

AcuBase (standard) CD-ROM

by Trigram Software

Cost £135 from Oxford Medical Supplies in the UK (Tel: 0800 975 80000)

Content: Database CD-ROM covering Traditional Chinese Acupuncture and herbs
This CD-ROM is essentially a large database of acupuncture point information, herbs, formulas (formulae) and a question and answer section, all based on the successful Claris Filemaker Pro database software. I was delighted to find that I could run the whole program (slowly!) from the CD by clicking 'acubase.exe' in file manager in windows 3.11. It will install into Win 3.1x, 95, or NT, taking up to 20 MB of hard disk space, and this will allow you to add, edit or delete "records" of information. After launch, the program quickly loads the main menu, which gives four choices: Acupoints, herbs, formulas, and exam questions.

'Acupoints' gives a list of acupuncture points, and when a point is selected, a text description of point location is shown with traditional function, indications and notes. This is not terribly new or exciting, and does not use graphics or multimedia features. There is no reference to traditional acupuncture concepts and the presentation appears as an acupuncture "cookbook" of points. Sadly the WHO nomenclature of acupuncture points is not followed.

The 'herb' section is also in list form with the option to select a particular herb for comprehensive information about its names, uses and cautions. Clicking over "photo" brings up a colour picture of the herb, which occludes most of the text. Under 'formulas', concoctions are suggested such as "Ginseng and Perilla leaf for treating a weak constitution with cold wind and internal damp retention".

The final sections ('exam questions') covers in question and answer format, a wide range of topics. The Californian origin of this software is shown by the first questions covering Californian Laws and Regulations governing TCM in that state. I was disappointed by the questions that covered re-sterilisation of needles, when disposable, single use needles are inexpensive and preferable. Many topics are covered, but it is necessary to use the 'find' option to track down particular items.

This software may appeal to Traditional Chinese practitioners who use acupuncture AND herbs, but as a resource for acupuncture only, AcuBase is disappointing, and a good text book is recommended instead. Although the software is easy and intuitive to use, the lack of multimedia features makes it somewhat dull.

Rating:

Presentation 8/10

Content (Traditional Chinese acupuncture) 8/10

Content (Medical acupuncture) 2/10

Ease of use 9/10

System requirements Mac (7.1 or better) or PC - windows 3.1x or higher - 486/33 or higher - 8 MB of RAM - 256 colour sVGA video card - CD-ROM drive X2 or faster - mouse or pointing device, 20 MB hard disk space.

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