

# HEALTH REPORT

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## ADD ACUPUNCTURE FOR GREATER WEIGHT LOSS

Obesity in America has reached what might be considered epidemic proportions. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the percentage of people who meet the definition of obesity has more than doubled over the past two decades. Approximately 65 million American adults could be considered to be clinically obese.

Acupuncture is being researched for its benefits in aiding weight loss. Previous studies have shown mixed results. A 2003 study found Acupuncture to be effective in weight loss treatment. In that sample, weekly ear acupuncture helped women lose weight more effectively.

An Australian trial has added credibility to the idea that Acupuncture can help in the fight against obesity. The results of the trial, published in a recent issue of *Medical Acupuncture*, suggest that Acupuncture can be effective when used in conjunction with a diet and exercise program in helping obese people lose weight. It produces benefits beyond those experienced by diet and exercise alone.

The study involved 30 adult patients who were recruited from a general practice clinic in Australia. All of the patients were considered to be clinically obese, were not suffering from any type of debilitating diseases, and weighed between 172 and 265 pounds at the start of the trial.

In the control group, patients were instructed to follow a restricted diet that required them to consume two-thirds of their usual dietary intake and to limit fat intake for five weeks. They were also asked to follow an aerobic exercise program that required between 20 and 30 minutes of walking, cycling or swimming three times per week.

Patients in the Acupuncture group were asked to follow the same diet and exercise program as the control group, but also received 20 minutes of Acupuncture twice per week for five weeks. In addition, a small patch containing a stainless steel pellet was taped over the hunger point of each ear, and worn for the duration of the study. Patients were asked to press on the pellets for one minute upon waking, before each meal or snack, and at other times in the morning and afternoon.

Analysis of measurements taken before and after the study showed significantly greater weight loss in the patients who received Acupuncture compared to those who did not. Patients in the Acupuncture group lost an average 10.6 pounds per person. Patients who followed the diet and exercise program, but who were not treated with Acupuncture, only lost an average of 5.3 pounds over the same period of time. Nine Acupuncture patients lost at least 11 pounds during the course of treatment; only three control patients experienced the same type of weight loss.

The results of this study show that Acupuncture can be an effective addition to regular exercise and a sensible diet in the promotion of weight loss.

*SOURCE:* Acupuncture Today <http://www.acupuncturetoday.com/archives2006/may/05obesity.html>