

HEALTH REPORT

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MAYO CLINIC: “ACUPUNCTURE RELIEVES FIBROMYALGIA!”

A significant study conducted under the watchful eye of Mayo Clinic researchers has clearly demonstrated that Acupuncture brings relief to fibromyalgia sufferers. These are very positive findings for individuals who wish to avoid a reliance on drugs to treat the pain caused by this condition.

“This study shows there is something real about Acupuncture and its effects on fibromyalgia,” said Dr. David Martin, the Mayo Clinic anesthesiologist who was the study’s lead investigator. “Our study was performed on patients with moderate to severe fibromyalgia. It’s my speculation that if Acupuncture works for these patients with recalcitrant (hard to treat) fibromyalgia – where previous treatments had not provided satisfactory relief – it would likely work for many of the millions of fibromyalgia patients.”

Fibromyalgia is a chronic disorder with symptoms that include widespread pain, tenderness and stiffness in the muscles. It is generally accompanied by fatigue, headache and sleep disturbances.

Fifty patients for whom symptom-relief treatments had failed were selected for the study. Mayo Clinic physicians who specialize in pain management randomly assigned subjects to a group that would receive Acupuncture or a group that would receive simulated Acupuncture (treatment to a sham Acupuncture point). Subjects were not informed which group they were in.

Each person filled out a symptom-assessment questionnaire prior to the first treatment and then received six treatments over a period of two to three weeks. Follow-up data was collected from all patients immediately after treatment. Then, one month after care ended and then again seven months after treatment, they were re-interviewed to find out about their current levels of pain and other symptoms.

Following the initial treatments, symptoms of pain, fatigue and anxiety were most significantly improved in the patients given true Acupuncture. These patients experienced the largest improvements one month after their care ended. At the seventh-month follow-up interview, some patients reported that their discomfort had returned if no additional Acupuncture care had been administered.

Dr. Martin believed the study patients would have seen sustained improvement with ongoing Acupuncture. “It’s a reasonable expectation that if they received more Acupuncture after two to three months, they would have maintained their improvement,” he said. “Acupuncture usually works for about three months, and then patients need a less-intensive treatment session. These patients would need more acupuncture periodically for as long as they experience fibromyalgia symptoms.”