

Topic: Acupuncture

General purpose: to inform

Specific purpose: To inform my audience about the effectiveness of acupuncture in treating various kinds of pain

Central idea: Acupuncture is thought to be effective in treating low back pain, shoulder pain, and pain associated with osteoarthritis in the knee.

Introduction

Imagine that you are suffering from a headache that won't go away after studying so hard for final exams. You try the usual medications, but the headache keeps coming back. Finally, even the doctor's prescription doesn't seem to help! What would you do? Would you just hope that it will eventually go away? Or would you go out and try alternative treatments like acupuncture, hoping it will get rid of the headache? If you chose the latter, you would have done what many people in the United States did when conventional medicine didn't appear to help with their health condition.

In a **National Health Interview Survey by Adam Burke in the November 2006 Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine**, 36% of the participants had used complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) in the last 12 months and 4.1% of these participants that had used acupuncture at some point in time. Most of the participants had used acupuncture because "regular" medicine did not improve their health problem and because they perceived that acupuncture as complementary medicine is, in fact, an effective form of treatment.

Today I will talk to you about whether this perception (that acupuncture indeed works) is supported by research, focusing on the effectiveness of acupuncture in treating chronic back pain, shoulder pain, and osteoarthritis of the knee.

(Transition sentence: Let's start by talking about how effective acupuncture is for treating chronic back pain.)

Body

- I. The general agreement is that acupuncture is effective for treating chronic back pain when compared to no treatment; however, there is debate on its efficacy compared to sham acupuncture.
 - A. Most studies showed that acupuncture reduced a significantly greater amount of back pain than if there was no treatment.
 - B. Several studies suggest that acupuncture only produces a particularly large placebo effect.
 - C. Long-term studies are necessary to definitively conclude that acupuncture is significantly better than sham acupuncture.

(Transition sentence: Now that we have learned acupuncture is generally effective for treating chronic back pain, let's discuss if the same is true for treatment of shoulder pain.)

- II. Acupuncture is more effective than both sham and no acupuncture for treating shoulder pain in the short and long term.
 - A. Most studies found acupuncture is definitively better than no treatment.
 - B. When considering long-term effects, real acupuncture may give similar results to sham over 6 months.

[Transition sentence: Now let's consider whether acupuncture may help with a more disease-oriented condition like knee osteoarthritis.]

- B. Acupuncture is effective in the short-term, but it's effectiveness in the long-term is unclear.
 - A. Acupuncture is good as complementary medicine to drugs.
 - B. The long-term benefits are unclear, however.

(Transition sentence: Let's review the effectiveness of acupuncture for treating the three types of body pain we discussed: chronic back pain, shoulder pain, and knee osteoarthritis.)

III. Conclusion

Informative Speech Preparation Outline

First, acupuncture reduces a significantly greater amount of pain than by receiving no acupuncture treatment for most conditions. However, it is not so clear when the effects of acupuncture are compared to sham acupuncture as in the case of back pain. This suggests a placebo effect, although higher quality studies indicate acupuncture truly is more effective than sham. Second, there is evidence that shoulder pain can be effectively relieved in the short term and, very likely, the long term. Finally, for knee osteoarthritis, the long term benefits are unknown. But in the short term, acupuncture can relieve pain better than if you only took conventional drugs.

Further studies are needed to confirm that acupuncture produces benefits for relieving various kinds of pain in the long run. Be that as it may, acupuncture holds a lot of promise for people who suffer from chronic pain. So, if you enter into the health field and a patient ever comes to you complaining of chronic pain, keep your mind open to acupuncture because, surprisingly, it really can be effective.

Bibliography

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