

# HEALTH REPORT

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## ACUPUNCTURE REDUCES PAIN, SAVES DRUG \$\$

Acupuncture could become the means to reduce a person's reliance on pain medication and on anti-inflammatory drugs. According to the findings of a recently published study, an individual who receives Acupuncture treatment can reduce their intake of drugs and enjoy noticeable savings on drug purchases.

Researchers in Spain under the direction of Dr. Jorge Vas, M.D., surveyed 5,981 patients who received Acupuncture treatment over a 9-year period. Their aim was to determine the effectiveness of treatment programs in helping patients deal with pain. A telephone survey was conducted to interview each of the patients. Persons with cancer-related pain were not included in the study.

In undertaking this task, researchers recorded the type of pain medications taken by each patient prior to beginning their Acupuncture regimen and at the end of their treatment plan. They also recorded information about the retail cost of those drugs. A 5-point scale was then used to assess consumption of the pain-reducing drugs, as follows:

- 0: No painkillers were required.
- 1: Occasional painkiller use, but below the recommended amount.
- 2: Using the recommended dosages in accordance with clinical guidelines.
- 3: Taking an increased dosage from the recommended amount.
- 4: The continued increase of painkiller types and amounts.

First off, it was interesting to note from the study's findings that of the 5,670 patients who completed the survey, there were no adverse reactions recorded from Acupuncture treatment. Next, headache sufferers enjoyed the greatest relief from their pain. In addition, headache sufferers had the greatest dollar savings on drugs. Finally, persons with sub-acute (less than severely sharp) pain experienced a greater degree of relief than those with continuing or chronic painful symptoms.

Upon further assessing the information collected, here is what the researchers discovered about Acupuncture and drug cost savings:

1. The average savings in drug costs was \$9.70 per week per patient.
2. The greatest savings was for patients with headaches at \$35.70 per week.
3. The smallest savings was for patients with neck pain at \$9.02 per week.

"The favorable response rate obtained for most of the patients, the absence of severe adverse events and the reduction in the consumption of analgesic (pain reducing) and anti-inflammatory drugs all suggest that our experience could profitably be extended to other primary healthcare clinics for the treatment of nonmalignant pain," said the researchers.

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## ACUPUNCTURE'S PAIN RELIEF EQUAL TO PAINKILLING DRUGS

A team of scientists from two British universities carried out brain scans on patients while they underwent Acupuncture treatment. The scans showed differences in the brain's response to acupuncture needles compared with tests using dummy needles that did not puncture the skin.

Doctors found that the part of the brain that manages pain and the nervous system showed pain relief levels of as much as 15 per cent.

Dr. George Lewith, from the University of Southampton's Complementary Medicine Research Unit, said the improvement is "exactly the same size of effect you would get from...real painkillers for chronic pain. The evidence we now have is that acupuncture works very well on pain."

The 14 patients in the study were put through three tests in random order, while 'brain maps' were created using sophisticated scans at University College London. In one test, researchers used blunt needles that pricked the skin, but which the brain registered as the sensation of touch. Dummy needles, where the tip was pushed back once it touched the skin, were then used, and in the third test the patients underwent acupuncture treatment with real needles.

The acupuncture needles had two measurable effects on the patients' brains: as with the dummy needles, the brain released natural opiates in response to the expected effect of the needles.

But the scans showed that the real needles had an extra effect and stimulated another part of the brain called the ipsilateral insular. This improved pain relief of 10-15% was similar to the effect of taking conventional analgesic drugs.

*SOURCE: [http://www.nzherald.co.nz/index.cfm?c\\_id=5&ObjectID=10123440](http://www.nzherald.co.nz/index.cfm?c_id=5&ObjectID=10123440)*

# HEALTH REPORT

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## ACUPUNCTURE PROVIDES WELCOME RELIEF TO NERVE PAIN

After twenty years of suffering from trigeminal neuralgia, a neurological disease that inflames a central nerve in her face so that it feels like “a vise grip in your face that keeps turning and won’t let go,” Daryl Files found a simple, drugless solution: Acupuncture.

“I’ve been to neurologists and pain management people,” Files said. “I’ve had nerve blocks. I’ve been on every medication combination (doctors) could think of.”

Then, on the advice of one of her daughters, she visited Jian Shu, an acupuncturist who was trained in traditional Chinese medicine in Beijing. Finally, said Files, after a few months of having slender needles only as wide as a whisker inserted in her face, her hands and along her back, she found relief.

Many people make their first visit to an acupuncturist for the same reasons Files did: they’ve received treatment for their ailments from Western doctors to no avail. Shu agrees; many of her patients come to her, frustrated, as a “last resort.” By that time, their pain may be years old and may need several visits to remedy.

“Traditional (Western) doctors use a Band-Aid effect,” Files said. “They treat the pain, they don’t get to the root of it. When I went to Dr. Shu, I told her what I had, she researched it and started doing different treatments related to the different nerve paths.”

Shu said inserting the needles is only one step of the treatment. Once they’re in deep enough to connect with the body’s energy pathway, they are stimulated by manual twisting, or application of electric currents or infrared heat. “This stimulates the emotions in the body, which stimulates the brain and that stimulates a hormone called endorphins,” she said, which help the body rebalance itself.

Evidence shows that the rebalancing effect was just what Daryl Files needed to overcome her constant pain.

SOURCE: <http://www.syracuse.com/entertainment/poststandard/index.ssf?/base/entertainment-0/112478614896600.xml&%3bcoll=1>

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