

# Mums-to-be get acupuncture boost

**STAFF REPORTERS**

As International Day of the Midwife is celebrated on May 5, midwives at Hutt Hospital are leading the way in the use of acupuncture and acupressure for pregnancy and childbirth.

Acupuncturist Debra Betts has been a driving force behind educating midwives and parents-to-be on the benefits of acupuncture.

Betts has been developing and teaching acupuncture courses for midwives for more than 20 years.

The collaboration between Eastern and Western medicine became official at Hutt Hospital in June 2008, when it opened an outpatient clinic offering free pre and postnatal acupuncture.

The clinic was the first (and to date,

the only) clinic of its kind in New Zealand, and was the brainchild of Jo McMullan, the midwifery manager at the time.

Demand for the service has been high, and in the ten years it has been open the clinic has treated over 1000 women.

“The hospital provides the clinical space, and treatments are carried out by fourth year students from the New Zealand School of Acupuncture. Everyone involved benefits: students gain valuable clinical experience, pregnant women gain high-quality treatment at no cost, and the hospital is able to offer women acupuncture as an option for many pregnancy-related complaints,” Betts said.

In addition to acupuncture training

for midwives, Betts has also developed a range of resources about acupressure aimed at birth partners and support people.

These include a DVD and a free online booklet which has been translated in to eight languages.

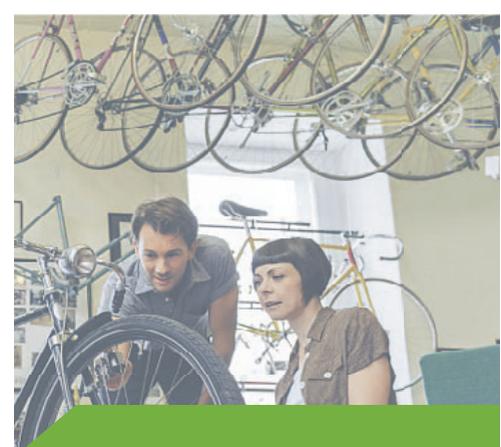
“Acupressure works by stimulating pressure points with the use of fingers, knuckles and elbows rather than needles. The beauty of it is that it’s non-invasive and can be done by anyone.”

Betts gets satisfaction from sharing her knowledge. She lectures internationally, and has written a book, *The Essential Guide to Acupuncture in Pregnancy and Childbirth*.

She is also a clinical supervisor at Hutt Hospital for the Zealand School of Acupuncture and Chinese Medicine.



Registered midwife Xiaoli Liu treats Lusi Heath.



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