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NEW STUDY RECOGNIZES ACUPUNCTURE AS EFFECTIVE TREATMENT FOR PAIN OF OSTEOARTHRITIS

A landmark study published in *The Annals of Internal Medicine* and funded by the National Institutes of Health has finally provided objective proof that Acupuncture provides real hope and help for those suffering from osteoarthritis.

The study team enrolled 570 patients aged 50 or older with osteoarthritis of the knee. Participants were randomly assigned to receive one of three treatments: Acupuncture, sham acupuncture, or participation in a control group that followed the Arthritis Foundation's self-help course for managing their condition.

On joining the study, patients' pain and knee function were assessed using standard arthritis research survey instruments and standard measurement tools. Patients' progress was assessed at 4, 8, 14, and 26 weeks. By week 8, participants receiving Acupuncture were showing a significant increase in function and by week 14 a significant decrease in pain, compared with the sham and control groups. These results held through week 26. Overall, those who received Acupuncture had a 40% decrease in pain and a nearly 40% improvement in function compared to baseline assessments.

"For the first time, a clinical trial with sufficient rigor, size, and duration has shown that Acupuncture reduces the pain and functional impairment of osteoarthritis of the knee," said National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine Director Stephen E. Straus, D.C. "These results also indicate that Acupuncture can serve as an effective addition to a standard regimen of care and improve quality of life for knee osteoarthritis sufferers.

"More than 20 million Americans have osteoarthritis. This disease is one of the most frequent causes of physical disability among adults," said Stephen I. Katz, M.D., Ph.D., National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases Director. "Thus, seeking an effective means of decreasing osteoarthritis pain and increasing function is of critical importance."

SOURCE:<http://nccam.nih.gov/news/2004/acu-osteo/pressrelease.htm>