

Ear staples designed to control weight

By SANDY TESSLER

Obesity is an affliction. In recent years, people who are overweight have pursued a variety of techniques to overcome their eating habits.

Some methods, such as the intestinal by-pass surgical operation, are last-ditch efforts. Others include injections, crash diets and amphetamine tablets.

A doctor in Lathrup Village has started using a form of acupuncture designed to curb the appetite, and hundreds of people have flocked to him.

Many thought it was a put-on when they heard of a staple, much like an ordinary desk staple, being applied to the ear for appetite control.

But others—eager to try almost any method to lose weight—ran to the doctor using the acupuncture and staple method.

The physician's name is Turgut S. Nese, M.D., a practicing anesthesiologist and a native of Istanbul, Turkey, where he earned his medical degree. Dr. Nese has been in his Twelve Mile Road office since April 1.

HE LAUGHED at the coincidence of its having been April Fools' Day when he hung the plaque which reads "acupuncture."

If you were to go to Dr. Nese for ear stapling, you would probably find yourself in a crowded waiting room. When your turn came, you would be told to feel free to ask any questions.

If you were curious, you might be shown charts of the ear and given an explanation of what would happen. Dr. Nese might volunteer to tell you that both he and his wife have staples in their ears.

There would be no physical examination, and no medical history would be taken. You would not be weighed or measured.

You would be required to sign a consent paper in which you acknowledge that you are informed that auriculoacupuncture is "an experimental procedure at the present time (and) that no guarantee can be or is made as to the success of this form of procedure."

THE PAPER further states: "I, also am informed that there is possibility of infection and reaction...."

Dr. Nese would assure you he will treat possible infections or reposition the staple and remove it for a single charge of \$25.

He would then use a staple gun to apply the unit in both ears (not earlobes) between the skin and the cartilage. You might experience pain similar to that of ear piercing and some discomfort for the next day or two.

You would be instructed to tap the staple for three minutes if you feel hungry. You would not be told what to eat, or how much, and you would be instructed to return when you lost the desired number of pounds or after six months.

Dr. Nese first learned of acupuncture through an article in the Journal of the Society of Anesthesiology. The initial interest in acupuncture was for relief of pain.

Over a two-year period, Dr. Nese studied and attended conferences and symposiums on acupuncture. About a year ago, he heard a paper read by Lester Sachs, M.D., a practicing acupuncturist who reported successes with controlling the excesses of drug addicts, alcoholics and cigarette smokers through the use of auricle therapy.

AURICULO THERAPY is a school of acupuncture which holds that the ear is a general reflection of the body and its organ system, where there exist points for more than 200 body sides.

By locating and stimulating the appropriate point, auriculo therapists theorize, the intended site can be either sedated or stimulated with fewer needles than traditionally required.

Dr. Nese was intrigued with the appetite control possibilities.

While needles are used in China, Dr. Sachs adapted the concept of utilizing stainless steel surgical staples designed for closing wounds. The staples are applied with a special staple gun.

The superiority of this method, Dr. Nese claims, is that the site can be self-stimulated by tapping or wiggling the staples, and the patient need not return to the doctor for continuous treatment.

THE SLENDER doctor was rather



This specialized staple gun inserts stainless steel needles into the ear.

vague in his explanation of how the technique works. It seems, as he said, that "No one yet knows how it works. It just works."

"The staple delivers continuous stimulation to the hypothalamus, a small part in the base of the brain which has many functions, among them appetite control," he explained.

He described it as a network center, which, when stimulated, delivers the message to inhibit the desire to eat.

"Obesity is an unbalanced condition of the body. Even the body knows this," he said. "Needles stimulate the point to get the body back in balance."

When asked what research findings supported the theory that patients do lose weight through this method, Dr. Nese referred to a few experiments for which data is still being collected. The experiments involve drug addicts and cigarette smokers.

RESULTS TO date, he said, show a 90-95 percent success rate with these subjects—there are no statistics but these findings are not conclusive and have not been done over a long period of time.

As a member of the National Acupuncture Research Society, Dr. Nese claims he will try to compile some statistics on the 2,000 or so patients he expects to see over several months. But he acknowledged that this is entirely up to the patients. He takes no

measurements and uses no scales.

An estimated 75 doctors in the United States use staples for compulsive disorders. Patients have come to Dr. Nese from as far away as Pennsylvania.

The method is attractive because it allegedly makes dieting easy; there is no addiction; no special diet is required; it is reversible, and, Dr. Nese said, "it works."

Patients disagree on success of stapling

By SANDY TESSLER

Does auriculo acupuncture work to curb the appetite? Practicing acupuncturist Turgut Nese, M.D., of Lathrup Village says "Yes," but he admits there are no statistics to back him up. Several area residents who've been "stapled" in trying to lose weight attest that it's worked for them.

"It's the easy way out and it's worked for me," said Harriet Wilner of Oak Park.

Mrs. Wilner said she was 50 pounds overweight and was considering a by-pass operation when she heard of Dr. Nese.

Both she and her husband went to him.

Although Mrs. Wilner claims she is less hungry than before the staples were applied, she said:

"FAT PEOPLE don't always eat because they're hungry. For me it's a crutch."

With a continual "full feeling" and some will power Mrs. Wilner said she lost 11 pounds in as many days following her visit to Dr. Nese.

"I've dieted before," she said, "but you're so regimented."

"This method lacks frustration. If I want it, I eat it."

"But my intake is less because when I sit down, I feel full and I eat slower. I stopped biting my nails also."

"Even if it's a hoax, I don't care."

"WHAT'S THE difference if it's physical or psychological as long as it works and is not detrimental to my health?"

Mollie Solomon of Southfield had a more negative view:

"I think it's a gimmick; a cheap fraud," she said.

Mrs. Solomon had the staples put in and experienced no difference in her appetite.

She then went back to Dr. Nese, had them repositioned at his urging, and still felt no difference.

They now have been removed entirely and Mrs. Solomon said:

"SINCE I had them out, I just cut down on eating and I'm losing weight."

"If you want to be thin, just stop eating."

One 64-year-old woman said she's had success with the staples. She lost nine and one-half pounds in three weeks.

But she does admit she's making a concentrated effort to lose weight and has cut down on high calorie foods.

She feels the patient must be in a receptive frame of mind.

For her it was "better than shots or pills" and less expensive.

Another patient had no success.

"IF YOU EAT normally, I don't know anyone that could lose weight," she said.

A Southfield patient who was also unsuccessful said:

"I think the fact you tap on your ears makes you conscious of the staple and it's purpose so you may eat less."

"I think it's psychological."

Sally Axler of Oak Park, who had 30 pounds to lose said:

"I don't find it decreased my appetite. I'm a skeptic."

"I've tried hypnosis three times to stop smoking and that never worked on me either."

"SOME PEOPLE are more suggestible than others."

Dr. Barry Rubin, a resident in psychiatry at Sinai Hospital cited a lecture given by Herbert Spiegel, M.D. associate professor of psychiatry at Columbia University.

Through his research, Dr. Spiegel was able to draw a direct correlation between a patient's ability to be hypnotized and his response to acupuncture.

Spiegel found virtually all patients who responded positively to acupuncture were easily hypnotizable.

The converse is also true.

Dr. Rubin concluded, "Neuroanatomically, I know of no pathway between the ear and the hypothalamus."

"BASED ON Dr. Spiegel's findings, I have to assume the patients who've been successfully treated for compulsive disorders with this staple method are highly suggestible."

Dr. Leonard Aronovitz, a Pontiac general practitioner, has also studied acupuncture.

He uses acupuncture for pain control on a small percentage of his patients who have specifically defined disorders.

His objection is that "using a staple in the ear for diet control is making a mockery of 5,000 years of tradition."

"It's sensationalism and an abuse for monetary gain."

"IT WILL take acupuncture out of the realm of respectability it's finally achieving in the western world."

"It's retarding the growth of what might be a legitimate healing art," he continued.

He didn't deny the method may work, but objects to the commercialism and the fact an obese patient is not learning or re-learning his eating habits.

This is an essential in his opinion for life-long dietary control.

DR. ARONOVITZ compared Dr. Nese's practice to "stamping heelers."

Dr. Nese referred to his own practice as a "mass production."

Dr. Nese countered Dr. Aronovitz's charges.

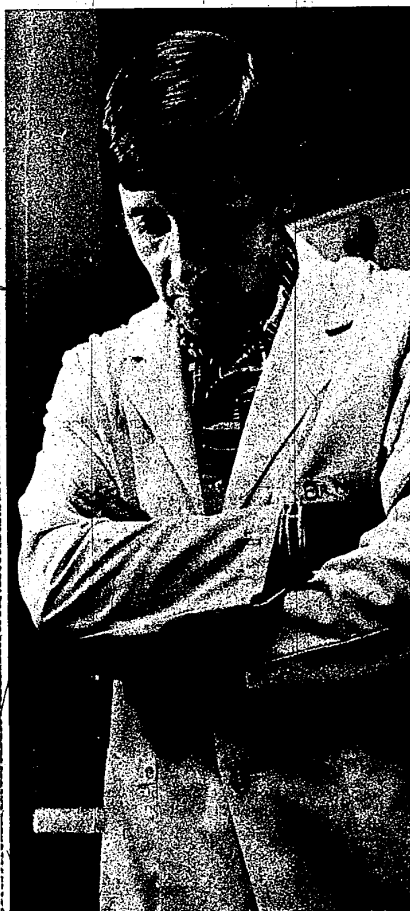
"There is no limitation to control diseased people," he said. "To me, obesity is a disease."

As to the charge that respectability for acupuncture might be sacrificed, Dr. Nese said:

"In China they use needles; so here I use staples—it's faster and they stay in there."

"The result is what matters."

"My plaque says 'acupuncturist.' I'm proud of it. It's not illegal and I'm helping people."



Dr. Turgut Nese practices specialized acupuncture designed, for controlling weight