FACT SHEET

Moxa and moxibustion

Moxibustion is an essential part of Chinese medicine which uses moxa, a soft woolly substance prepared from mugwort leaves (*Artemisia vulgaris*). In moxibustion the moxa is placed either directly on the skin or held just above it, over specific acupuncture points or meridians. The herb is lit and as it smoulders slowly, a therapeutic heat permeates the skin and affects the flow of 'qi' (energy) and blood in the area being treated.

Direct moxibustion is more commonly used for specific areas needing treatment. The practitioner shapes the moxa into a tiny cone and places it directly on to the body before lighting. The lit moxa cone is removed as soon as the patient feels any sensation of heat.

Moxibustion is a specialist technique demanding skilled clinical judgement and is contraindicated in certain cases. The easiest way to ensure your practitioner is properly trained is by visiting a British Acupuncture Council (BAcC) member

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