

AFPA ACUPUNCTURE AWARENESS WEEK IRELAND: 6th to 12th March 2017



ACUPUNCTURE FOR THE TREATMENT OF DIGESTIVE DISORDERS

According to the HSE health status report, diseases of the digestive system ranked among the most common acute illnesses for in patients in Irish hospitals. (HSE, 2008). According to the Central statistics office, of all acute hospital discharges, digestive diseases accounted for 10% of all male discharges and 8.6% of all female discharges in 2012. (CSO, 2013). A research study by Alonge and Codd (2013) has indicated that the burden of care on acute public hospitals is projected to increase greatly in relation to gastrointestinal diseases. (Alonge & Codd, 2013).

How can acupuncture help?

Traditional acupuncture treatments are based on an individual diagnosis and work by treating the underlying root cause of any condition as well as the symptoms. Acupuncture is believed to stimulate the nervous system and cause the release of neurochemical messenger molecules and the resulting biochemical changes influence the body's homeostatic mechanisms, thus promoting physical and emotional well-being. A 2010 study, using fMRI to monitor the effects of several classical acupoints on the human brain, indicated that acupuncture modulates the limbic network, an important intrinsic regulatory system of the human brain (Hui, Napadow, et al., 2010).

IRRITABLE BOWEL SYNDROME (IBS)

IBS is a disorder in which the bowel overreacts by going into spasm. Symptoms include abdominal pain, bloating and irregular bowel habits such as alternating diarrhoea and constipation. It affects as many as one in five of the population and can be extremely debilitating. Research has shown that acupuncture may work by modulating the serotonin pathway and a recent meta-analysis has confirmed the effectiveness of acupuncture, with clinically and statistically significant results, in controlling the symptoms of IBS (Chu et al., 2012; Chao & Zhang, 2014).

INFLAMMATORY BOWEL DISEASE (IBD)

The term IBD is used mainly to describe two diseases: ulcerative colitis and Crohn's disease. The main symptoms of Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis are similar and include: abdominal pain (more common in Crohn's disease than ulcerative colitis); a change in bowel habits; urgent and/or bloody diarrhoea or constipation; weight loss; and extreme tiredness (HSE, 2017a). It is thought that at least 20,000 people are living with IBD in Ireland (ISCC, 2017). A meta-analysis of 43 controlled clinical studies looked at the efficacy of acupuncture and moxibustion treatment on inflammatory bowel diseases (Ji et al., 2013). The results showed that acupuncture and moxibustion treatment was more effective than using sulfasalazine drugs. One of these studies, on 220 patients, showed that acupuncture was significantly more effective (84.5%) than the control group (68.2%) (Zhou & Jin, 2008).

GASTRO-OESOPHAGEAL REFLUX DISEASE (GORD)

Gastro-oesophageal reflux disease (GORD) is a common digestive condition where stomach acid leaks out of the stomach and into the oesophagus. It is estimated that around 1 in 5 people will have at least one episode of GORD a week. Symptoms include: heartburn - burning chest pain or discomfort that occurs after eating; an unpleasant sour taste in the mouth caused by the stomach acid coming back up into the mouth (this is known as regurgitation); and difficulty swallowing (dysphagia).

Research has shown that adding acupuncture to treatment for GORD is more effective than the option of doubling the proton pump inhibitor dose in controlling gastro-oesophageal reflux disease-related symptoms in patients who failed standard-dose proton pump inhibitors (DICKMAN et al., 2007). The most important factor is a muscle called the lower oesophageal sphincter (LOS) not working properly. An Australian study by Zou et al. (2005) showed that electro-acupuncture had a significant effect in inhibiting lower oesophageal sphincter relaxation (LOS) (Zou et al., 2005).

PROFESSIONAL ACUPUNCTURISTS in IRELAND

Acupuncture as practiced by Professional Traditional Acupuncturists is widely used in mainstream hospitals throughout the World, including the Whittington Hospital in London which has a dedicated Pain Clinic run entirely by TCM practitioners. The therapeutic benefits of acupuncture have been embraced internationally due to its proven effectiveness not only in respect of the management of chronic and acute conditions but also in the treatment of their underlying causes. It is now the largest drug-free healthcare therapy in the World whilst being compatible with and therefore capable of being used alongside Western (Orthodox) Medicine. In Ireland acupuncture is becoming increasingly acknowledged within mainstream healthcare as a treatment option for many conditions and is included in many private health insurance plans. This potential of acupuncture to deliver timely, cost effective, safe and clinically effective management of a range of conditions has yet to be fully exploited and referrals to acupuncture clinics are likely to become more commonplace as happens in other countries.

Acupuncture is considered very safe in the hands of well-trained practitioners. Ensure that you receive the highest standard and most effective acupuncture treatment by attending a Registered Acupuncturist who is suitably qualified with a minimum of three years training in this specialised field. In Ireland practitioners should be a registered member of a Professional Association such as the AFPA which oversees excellence in training, safe practice and professional conduct. Find a registered professional acupuncturist on www.afpa.ie

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The **Acupuncture Foundation Professional Association** is the leading independent Professional Association of Acupuncturists and Chinese Medical Practitioners in Ireland. Established in 1987, it is the oldest and largest organisation with responsibility for the regulation and maintenance of a Register of Acupuncturists who work within the guidelines set out by the Department of Health. Our members are bound by a Code of Ethics and Practice which is strictly enforced by the AFPA. In Ireland, Professional Chinese Acupuncture is an effective treatment option for many conditions as it is in many other countries and also as recognised by the World Health Organisation.

Diseases & Disorders That Can Be Treated With Acupuncture



The following is a list of diseases or disorders from the World Health Organisation for which acupuncture therapy has been tested in controlled clinical trials reported in the recent literature can be classified into four categories as shown below.

1. Diseases, symptoms or conditions for which acupuncture has been proved-through controlled trials-to be an effective treatment:

Adverse reactions to radiotherapy and/or chemotherapy
Allergic rhinitis (including hay fever)
Biliary colic
Depression (including depressive neurosis and depression following stroke)
Dysentery, acute bacillary
Dysmenorrhoea, primary
Epigastralgia, acute (in peptic ulcer, acute and chronic gastritis, and gastrospasm)
Facial pain (including craniomandibular disorders)
Headache
Hypertension, essential
Hypotension, primary
Induction of labour
Knee pain
Leukopenia
Low back pain
Malposition of foetus, correction of
Morning sickness
Nausea and vomiting
Neck pain
Pain in dentistry (including dental pain and temporomandibular dysfunction)
Periarthritis of shoulder
Postoperative pain
Renal colic
Rheumatoid arthritis
Sciatica
Sprain
Stroke
Tennis elbow

2. Diseases, symptoms or conditions for which the therapeutic effect of acupuncture has been shown but for which further proof is needed:

Abdominal pain (in acute gastroenteritis or due to gastrointestinal spasm)
Acne vulgaris
Alcohol dependence and detoxification
Bell's palsy
Bronchial asthma
Cancer pain
Cardiac neurosis
Cholecystitis, chronic, with acute exacerbation
Cholelithiasis
Competition stress syndrome
Craniocerebral injury, closed
Diabetes mellitus, non-insulin-dependent
Earache
Epidemic haemorrhagic fever
Epistaxis, simple (without generalized or local disease)
Eye pain due to subconjunctival injection
Female infertility
Facial spasm
Female urethral syndrome
Fibromyalgia and fasciitis
Gastrokinetic disturbance
Gouty arthritis
Hepatitis B virus carrier status
Herpes zoster (human (alpha) herpesvirus 3)
Hyperlipaemia
Hypo-ovarianism

Insomnia
Labour pain
Lactation, deficiency
Male sexual dysfunction, non-organic
Ménière disease
Neuralgia, post-herpetic
Neurodermatitis
Obesity
Opium, cocaine and heroin dependence
Osteoarthritis
Pain due to endoscopic examination
Pain in thromboangiitis obliterans
Polycystic ovary syndrome (Stein-Leventhal syndrome)
Postextubation in children
Postoperative convalescence
Premenstrual syndrome
Prostatitis, chronic
Pruritus
Radicular and pseudoradicular pain syndrome
Raynaud syndrome, primary
Recurrent lower urinary-tract infection
Reflex sympathetic dystrophy
Retention of urine, traumatic
Schizophrenia
Sialism, drug-induced
Sjögren syndrome
Sore throat (including tonsillitis)
Spine pain, acute
Stiff neck
Temporomandibular joint dysfunction
Tietze syndrome
Tobacco dependence
Tourette syndrome
Ulcerative colitis, chronic
Urolithiasis
Vascular dementia
Whooping cough (pertussis)

3. Diseases, symptoms or conditions for which there are only individual controlled trials reporting some therapeutic effects, but for which acupuncture is worth trying because treatment by conventional and other therapies is difficult:

Chloasma
Choroidopathy, central serous
Colour blindness
Deafness
Hypophrenia
Irritable colon syndrome
Neuropathic bladder in spinal cord injury
Pulmonary heart disease, chronic
Small airway obstruction

4. Diseases, symptoms or conditions for which acupuncture may be tried provided the practitioner has special modern medical knowledge and adequate monitoring equipment:

Breathlessness in chronic obstructive pulmonary disease
Coma
Convulsions in infants
Coronary heart disease (angina pectoris)
Diarrhoea in infants and young children
Encephalitis, viral, in children, late stage
Paralysis, progressive bulbar and pseudobulbar