

The Effectiveness Of Acupuncture

Whenever you are feeling pain and discomfort, you'd usually reach for your painkillers for relief. While they do relieve the pain, they also bring along side effects that comes with taking foreign chemicals into your body. As much as modern medicine has developed drugs that can relieve pain right off the bat, do you really think that the quick fixes you've been taking are actually good for your body? Why not try something safer and more effective like acupuncture.

What is acupuncture?

Acupuncture has surged in popularity for the last few decades as brought on by the recent health trend. Mostly known as a traditonal Chinese medical technique, acupuncture is seen as a homeopathic method of treatment. While alternative medicine does raise a lot of eyebrows for the scientifically-inclined, it does merit attention before being dismissed as a quack cure.

Basic Procedure

Basically, needles are inserted into the skin, each corresponding to one of the numerous pressure points located throughout the body. According to Traditional Chinese Medicine, by inserting a needle into the pressure point, an acupuncturist can manipulate the flow of chi or life force, thus relieving pain and gradually treating the patient. While most would say that the whole chi thing is a bunch of nonsense, science has suggested that with the needles inserted, the body's natural painkillers called endorphins are released, thus helping with pain relief.

Instruments

Modern acupuncturists nowadays use disposable fine stainless steel needles that are 0.007 to 0.020 inches in diameter which are sterilized with either ethylene oxide or by autoclave. Since they are way finer than hypodermic syringe needles, being poked by these needles are relatively painless. The upper third of the needle is covered with either a thicker bronze wire or plastic to make the needle sturdier and easier to handle. The length of the needle and how far they are inserted is all up to the acupuncturist and his practised style of acupuncture.

Example Of Treatment

If a patient has a headache, he/she is diagnosed and is treated by stimulating the sensitive points located at the webs between the thumbs and palms. In

acupuncture theory, these points are connected to the face and head and can be used for treatment of headaches and other ailments involved. Needles are then carefully inserted into the skin until the patient feels a twinge, which is usually accompanied by a slight involuntary twitching of the area. During this treatment, a number of things may occur.

- Sensitivity to pain in where needles are inserted.
- A hint of nausea during treatment in case of bad headaches.
- Near-immediate headache relief.

Evolution

As an ancient method, acupuncture has crossed over into the modern age with implementations of technology and recent scientific findings. Electrical stimulation is now a common technique that is combined with acupuncture to produce more effective results. Also, acupuncturists combined this eastern technique with western methods to further enhance the treatment.

Practitioners have eventually realized that leaning towards one school of thought can't propagate progress unless they are willing to move towards the future by looking towards other horizons as well.

Reactions And Research

Not everyone is impressed with acupuncture itself. Most western medical professionals have expressed either doubt or indifference to the oriental method while others have downright driven it down into the earth with criticisms and brutal skepticism. However, recent research shows the efficacy (or lack thereof) of acupuncture, and while more research has to be done, it has been proven to actually positively affect some, but not all, forms of ailments that it claims to cure.

So as the doors open to a new age of acupuncture, give it a try when you feel the need for pain relief and you will not be disappointed. As the Chinese have used it for many centuries, so should we.