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On average, one session lasts 30 minutes and costs up to \$60 each.

Aimin Acupuncture Weight Loss Centre, which has branches in Cuppage Road and Joo Chiat, says its customer base has jumped from more than 300 when it first opened in 2001 to close to 6,000 now.

The centre's Chinese physician and acupuncturist Dr Luo Hong says its customers include students as young as 10 years old and those in their 70s. They can lose an average of between 10 and 22 kg after completing 30 sessions.

However, she admits the degree of success depends on the individual's commitment to both the acupuncture and diet programme.

Chinese physician Esther Gow, from Gow TCM Healthcare in Jurong West, which also offers acupuncture slimming treatments, says it is too extreme to have people abstain entirely from carbohydrates as 'people need their energy'.

She advises her patients to cut back on their carbohydrates while she uses acupuncture to curb their appetite. She also prescribes Chinese herbs that help aid digestion as a complementary treatment.

One of her new clients, Ms Jovi Chen, says she 'feels full and doesn't eat so much' after acupuncture.

The 30-year-old medical research associate, who wants to lose 20kg from her current 86kg size, did not opt for the herb treatment.

She has since lost 1.5kg after two sessions but says: 'I don't know whether it is water weight I have lost or if I'm truly burning fat.'

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