**A MIRACLE CURE?**

**Two weeks of acupuncture could ‘STOP your baby crying, curing colic’**

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The traditional Chinese practice reduced the amount of time babies with colic spent crying

**BABIES who cry a lot could be calmed with a course of acupuncture, a controversial study suggests.**

The traditional Chinese practice – where fine needles are inserted into the skin – reduced the amount of time babies with colic spent crying.

Two weeks of acupuncture treatment reduced the amount of time babies with colic spent crying (file image)

Scientists at Lund University in Sweden found that giving babies a short course of acupuncture twice a week appeared to calm the infants.

The number of babies who cried for more than three hours was cut by a third in those who received acupuncture compared to those who did not, the researchers says.

Colic is the name for excessive crying in otherwise healthy babies. It can affect up to one in five children during the first few months of their lives.

It tends to begin when a baby is a few weeks old and normally stops by four or six months of age.

But parents can find it stressful because they are unable to soothe their baby and it is unclear what is wrong.

Dr Kajsa Landgren, who led the study at Lund University, said: “Colic is a spontaneously healing condition but can cause pain in the infant and lots of stress in the family.

“Many desperate parents want to shorten this strenuous period and seek help in complementary medicine as there is no effective medication available.

“We found that infants who received acupuncture cried less.”

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The study looked at 147 children with colic who were split into three groups.

Two groups were given acupuncture where up to five needles were inserted into their skin for up to 30 seconds.

The babies given the acupuncture cried for up to a minute afterward, but tended to be calmer in the long term, said Dr Landgren.

But some medical experts have reacted angrily to the research, insisting acupuncture has no scientific basis as a treatment and criticised the analysis of the results.

Professor David Colquhoun, a pharmacologist at University College London, said: “What parent would think that sticking needles into their baby would stop it crying?

“The idea sounds bizarre. This paper certainly doesn’t show that it works.”

Past studies have shown how effective acupuncture can be in women become pregnant.

The alternative treatment was found to increase a woman’s chances of pregnancy to 43 per cent, compared to 20 per cent using popular drugs.