

HEALTH REPORT

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GERMAN MIGRAINE SUFFERERS REFUSE DRUGS, ASK FOR ACUPUNCTURE INSTEAD

The authors of a large German research study comparing the effectiveness of Acupuncture to the drug metoprolol in treating migraine headaches found that German patients suffering from the dreadful pain and misery of migraine “expressed a strong preference for treatment with Acupuncture” rather than risk the potentially life-threatening side-effects of the drug.

The researchers were forced to reduce the number of participants to 114 from the planned 480. “Also, patients receiving metoprolol rather than Acupuncture were considerably more likely to discontinue treatment,” the authors stated. “Thus the recruitment phase of the study was ended prematurely after 114 patients had been randomized.”

The headache study was part of a larger nationwide research project to study the effectiveness of Acupuncture for headaches, chronic low back pain, and pain from osteoarthritis. The methodology called for real Acupuncture treatments, “sham” or minimal Acupuncture, and no treatments, as well as drug treatment in the case of the headache trials.

The results showed that, for all three conditions, Acupuncture produced a clear benefit that lasted for at least several months, and whose benefit was greatest in the osteoarthritis groups. In all three categories, Acupuncture proved extremely effective at reducing pain and inflammation compared to either traditional drug or other treatments, or no treatment at all.

The study was aimed at providing more information for the government to ascertain whether Acupuncture for these conditions should be covered by medical insurance. As a result, insurance in Germany has been extended to include osteoarthritis of the knees. Further research is planned in the other areas surveyed.

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FROM RELIEVING MIGRAINES TO IMPROVING STROKE SYMPTOMS, PATIENTS SAY ACUPUNCTURE WORKS

In Reading, Berkshire, England, Louise Shelver has suffered from debilitating migraines and pre-menstrual tension for years. Her doctor offered her birth-control pills or antidepressants but she decided to find another alternative: Acupuncture. She began to receive treatments once every two weeks.

She reports, “I feel like a different person. The migraines come maybe every three months now but they are not so bad. My husband has noticed a huge change because I don’t get so low.”

At the same, a retired firefighter is also finding relief from the symptoms of stroke. John Thurston, 79, suffered from a stroke last year and was left with numbness in one hand, an inability to lift one of his arms and difficulty walking. He started being treated once every two weeks at the College of Integrated Chinese Medicine in Berkshire, England, several months ago.

“When the doctors signed me off at the hospital, they said cheerio and that was it. I did a bit of physiotherapy but it’s coming here that has really helped. I can dress myself now whereas after the stroke, I couldn’t do a button up. I used to find it hard to lift my left leg up and now I’m walking more or less straight. I have got a lot more movement back.

“I wish everyone could have it. It’s done me a world of good.”

SOURCE: <http://education.guardian.co.uk/higher/sciences/story/0,12243,1474375,00.html>