

# Lasers help smokers to kick habit

A HOSPITAL is claiming a 52% success rate for the first NHS-funded laser treatment to help patients give up smoking.

Monklands Hospital in Lanarkshire, serving one of the country's heart disease and cancer black spots, tried the treatment first on members of its own staff.

Impressed by the success it and a local GP practice commissioned the practitioner, Glasgow complementary therapist Anne Penman, to carry out a trial on 60 patients. After six months, more than half were still off cigarettes.

The hospital trust said the result was 10 times more effective than conventional treatment like nicotine patches and hypnotherapy.

The £80 treatment uses a cold laser to apply pressure to certain acupuncture points.

Mrs Annie Westhorpe, from Coatbridge, smoked 30 cigarettes a day for 46 years before starting the treatment.

She said yesterday: "After having a heart attack, I knew I had to stop smoking and I tried nicotine patches. But they didn't do any good – I just ended up with a double dose.

"I haven't had a craving since the therapy. It's not a miracle cure, you have to be very committed and really want to stop. But the benefits to your health are worth the effort."