question: To check a patient's temperature, do we need to use a touch free thermometer?

Answered on 5/16/20: A thermometer does not need to be touch free; however, it must be disinfected in accordance with CDC infection control guidelines (like all equipment).

Question: Can you provide some guidance on our best practices, and responsibilities regarding notification and behaviors if a client we have seen in the office later tests positive for COVID?

Answered on 5/16/20: Providers should be tested if you suspect exposure to patients with COVID. Proper PPE, hygiene and disinfection protocols should protect a practitioner. [For Return to Work guidelines for practitioners with COVID, visit the CDC's website.](#)

Question: I was curious about any laws that protect us as healthcare providers with regards to being Independent Contractors? The clinic I am contracted at decided to reopen without the best safety protocols. The owner decided on protocols without consulting his practitioners. It makes me uncomfortable to go back to an environment not following best practices.

Answered on 5/16/20: Acupuncturists should be following all national, state, and local laws. Clinics should not be reopening if they cannot adhere to safety/hygiene practices. Your state health department might have specific guidelines requirements for re-opening. [Here are the CDC Guidelines for Healthcare providers.](#)

Question: Do you see drop in O₂ saturation in mild cases?

Answered on 5/16/20: Yes, you can see a decrease in O₂ sat, however there are a lot of conditions and factors that can contribute (not just COVID).

Question: Any extra words of advice for facial acupuncturists who work close to the head and face? Are face masks required for the patient in this case, even if the practitioner is wearing one (or should they try to obtain a N95 to use in this case if the supply increases?)

Answered on 5/16/20: Assuming treatments without a face mask for the patient is allowed in your local and state health department requirements, an N95 with a face shield and/or eye protection should be adequate. Please try to limit the amount of time and exposure. Please obey local, state, and national laws.

Question: How long can an asymptomatic carrier transmit the virus?

Answered on 5/16/20: Although the period of infectiousness for COVID-19 are not yet known, the incubation period of SARS-CoV-2 and other coronaviruses (e.g. MERS-CoV, SARS-CoV) ranges from 2–14 days.

Question: Would you be able to provide us with a template for the safety plan that we can then modify according to our specific cases?

Answered on 5/16/20: Every clinic is different, so please adjust according to your specific situation. [Please refer to OSHA](#) for safety considerations.

Question: I have cloth gowns and washer/dryer at my office (I own the building); can I use these gowns so long as they immediately go into covered hamper after treatment and are washed each night?

Answered on 5/16/20: Yes, treat just as you would linens and apparel. [Please use hot water and dry gowns completely in dryer.](#)

Question: Are you still looking at tongues?

Answered on 5/12/20: Yes, you can, however this would be a comfort level and choice for you as a provider. Follow guidance on physical distancing, proper hand washing and sanitizing procedures.

Question: I have a question regarding patient flow. I have two rooms and I am planning on alternating patients so I can clean up after each, with one patient per hour.

Answered on 5/12/20: Remember it will take 30 minutes or more to properly disinfect your treatment/exam rooms at a minimum, in addition you may have a disinfection process for common areas.

Question: Given that patients could be asymptomatic but have COVID-19, and that testing is insufficient and contact tracing not in effect, even with all the precautions--is it safe and responsible to open at this time? I know you mentioned consulting local ordinances, but I do not know that they speak to this.

Answered on 5/12/20: If you follow best practices and have enough PPE to sustain your practice, in addition if you personally are comfortable opening and seeing patients, and have followed all local ordinances, then open when YOU are ready.

Question: The primary modality I use in my practice is tui na, which is sustained close 1:1 contact in the session. Unlike other practices where the acupuncturist leaves the room after inserting needles, I am with a client directly for extended periods of time. Are there different or additional recommendations you

have for this style of practice? I am additionally concerned because massage therapists are not practicing in my state and my practice is more like that of a massage therapist.

Answered on 5/12/20: If you follow best practices and have enough PPE to sustain your practice. Patient and practitioner will need facemasks. Practitioner should use gloves. If you personally are comfortable opening and seeing patients, and have followed all local ordinances, then open when YOU are ready.

Question: I would like to know if I can tell my patients that I will not provide acupuncture treatments to anyone who presents with any cold/flu/diarrheal symptoms whether chronic or new. Instead, I will provide herbal treatment only to those patients. Patients stay in the car the whole time without physically coming into the clinic for herbal treatment. I am just not sure if I will get into trouble by denying acupuncture service to those patients. I also am not sure about what if a patient accidentally sneezes or cough without the face masks on, what is the proper procedure to follow. I am concern about the droplets hanging in the air. Is there any way to disinfect the air?

Answered on 5/16/20: Patients should always have face mask on during treatment. Please contact your malpractice insurance company for more information regarding your situation. Join us on May 20th at our Town Hall for more information from our insurance providers.

Question: When we are looking at a fever of 100.4 as a potential covid-19 patient, would that be before or after the patient has taken medication to control their symptoms? Or it that unspecified? So, if we have a cap of 100.4 and cannot treat a patient with or beyond that temperature, then aren't we excluding treating the symptoms of other conditions such as cancer or aids?

Answered on 5/12/20: Just because a patient has a fever of 100.4 does not mean they have COVID19, they could have strep, or another condition. The fever symptom is part of the COVID presentation, therefore having them self-quarantine protects others. It does not mean you cannot treat them; it is about reducing risk of transmission. If you can rule out COVID or confirm Dx then treat what you know, maintaining PPE and best practices.

Question: Should we have patients sign a consent specific to COVID19 before a treatment or maybe before coming to clinic to enforce following face mask requirements, and other new clinic procedures?

Answered on 5/12/20: This is not necessary, however check with your liability/malpractice insurance. Document all prescreening, day of service screening, and treatment.

Question: If we are wearing a mask treating a patient, and that patient is determined within 2 weeks to be COVID19 positive or highly suspect, do we have to stop treating and immediately self-quarantine? How long would we have to wait to be tested for COVID19 then to increase odds of a more reliable result?

Answered on 5/12/20: If you have an exposure or known potential exposure in the 2-14 days, then yes self-quarantine for up to 14 days is the practice. At that point, if tests are available to you, get one - you are an HCP. Also know that current antibody tests only indicate an exposure, they do not show immunity.

Question: What is recommended for keeping carpeting clean/disinfected in treatment rooms? Shoes carry virus, but we cannot clean the carpet between each patient. Suggestions? Looking for something other than 'take off shoes'.

Answered on 5/16/20: Practitioners can provide disposable shoe covers for patients.

Question: Is there consensus on how long the virus can survive on surfaces, such as in a treatment room?

Answered on 5/12/20: Surfaces can vary from minutes to DAYS (on harder surfaces), this is why the disinfection process is so important as part of your practice. Typically, viruses last on Glass – 5 days, Wood – 4 days, Plastic & stainless-steel – 3 days, Cardboard – 24 hours, Copper surfaces – 4 hours.

Question: How should needles be set up in treatment room?

Answered on 5/12/20: Please follow normal CNT protocols.

Question: Can she talk about HEPA filters that many are chatting about online? What about rooms that have no windows (interior treatment rooms).

Answered on 5/16/20: [Here are the Guidelines for Environmental Infection Control in Health-Care Facilities](#) (2003) HEPA filters can be used in treatment rooms. Please make sure that the filter is an adequate size for the room you are using. Place the filter as close to the patient as possible without disturbing the treatment. Run it on high when the room is empty. When patients are in the room, run the HEPA filter as high as possible being aware the noise may disturb the patient.

Question: What are her thoughts about using sheets on tables as opposed to paper? What about laundering at home?

Answered on 5/12/20: Sheets should be laundered in the office space. If it is not possible, paper sheets are recommended.

Question: Can he review how to best change clothes? Should we change our clothes before leaving and getting into our cars? Do you need gloves to do your laundry?

Answered on 5/12/20: Please wear a mask and gloves when touching laundry. It would be ideal to launder your clothes at work. If this is not possible, change clothes before heading home or change (and launder) as soon as you get home.

Question: How do you suggest taking temperatures upon entry to office? What type of thermometer? How do we clean them?

Answered on 5/12/20: Either a non-contact or forehead temp gun are ideal. Cleaned with the same protocols as other equipment.

Question: Can we wear the same plain blue accordion surgical masks all day?

Answered on 5/12/20: During this time of the pandemic, surgical masks can be reused as long as they are intact, not wet, or soiled, torn, or damaged. It is recommended to discontinue use

when any of the above happens. Limit the frequency and use caution when donning and doffing the mask. Touch only the ear straps.

Question: Is it ok to wear regular clothes to the office? They would need to get washed just like scrubs, right?

Answered on 5/12/20: Yes, they should be removed as soon as you get home and laundered. You should shower as well after your clinic day to reduce risk at home.

Question: Should we be concerned about infection when washing clothes or laundry?

Answered on 5/12/20: Please wear a mask and gloves when handling any soiled laundry.

Question: Do we have to have plexiglass dividers?

Answered on 5/12/20: Plexiglass dividers are not required. Everyone has different facilities and needs based on the practice.

Question: Can scrub tops be worn between clients or must a new top/pants be worn for each client?

Answered on 5/16/20: At this time, there are no requirements for changing practitioners' clothes after each patient. Consider a change of clothes or disinfect, with possible airborne pathogen exposure. Please do change if your clothes are contaminated, soiled, or damaged.

Question: Do you have resources for what to use for cleaning massage tables since they are porous?

Answered on 5/16/20: Cavicide, 70% alcohol, bleach dilution and other EPA approved disinfectants can be used. Check the label for efficacy and for well (wet) time.

Question: If we wear a face shield, is a fabric mask with a filter sufficient?

Answered on 5/12/20: Healthcare providers are required to wear surgical masks.

Question: Can you really feel pulses well enough through gloves?

Answered on 5/12/20: Yes. We recommend that you practice this before seeing patients.

Question: Do surfaces underneath the sheet (that will be changed) need to be disinfected after each patient?

Answered on 5/12/20: Yes. This is the same with paper sheets.

Question: Why are scrubs recommended? Are you saying change clothes every time you leave / enter a patient room? What would that mean for staggering patient appointments and going from one room to another?

Answered on 5/12/20: Scrubs are designed for hospital use (body fluid exposure etc..) If they are soiled or damaged, they should be changed. The lab coat suggestion provides a layer of protection to your clothing. You do not need to change after every patient, only during the day and if soiled, damaged, or contaminated.

Question: Is seeing one patient at a time a mandate or a suggestion? And some have suggested that we should spend as little time in the treatment room as possible. Is there any maximum amount of time spent in the treatment room with a patient that should not be exceeded?

Answered on 5/12/20: No time limits. Follow best practices to minimize potential spread. Allow yourself enough time to clean and disinfect treatment rooms and common areas before other patients arrive (limit potential spread).

Question: Shouldn't hands be washed before and after taking gloves off?

Answered on 5/12/20: Hands should be washed after removal of gloves, and before donning gloves.

Question: When you say PPE, what specifically are you including? Do we need gowns, foot covers, etc., or would gloves and facemasks be enough? Who decides?

Answered on 5/12/20: We ask that practitioners follow all recommendations by CDC, OSHA, and your local and state health authorities. [Please review the slides from the presentation.](#)

Question: For how long can an asymptomatic carrier transmit the virus?

Answered on 5/12/20: Although the period of infectiousness for COVID-19 are not yet known, the incubation period of SARS-CoV-2 and other coronaviruses (e.g. MERS-CoV, SARS-CoV) ranges from 2–14 days.

Question: Where can we get the gloves?

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Question: Where can we get the gloves?

Answered on 5/16/20: There are many resources for gloves. Our acupuncture supply vendors do have them in stock occasionally. Please check medical supply companies, veterinary and dental supply companies such as medexpressgloves.com. An internet search should provide you with options.

Question: Is a polyurethane covering over the table warmer & mat, is that suitable to disinfect before the clean set of sheets goes on? Polyurethane over face cradle and under the clean cloth face cradle...So

the polyurethane becomes the disinfected surface and clean sheets used each treatment...is that adequate?

Answered on 5/12/20: Please use approved disinfectants. Nothing on the table can be multi-patient without being disinfected. If you have a linen or removable covering, they should be taken off and properly laundered, and the other surfaces under disinfected. [An EPA list of approved disinfectants can be found here.](#)

Question: Are homemade masks ok for other people in the clinic - front desk staff/ massage therapists/ etc.?

Answered on 5/12/20: Best practice recommendations for your staff with patient interaction are with surgical masks. Massage Therapists should be wearing surgical masks.

Question: What is the chance of us returning to a time when we do not have to wear gloves and masks? Will this level of sanitizing between patients become the norm for all time, for now on?

Answered on 5/12/20: We will have to wait to see for recommendations from OSHA, CDC, and your local and state health authorities.

Question: How to sterilize used masks? We cannot get too many masks for constant change.

Answered on 5/16/20: UV light, Hydrogen peroxide, alcohol and disinfectants can be sprayed on to masks to disinfect. Please do not use it until the mask is fully dry. All masks that are soiled, contaminated, or damaged must be discarded.

Question: Should we be disinfecting walls and ceiling daily?

Answered on 5/12/20: Any surfaces that are touched should be disinfected daily. If you have low ceilings where patients can touch them, then you will need to disinfect those daily.

Question: Can you go over the use of gloves again? Maybe walk through a treatment process as in put on gloves in room before touching patient, treat with gloves on -- then do you remove and discard and leave the room and have to put another pair on when return to pull needles? Or can you clean with washing hands with gloves on. I have never used gloves in PPE setting like doctors do.

Answered on 5/16/20: Disposable gloves should only be used for each patient encounter and then discarded. Always wash your hands before you don on gloves and after you remove them. Please watch PPE donning and doffing videos.

Question: What is the recommendation then for practices in large buildings that have a central HVAC system? Are you saying that room air filters are helpful, or not that important? The OSHA document seemed to indicate air quality was the most efficacious way to stop the spread of the virus.

Answered on 5/16/20: Large buildings should be following OSHA guidance for HVAC air filtration. HEPA air filters are useful for treatment rooms.

Question: Do we need vinyl/plastic-based pillowcases? Would Hepa filters/UV be helpful? Do we need to remove glass framed art from walls? Thanks.

Answered on 5/16/20: Yes, paper/plastic lined pillowcases are recommended. HEPA filters and UV can also be used. It is advised to remove any unnecessary things from the treatment room.

Things that are not removed should be disinfected at least daily. Items that might be touched should be cleaned after contact.

Question: Can ultraviolet boxes be effective in sterilizing mask?

Answered on 5/16/20: Yes, you can use UV light to sterilize your masks. However, please check your equipment for time and wavelength of light required for sanitation.

Question: Can you please address house call situation and screening/disinfection etc. I am a primarily house call-based practice. Thank you.

Answered on 5/16/20: We advise to follow recommendations from all state and local health authorities. Please consult advice of other agencies such as the [National Association for Home Health & Hospice](#) for specific COVID information.

Question: The primary modality in my practice is tui na. How do I address this high touch modality? Massage therapists in my state are not practicing.

Answered on 5/16/20: We recognize that in these unprecedented times, we must all adjust our normal procedures. We recommend that you follow all local and state health department guidance. You must wear a mask and gloves during your treatment. There must be protection separating you from your patients such as a plastic sheet. Please consult other associations, such as the [American Massage Therapy Association](#) for more COVID related advice.

Question: Can you please go over what proper cough hygiene is?

Answered on 5/12/20: Please refer to PowerPoint slides for more information. [CDC recommends](#) that we cough into a tissue and discard.

Question: What's the difference between a surgical mask and N95 mask? Wanting to know what a surgical mask looks like. Please give a visual example.

Answered on 5/12/20: Surgical mask looks like a pleated rectangle. N95 masks are form fitting and does not allow for air leakage. They say N95 on them. You can search for an image, or your medical supplier should have one when ordering.

Question: The chairs in my clinic are wood and leather. Is there a way to disinfect these without damaging them, or do I need different chairs?

Answered on 5/12/20: Check the label of which approved disinfecting solution you are using for its use on those types of surfaces. [A list of approved disinfectants can be found here.](#)

Question: I work at a teaching clinic which of course right now is closed, and we are teaching remotely. However here in the state of WA it is looking promising that our clinic will reopen for summer quarter. My concern is the bathrooms. We have a multi stall bathroom for men and for women off the entry and check in desk plus two in the treatment area room. There are 9 acupuncture rooms and two CHM rooms. Is the recommendation to clean after each use?

Answered on 5/12/20: We do not have any specific recommendations at this time, other than frequent cleaning. We recommend that you contact your local health authority for recommendations and guidance.

Question: How do we know if the air in our office space has enough ventilation if there are no windows in the rooms?

Answered on 5/16/20: A HEPA filter can be used. Guidance on room size and size of filter will need to be adhered to.

Question: If in my state acupuncture is declared as essential service, should we wait for reopening date?

Answered on 5/16/20: Yes, even essential services in a state has specific guidelines for the level of service. Please consult your local authorities for reopening dates.

Question: Can waste baskets be open? Do they have to have lids?

Answered on 5/16/20: They should be covered, or if open and used should be emptied then any should be disinfected as part of your post treatment protocol.

Direct, Ethics & Treatments

Question: Has Malpractice Insurance made changes to protect acupuncturists during this time? Some patients who are desperate financially may get sue happy.

Answered on May 10, 2020: Malpractice insurance will be a topic of an upcoming Town Hall. Documents from some of our malpractice insurers will be available shortly. Please contact your malpractice insurer for additional information.

Question: Regarding limitations on cases, can we only practice acupuncture in our clinic, i.e., if we offer other modalities?

Answered on May 10, 2020: Please provide more information or examples so that we may be able to answer your question. Please resubmit this question to TownHall@thenccaom.org

Question: Do we need to require that patients wear face masks when lying face down on the table?

Answered on May 10, 2020: Patients must wear facemask while they are in an acupuncture office.

Question: What are the risks of tongue diagnosis? If patients are wearing masks, how do we do this effectively?

Answered on May 10, 2020: Patients may briefly remove their facemask while 6 feet away from the practitioner to allow for tongue diagnosis. Patients must put on the face mask immediately following.

Question: How long after a patient travels must they wait before coming in? How about after symptoms of COVID19?

Answered on May 10, 2020: The CDC recommends quarantine of 14 days after travel. Please consult your local health department for more information.

Question: If a patient has a cough should we treat or refuse treatment?

Answered on May 10, 2020: If a patient is suspected of having COVID-19, please use telehealth to advise them. Patients can use the [CDC's self-checker](#). When treating patients with a cough with no other fever or shortness of breath, practitioners should wear appropriate PPE for aerosolized pathogens (N95 respirator, eye protection, gown and gloves).

Question: Are there patients you would not see because they are at too great a risk?

Answered on May 10, 2020: Please use your professional judgement. Practitioners who are at a higher risk must exercise caution in treatment. Patients with COVID-19 should not be receiving in-person treatments. If necessary, patients should be referred to their healthcare practitioner or emergency department.

Question: What will be the best way of taking pulse? Or is it best to not take them?

Answered on May 10, 2020: Practitioners can take pulses with gloves on. Gloves are one time use only and should be changed between patients.

Questions for Dr. Li

Disclaimer: *The information presented by guests on the ASA/NCCAOM Town Hall meetings is for educational purposes only and is not meant to direct specific patient treatments. Any information presented by guests should be evaluated by each practitioner individually, and ASA/NCCAOM cannot and does not endorse any specific treatment regimens (herbal, acupuncture, or other). Practitioners are cautioned to avoid any advertising or other outreach that would lead consumers to believe direct treatment of Covid-19 is offered in any form. Such statements do violate FDA regulations on health claims. All treatments using integrative/Chinese medicine in the care of patients with Covid-19, whether originating from studies in or outside of the U.S., should be considered experimental at this time. For more information, click [HERE](#).*

Question: What is ALI in the Time Series Clinical Presentation?

Answered on May 10, 2020: ALI = Acute Lung Injury

Question: What are the ingredients in Ren Shen Bai Du San?

Answered on May 10, 2020:

REN SHEN 12g or Xi Yang Shen 24g

QIANG HUO 12g

DU HUO 10g

CHAI HU 12g

QIAN HU 10g

CHUAN XIONG 12g

ZHI SHI 10g

JIE GENG 10g

FU LING 20g

SHENG JIANG 6g
GAN CAO 6g
BO HE 6g

Question: Can you tell us more about the transdermal machine that does cupping and heat therapy? What is it called? Can we access that in the US?

Answered on May 10, 2020: Chinese name of the machine is [新汉方TTS动力给药治仪](#). It could be accessed through the US market. [Here is the information sheet for the machine.](#)

Question: What acupuncture points did you use with the patients in the case study you presented?

Answered on May 10, 2020: Ling Xu (KD24), Fei Shu (BL13), Ge Shu (BL17)

Question: You recommend using Ren Shen Bai Du San for prevention of ALI. Do you use it in the early state, middle stage, or late stage of illness? Or even for the prevention phase when patients do not have any symptoms?

Answered on May 10, 2020: It should be used at early and middle stage, basically, within the first ten days of disease course. We should not use this during recovery period or prevention. It should be only used for those with Qi Deficiency who are the most vulnerable patients and high chance to die from COVID19.

Question: Do you have success using other formulas such as Pu Ji Xiao Du Yin or Xie Bai San?

Answered on May 10, 2020: I rarely treated mild cases. Most of patients who asked me for consultation were very sick and already had some de-saturation. We could not use PU JI XIAO DU YIN or Xie Bai San for those patients since they obviously had qi deficiency.

Question: Do you use Lian Hua Qing Wen Jiao Nang in the early State?

Answered on May 10, 2020: I did not try this in the early stage. Like what I mentioned in my presentation, Ginseng should be considered as the first herb to regulate human response. Regarding the mild cases, you could have many selections including Lian Hua Qing Wen Jiao Nang if patients only had pain throat and some other heat symptoms. However, keep in mind, using Ren Shen Bai Du San for vulnerable population (elderly patients, high BMI patients....).

Question: There is a lot of evidence that metabolic disease is the root cause of the severity in most people, relating more to insulin resistance than weight. Do you feel that even thin people who are insulin resistant are increased in risk?

Answered on May 10, 2020: It is quite controversial regarding who is most risk population. In Chinese Medicine theory, any patient with Qi deficiency or during the disease progression stage patients became Qi deficiency, they all need ginseng. Insulin resistant, low testosterone level, etc. all contribute to the severity of disease.

ADVOCACY / CARES ACT

Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) and Unemployment

Question: I had a question about the PPP loan. I just got one but had applied for Unemployment for end of March and first part of April only--is this ok?

Answered on 5/10/20 – M. Giammarco, MPP: Check the terms of eligibility for your state unemployment/pandemic unemployment insurance policy. Some state may prohibit receiving PPP.

General Advocacy Question

Question: Are things being done in the political arena to catapult acupuncture into essential medicine, if not now than in the future?

Answered on 5/04/20 – M. Giammarco, MPP: States determine essential-worker designations. Your state association may have more information on the efforts to receive essential classification status for acupuncturists practicing in your state. The NCCAOM was successful in establishing an essential designation at testing centers, which will enable those sitting for certification tests to sit for these exams.