



Acupuncture for Aches and Pains

Posted by Nicholas DiNubile, M.D. on Mon, Mar 12, 2007, 3:51 pm PDT

In my last blog entry I talked about my own personal eye-opening experience with alternative medicine, specifically Eastern medicine that is practiced in mainland China.

In the past 20 years, since I was fortunate enough to be part of a sports medicine exchange program to China, we have seen alternative medicine go mainstream, especially in the U.S.A. I believe this is a good thing. Many patients who have not done well with traditional medical interventions have found some relief in the hands of alternative medicine practitioners.

Although "alternative medicine" encompasses a wide range of treatments and approaches, the one area that has made tremendous strides in not only becoming accepted, but also in showing scientific proof of its benefits, is acupuncture.

Acupuncture has been shown to be effective in managing a wide variety of musculoskeletal ailments (i.e. problems with muscles, bones and joints). Done properly, there can be terrific results with minimal, if any, risk.

Scientific research has shown acupuncture to be helpful in the following musculoskeletal conditions and ailments:

- Arthritis
- Back pain
- Neck pain
- Sciatica
- Carpal tunnel syndrome
- Tennis elbow
- Other "pinched nerves"
- Other "chronic pain" situations

A recent study published in the November 2006 issue of the medical journal Arthritis and Rheumatism also got my attention. It was a well-done study from Germany that looked at the role and effectiveness of acupuncture for individuals with chronic hip and knee pain related to arthritis.

A very large group of patients were treated with usual traditional medical care for their arthritis for three months. Following that time period, acupuncture was added as an additional therapeutic intervention for one portion of that patient group, while the others continued with medical care only (i.e. no acupuncture).

The results of the study revealed that those patients who had acupuncture added to their treatment regime had significant and persistent improvements in not only their arthritis symptoms, but also in their overall quality of life. They did much better than those patients receiving medical care only for the arthritis, without acupuncture.

There have been other interesting studies that are allowing us to begin to understand how acupuncture may actually work, and I think you'll see much more of this in the upcoming months and years. Our ability to understand acupuncture's effects was heightened by the invention of the functional MRI (also known as fMRI).

The fMRI is an MRI type machine that actually can show changes in physiology and biochemistry in certain body parts. For example, it can actually show predictable and reproducible changes in very specific areas of the brain when acupuncture needles are placed in appropriate sites around the body. This really opens the door to understanding the capabilities and effectiveness of this ancient healing art.

Have you had acupuncture? For what condition? Did it help? How did you find an appropriately trained and experienced acupuncturist in your area? One of the additional extremely important findings of the acupuncture study mentioned above, was that the most important factor in getting good results with patients were the qualification and clinical experience of the acupuncturist!

Finding the best acupuncturist can be tricky since this whole medical area is relatively new to the U.S.A., and since it has become more mainstream, many are jumping on the bandwagon by taking a course or two, and hanging up a shingle claiming that they are an expert. So it becomes very important to do a little research before getting needled and poked.

<http://health.yahoo.com/experts/sportsnick/8748/acupuncture-for-aches-and-pains: ylt=AqBUW3mB.KyzfxE4qiAfDC9asckF?print=1&cin=>

Comments

- 1 When my brother was looking for an acupuncturist, he just asked his physician if he knew of one in the area since he was going behind his neurologist's back to do this treatment. He gave him two recommendations to investigate and wished him luck. He gave it a few months to see some results and sure enough he did. He walks in with blind faith all of the time with traditional doctors hoping that they will do something. He has had years of nobody helping him with just drugs alone. Why shouldn't he try an alternative at some point? The western doctors afraid of a little competition?

Posted by ricecakecoaster on Wed, Mar 14, 2007, 8:00 am PDT

- 2 I tried acupuncture for a back problem once. It helped me to manage the pain. I didn't get any recommendations. Just looked for one blindly in the phone book like I do every doctor. Like a recommendation means anything anyway. Who's fooling who here? A recommendation from the cab driver is just as legitimate as one from another doctor. I didn't have anything to lose but some pain in my back. After a bunch of needles being poked in me, a half hour later of listening to some classical music, my pain was gone. Amazing.

Posted by unsatisfiedblackout on Thu, Mar 15, 2007, 4:00 pm PDT

- 3 I receive acupuncture treatment about once a month to help with anxiety. My acupuncturist tells me that in Eastern medicine anxiety is caused by the body's energy centers being out of alignment with one another. The treatment I receive is to "balance" these centers. I have noticed a significant

decrease in my anxiety levels. My friends and family members can tell you when it's time for another treatment. I am a believer!

Posted by jesbabe10 on Fri, Mar 23, 2007, 11:42 am PDT

- 4 Acupuncture has significantly helped my migraines. I went from having 10-15 a month to sometimes going 3 months or more without a single migraine. When I decided to try acupuncture, I think I just looked in the phonebook, but his ad listed the various organizations he was a part of, and I was able to check him out online. People have said to me "it just works because you WANT it to work" but that's not true. I was very skeptical going into it, but as any migraine sufferer knows, you'll try anything once (and usually twice). I didn't expect it to help. I just thought it would be fun to try. It ended up giving me my life back. I've also gotten acupuncture while suffering through a migraine and it works almost as well as my normal medication. I would definitely recommend acupuncture to anyone who gets migraines or has any type of pain that they are trying to deal with. I don't need to go as much anymore, which was the goal of my acupuncturist.

Posted by aefranko on Fri, Mar 23, 2007, 11:45 am PDT

- 5 my dad had it for back problems. he through his back so bad the doctors said either deal with the pain or have surgery. we hear to many stories of back surgeries gone bad. so he tried acupuncture. he did 3 sessions, after the first session, he said that was the first night he slept all night long without waking up from pain in about 2 years. when I get back problem or knee problems, I'm going to an acupuncturist.

Posted by jbsoccer4 on Fri, Mar 23, 2007, 12:15 pm PDT

- 6 I current started seeing an acupuncturist in my doctors office for anxiety, pms issues. I have gone 3 times and he is great. I feel so much better the anxiety I feel now is controllable and not overwhelming. Its amazing how relaxed even after the first treatment I felt. It has been a very positive thing in my life.

Posted by daizygirl1827 on Fri, Mar 23, 2007, 12:22 pm PDT

- 7 For almost 5 years, I've suffered from severe migraine headaches... having, on average, 2 a month. About a year and a half ago my grandmother told me that I should try acupuncture. My migraines has since reduced to only having approx. 1 every 7-8 months. THANK YOU ACUPUNCTURE!

Posted by mattson22 on Fri, Mar 23, 2007, 12:35 pm PDT

- 8 I have had hip dysplasia for 6 years and have been in constant pain and have walked with a limp. I went to an accupuncturist for back spasms from slipping on ice, and that was cured the first visit, and by the end of the second visit I had the first pain free day in years. A week later the pain returned, but only 50%, and so I will be going back every week until it is completely relieved. I am a born skeptic, and I hate traditional medicine, but I will give this woman as much money as she wants, and go as often as I have to, to feel the way I used to feel... and she has also controlled my appetite and helped my sleep. I now recommend it to everyone !

Posted by ljohland on Fri, Mar 23, 2007, 4:00 pm PDT

- 9 FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO ASKED, YES, ACUPUNCTURE CAN HELP WITH PSORIASIS..... ACUPUNCTURE CAN HELP WITH SLEEP DISORDERS, STOP SMOKING, HELPS ALCOHOLICS AND DRUG ADDICTS TOO. NOT JUST FOR YOUR BONES OR HEADACHES!!!! YOU MAY ALSO WANT TO TRY ACUPUNCTURE WHEN YOU'RE not SICK. MAKES YOU FEEL REJUVENATED, MORE ALERT, AND YOU'LL SLEEP MORE SOUNDLY AT NIGHT.

Posted by arose4nanna on Fri, Mar 23, 2007, 4:37 pm PDT

- 10 I AM CURRENTLY STUDYING EASTERN MEDICINE AND CAN TELL YOU THAT WE ARE VERY FAR BEHIND IN THE MEDICINE WORLD. MOST CULTURES HAVE BEEN PRACTICING THE SAME MEDICINE, SUCH AS ACUPUNCTURE FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS, AND ARE MUCH MORE HEALTHY THAN WE ARE.... THEY'VE LEARNED THAT YOU DONT NEED TO TAKE A PILL FOR EVERYTHING THAT AILS YOU. THERE ARE EXTREME SIDE EFFECTS TO MOST DRUGS ON THE MARKET HERE IN THE U.S. IN OTHER CULTURES, THEY GO TO THE DR TO STAY WELL, HERE WE GO TO THE DOCTOR ONLY WHEN WE ARE SICK. AS PEOPLE LEARN OF

OTHER OPTIONS FOR HEALTHCARE SUCH AS HERBAL TREATMENTS, NATURAL REMEDIES AND ACUPUNCTURE THE FDA AND OTHER GOVERNMENT AGENCIES WILL HAVE TO FIND NEW JOBS. THEY WONT BE ABLE TO TAKE OUR MONEY ARE READILY AS THEY DO NOW !!!!

Posted by arose4nanna on Fri, Mar 23, 2007, 4:42 pm PDT

- 11 I found out about acupuncture a few years ago after I had other repeated therapies for my 2 herniated discs in my lower back, as prescribed by worker's comp. I had no relief from the radicular pain that I experienced in my legs and the constant stabbing pain in my back. I had to walk with a cane because I was so unsure if I would be able to take another step. From pills to steroidal injections to constantly wearing a pain patch, nothing helped. I went to see a local acupuncturist and within three visits, I was walking without help, and by my 6th visit, the pain had almost completely disappeared. Now 2.5 years later, I have a job that requires a lot of walking and driving, I can carry my 3 year old daughter anywhere she wants to go, and I can bowl, shoot hoops or play catch with my girls. I can still feel an ache now and then, but nothing compared to what I have endured. A hot shower and some rest and I am usually back to normal. I feel like a 20 year old again even though I am 42. I swear by acupuncture and am glad it gave me my life back.

Posted by sgsthirteen on Fri, Mar 23, 2007, 7:34 pm PDT

- 12 I have experienced miagaine headaches since I was 8. When I was in my 20's I had the worst miagaine ever. I tried many different Western medicine treatments then I had acupuncture for the pain. Within a short time my headache was gone. I have tried acupuncture many times since then and love it. I wish it was mainstream enough to be covered by insurance. I can't afford it now and really really could use it when I get a headache, backache etc.

Posted by Imontoya-tucker@sbcglobal.net on Fri, Mar 23, 2007, 8:00 pm PDT

- 13 I have had chronic back pain and could not find a solution until I added acupuncture to my treatment regime. I swear by it! If I stop the treatment, and I have tried that, I become incapacitated. When I resume treatment, I slowly gain my life back...will not stop and would recommend acupuncture to anyone who is not achieving relief through traditional medicine...yoga helps as well...after every acupuncture appt. I'm told to "relax" and yoga does that.

Posted by thebu6 on Fri, Mar 23, 2007, 8:22 pm PDT

- 14 I love acupuncture. I have had several treatments in the past, due to all my athletic sports. My sprained ankles and tennis elbow, and constant headaches were treated by acupuncture in less than one week, if not one day. There is fast relief, and the herbal supplements are very natural and safe. I hope that more people get to know more of the benefits of acupuncture, because so many people seem to be unaware of all the treatments it is capable of. If you account it in financial terms, acupuncture is not a treatment, where you have to spend thousands of dollars on, like medical clinics, but it is actually quite cheap, if you consider your long-term cures. It is definitely a wonder, like "Jesus hands."

Posted by soyoungpk14 on Fri, Mar 23, 2007, 8:34 pm PDT

- 15 I used to have a great pain in my stomach and after 3 treatments of acupuncture I felt much better than a month of pill taken prescribe by my doctor

Posted by gabijeng on Fri, Mar 23, 2007, 11:46 pm PDT

- 16 i have a back injury due to golf, and i did try acupuncture. i go usually twice a week and it really works! the acupuncturist felt my pulse and actually told me that my blood was thick from too much meat and nuts. it's really good, not only for my injury, but for my overall health.

Posted by resha_symphonia on Fri, Mar 23, 2007, 11:59 pm PDT

- 17 I fell and dislocated my elbow this February. I went for acupuncture twice to help in the healing and it worked wonderfully. I went to the doctor yesterday and he was amazed at how good I was doing. I will go back if necessary.

Posted by jffromashaway on Sat, Mar 24, 2007, 9:59 am PDT

- 18 I am a walking testimonial for acupuncture being real. I tried everything to help my back...physical therapy, chiropractors, epidural and cortizone shots, etc. The only thing that made a noticeable difference and made me feel normal again was acupuncture. HUGE supporter!

Posted by katiemiles83 on Sat, Mar 24, 2007, 2:07 pm PDT
- 19 I have tried acupuncture before with good results. I believe it should be tried instead of just popping pills that just cause yet another health problem. I wish insurance companies would have more acceptance for it. Instead, you are left having to pay for it yourself. The needles do not hurt! Be more concerned about whether they are clean and you are in hands of someone licensed~

Posted by princess9966 on Sat, Mar 24, 2007, 2:15 pm PDT
- 20 I went through MRI and C-SCAN but doctors couldn't find any problem as I had severe pain in my leg. After taking pain drugs for so many months my wife took me to acupuncture. I felt immediate relief and comfort. I tried it many times and went to the acupuncture as needed. I was feeling very good and there was almost no pain after 3 months. I even went to Shanghai, China and got the acupuncture treatment. It helped me. It's much better than trying out drugs and pain killers.

Posted by vinayjoneja100 on Sat, Mar 24, 2007, 2:16 pm PDT
- 21 I've used an accupuncturist to help, successfully, with my allergies and sinus problems

Posted by cmichmax on Sat, Mar 24, 2007, 2:17 pm PDT
- 22 I have had acupuncture for my plantar fascia and it worked circles around physical therapy treatments. I feel better overall. I highly recommend this treatment to anyone before taking medications.

Posted by rosehut26 on Sat, Mar 24, 2007, 2:20 pm PDT
- 23 I FIRST FOUND ACUPUNCTURE FOR SEVERE SINUS, I HAD BEEN ON A TON OF ANTIBIOTICS WITH NO RELIEF AND GETTING MORE ILL, A FRIEND RECOMMENDED I GO TRY ACUPUNCTURE AND IN THREE SESSIONS MY NOSE LET LOOSE OF ALL THE NASTY STUFF AND I GOT BETTER, NOW WHEN I FEEL IT COMING ON, I DON'T CALL THE DOCTOR I GO TO MY ACUPUNTURIST. I ALSO HAVE HAD GREAT RELIEF FROM ACHING JOINTS AND BACK PAIN. THE TREATMENT IS GREAT AND VERY RELAXING.

Posted by crskitchenlynn on Sat, Mar 24, 2007, 2:20 pm PDT
- 24 I began taking acupuncture almost four months ago for chronic neck pain & migraines. It has worked so well for me, my use of o.t.c. pain meds. has been greatly reduced & I feel significantly improved in my range of movement & ability to recover more quickly if the pain does reoccur. I will be a big booster of this form of treatment for whomever needs an opinion on whether to try it or not.

Posted by suchapinch4 on Sat, Mar 24, 2007, 2:21 pm PDT
- 25 This treatment has helped me with post traumatic stress after Katrina and am still going today to help with knee pain, back pain, arthritis and to help curb my appetite. This is the most helpful treatment I have ever received. Rather than talking about problems, I am actually in an environment that is soothing the mind with the music and the body with the pressure points. Very recommended for everyone that wants to relieve that extra stress we all don't need. After my car accident I messed up my knee and back and this has helped a lot.

Posted by shaggyh2o on Sat, Mar 24, 2007, 2:23 pm PDT
- 26 Love it. My first 'miracle' with acupuncture was when I was 13. Everytime I walked for two or more hours (shopping or other activities), my calf (can't remember right or left) gave me this squeezing pain that I had to sit down to rest. Only took 1 needle and 1 treatment, I'm free from that pain until today. I also go see my acupuncturist whenever I get flu. Prescription or OTC drugs gave me lousy feeling that prevent me to go to work. With acupuncture, I only need to rest longer at night and go back to work the next day and still feel better each recovering day! Of course there are other things can't be treated with acupuncture (surgery may be?), but good thing acupuncture is there as an option for other things.

Posted by Si_Jangkung on Sat, Mar 24, 2007, 2:23 pm PDT

- 27 I had herniated discs in my c-4 c-4 and radiculopathy down my right arm and spasms in my upper back. NOTHING helped I literally had tried everything until a few friends recommended acupuncture. I called a couple until I found one that accepted my insurance. After about 6 sessions I literally felt cured. I could move my neck no problem and my upper back was practically gone. I still try to go at least once or twice a month to maintain it. Honestly, acupuncture saved my life. Western medicine tried and failed.

Posted by marnijoyweisberg on Sat, Mar 24, 2007, 2:24 pm PDT

- 28 I have indeed had acupuncture. I had a headache every single day and was taking up to 12 Darvocet daily (I have a high resistance to any drug, need a lot!) but I thought this was excessive. I went to an acupuncturist and now I have no more daily headaches. Some of the acupuncture points hurt - particularly the ones that go in the ear!! but it was worth it. I am now suffering (badly) from arthritis, lower back pain and tennis elbow (altho' I do not play tennis! I am on the computer a lot - repetitive movement), so have an appt. next week to begin treatment. I know it will help me a lot.

Posted by pfquest12000 on Sat, Mar 24, 2007, 2:26 pm PDT

- 29 I have fibromyalgia and acupuncture is the only pain intervention that I have found that worked for me. Prescription pain meds work for awhile, but then lose their effectiveness, not to mention uncomfortable side effects. Acupuncture never lost its effectiveness and the only "side effect" was sustained pain management. In fact, it worked so well that I got where I could go for longer periods of time between sessions. However, my insurance and most insurances do not cover it. And it is a costly treatment. Worth it, but too expensive on a limited income. Hopefully, some day, I will be able to get insurance again...and maybe also then the insurance companies will be paying for acupuncture. It was extremely beneficial to me and I would have acupuncture again if I could either afford it or insurance companies started paying for it like they do pain medications, i.e. narcotics.

Posted by bonniecatherinewest on Sat, Mar 24, 2007, 2:26 pm PDT

- 30 I had acupuncture treatments for the first time last year. After being told by the head of Orthopedic Surgery at Alvarado Hospital near San Diego that I had to have emergency surgery to remove two ruptured discs, I sought a second opinion and in addition had acupuncture treatment and physical therapy. It's been over a year now and I am pain free. I am a firm believer in the ability to heal our body with this treatment.

Posted by scarletjuliet on Sat, Mar 24, 2007, 2:27 pm PDT

- 31 My carpal tunnel was so bad that I woke up in tears, shooting pains, numb fingers and nearly bleeding to death from anti-inflammatories. They saved me but I had to find another way to deal with it. Living in San Francisco made it easy, my Chinese friends weren't helpful but The American College of Traditional Chinese Medicine cured me. A cure was NECESSARY as I am a food professional who does a lot of public food demos and TV, Trade shows and cooking classes. Holding knives, lifting pots and other hand needs made it imperative to get better. I walked in unable to hold a pen to fill out the forms - it looked like a hundred year old's writing, wispy, faint and fragile plus illegible. They had to fill out most of it for me. I became their Poster Child and was relieved of all symptoms. This is 5 years later and I sometimes wear a brace to protect my hand. There are no issues and I am thrilled! Now, I must go back for my left hand. Dummy me, thought I'd get surgery if it became really bad! Hah, no, more acupuncture - NO DRUGS. Chinese herbs are different, but WTF, they work! 5 STARS to American College of Traditional Chinese Medicine!

Posted by lareginae on Sat, Mar 24, 2007, 2:28 pm PDT

More comments.....