

HEALTH REPORT

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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>

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DRIVE DOWN BLOOD PRESSURE RECOVER FROM STROKE WITH ACUPUNCTURE

The calming and regenerative effects of Acupuncture have long been known. Now, Acupuncture is becoming more widely recognized as an alternative therapy for curbing high blood pressure as well as aiding those recovering from a stroke.

Hypertension, elevated levels of blood pressure, is sometimes referred to as a “Silent Killer.” Of the 50 million Americans who suffer from some form of it, estimates show that 35% of them may not even be aware of its presence in their life.

With hypertension the body, and especially the heart, must work with extra force to perform daily functions. This often occurs without visible symptoms. It is important that those potentially affected see a doctor or a Traditional Chinese Medicine physician to be checked for these subtle symptoms.

An Acupuncture study offering hope and positive results for hypertension sufferers has recently been conducted at the University of California Irvine by Dr. John C. Longhurst. While in this case the test subjects were hypertensive rats, the results support the link between endorphin release and decreased heart activity. In addition to traditional Acupuncture methods, needles charged with a low frequency electrical stimulation were also proven to be effective in this study.

With these positive findings, the reduction of hypertension in patients could reduce the need for drugs to control the condition, as well as eliminate the onset of strokes.

Should a stroke occur, however, Acupuncture is known to be greatly effective in the improvement of motor and cognitive skills. Scalp Acupuncture, in particular, is the favored application using methods developed and popularized by Professor Ming Quing Zhu, a 1964 graduate of the Shanghai University of Traditional Chinese Medicine.

In this treatment, needles are inserted directly into the scalp according to a map of brain functions. The needles alter blood and hormone levels that affect both brain activity and the flow of blood to portions of the brain related to other body parts damaged from the stroke. Needles can actually remain in place from two to seventy-two hours. In addition, manual movements of the affected area of the body or visualization accompanied by specialized breathing exercises to increase Qi (energy or life force) are prescribed while the needles are in place under the skin.

As in treating hypertension, it is the release of endorphins through Acupuncture that can help to relax the muscles and tissues of the face and the rest of the body. Tension in the muscles and tissues hinders the free flow of moisture, blood, and other bodily fluids. It is especially important in cases of stroke that Qi flow be restored as everything follows in its path. Acupuncture along with conscious participation of the patient can help expedite this process.

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STUDIES SHOW THAT STROKE SUFFERERS WOULD BE WISE TO INCLUDE ACUPUNCTURE FOR THEIR RECOVERY

Internationally, many studies have been done on the benefits of Acupuncture for stroke victims. In a Swedish study, stroke patients receiving Acupuncture recovered faster and more fully than a group of stroke sufferers who had not received any Acupuncture.

A number of Chinese studies resulted in the same findings. In one Chinese study it was found that post-stroke aphasia (loss of ability to use or comprehend language) showed greater improvement in the Acupuncture-treated group.

Research suggests that Acupuncture treatment improves blood circulation to the brain which may help reduce swelling or help heal tissue that was damaged but not destroyed.

Chinese researchers were able to document objective improvements after Acupuncture treatment, including positive changes in EEG (electroencephalogram) and in the composition of the blood.

SOURCE: *Scandinavian Journal of Rehabilitation*, 1993, *Neurol Res Bol.* v23, p. 47-50 2001; *Tidsskr Nor Laegeforen* 1998 Mar 30; 118 (9): 1362-6 ; *Clin Rehabili* 1997 Aug; 11(3): 192-200; *Am J Phys Med Rehabil* 1999 Mar-Apr; 78 (2): 117-22; *J Tradit Chin Med* 1997 Sept; 17(3) 194-7; *Zhong Xi Yi Jie He Za Zhi* 1990 Sep; 10(9): 526-8, 515; *J Tradit Chin Med* 2001 Dec; 21(4): 270-2; *Zhong Xi Yi Jie He Za Zhi* 1989 Nov; 9(11): 653-5, 643-4; *Zhen Ci Yan Jiu* 1993; 18(3):209-12; *Zhonghua Yi Xue Za Zhi* 1995 Oct; 56(4): 258-63; *J Tradit Chin Med* 1998 Jun; 18(2): 102-5; *Neuroradiology* 2003 Au 27; *Am J Chin Med* 2003;31(3): 467-74

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ACUPUNCTURE ENABLES STROKE VICTIM TO RECOVER BALANCE, VISION, MOBILITY AND OTHER FACULTIES

Ruth Lycke lives in America's heartland, Marshalltown, Iowa. In 2001, she suffered a stroke that left her 100% disabled. While she was told that whatever recovery she made in the first 12 months was all she would *ever* make, she refused to believe it.

Instead, in 2004, she traveled to China to undergo a course of acupuncture treatment. Now, a year later, she has regained her balance, vision, mobility, cognitive brain functions and increased her fine motor skills and her energy level. She has regained a normal lifestyle. "You don't know how good it feels to get things back after years. I'm glad I was not content."

With the help of foreign exchange students from China, she found her way to Tianjin, China, where she was the first American patient ever treated. Each day, she received two acupuncture treatments lasting 20 to 30 minutes each.

"After only 8 weeks of Traditional Chinese Medicine, including acupuncture, they completely restored the feeling on my right side and made tremendous progress on restoring the fine motor movement and balance. I extended my stay for five months allowing me to maximize the affect that the acupuncture had on restoring my vision.

"A year ago, I was convinced I had little to offer and was considered 100 percent disabled. Now I can bring hope to hundreds if not thousands of stroke survivors who are simply existing and not truly living."

She now sets up trips to China for other stroke survivors.

SOURCE: http://www.timesrepublican.com/news/story/0622202005_new_news.asp;
<http://www.strokesurvivors.net/>

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ELECTRO-ACUPUNCTURE HELPS STROKE VICTIMS TO ENJOY RESTORED MOVEMENT

A person who has suffered any type of a stroke and survived certainly faces a long road to recovery. A recent study shows that Acupuncture can play an important role in helping such a patient along the road to physical repair, rehabilitation and a useful life.

The study involving 23 patients was recently conducted to determine if electro-acupuncture could be of benefit to first-time ischemic stroke victims. (Ischemic stroke means that a local area was cut off from the normal flow of blood causing the regular flow of necessary oxygen to the area to be interrupted.)

Electro-acupuncture involves the use of 2 needles attached to a device that produces a regular and continuous electric impulse. The needles are inserted at known Acupuncture points. The impulse travels through one of the needles, on throughout the body and exits via the second needle.

Following their stroke, each victim was given a course of conventional rehabilitation. A study group and a control group was then determined with members of the study provided with 8 courses of electro-acupuncture treatments.

Acupuncture was delivered over a period of one month's time. After 2 weeks, the motor performance of both groups was tested using two recognized scientific measuring standards. This was done again following 4 weeks of treatment and repeated at 3 months and 6 months later.

The group that received electro-acupuncture showed more significant improvement results following 2 weeks, 4 weeks and 3 months after the treatment according to one of the measurement tools. The second measurement standard used showed that while there was no significant difference between each group in overall performance, there was significant improvement in upper limb function for the study group.

From these results, victims of such a stroke would certainly be advised to include a course of Acupuncture into their recovery program. Acupuncture is known to restore energy flows to blocked areas of the body. Energy flow restriction caused by a stroke could likely show improvement as in the case of this study.

Researchers concluded that electro-acupuncture can be valuable in improving the movement and motor function of the body, especially in the upper limb area, for individuals who have experienced a stroke.

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EARLY DELIVERY OF ACUPUNCTURE HELPS CHINESE STROKE VICTIMS RECOVER

Should the unthinkable happen – a person has a stroke – it may be far better to have the incident occur in China than in the United States.

Why? Because in China, Acupuncture is a key ingredient in the immediate emergency handling of the patient, and the timing of when the procedure is delivered to the victim can make all the difference in successful recovery.

Approximately 80 percent of all stroke sufferers worldwide have an “ischemic” stroke. This occurs when a blood clot, called a thrombosis, develops somewhere in the body and then travels to the brain.

Typically, the stroke patient in China would first receive anti-platelets and/or anti-coagulants from doctors trained in Western medicine. In addition to these Western remedies, Acupuncturists are called upon to immediately perform head Acupuncture and possibly to treat the entire affected side of the body as well.

Studies in China have shown that Acupuncture, coupled with physical therapy and herbal treatments, greatly enhances the effectiveness of stroke recovery rates over physical therapy alone. Acupuncture works to enhance Qi (energy flow) and blood circulation in the brain and on the affected side of the body. It helps to rebuild the brain’s ability to communicate with the body.

Some American stroke patients are now receiving Acupuncture treatment and seeing improvements in their mobility. However, most stroke patients don’t get Acupuncture soon enough after the incident.

Depending on age and the extent of the stroke damage, it may take many sessions of Acupuncture treatments in combination with physical therapy to see noticeable results. Thus, time is of the essence, especially for senior citizens, in receiving treatments early.