



ACUPUNCTURE FOUNDATION PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION

ACUPUNCTURE AWARENESS WEEK 2019

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Acupuncture has been used within Chinese medicine for thousands of years. Modern methods have allowed us to establish that it is safe, effective, evidence-based and cost-effective (MacPherson et al., 2001; Zhang et al., 2010; McDonald & Janz, 2017). For these reasons it is well placed to play a significant role in solving the current opioid crisis (Fan et al., 2017) and filling gaps in conventional medicine.

Safety

Research has shown that acupuncture is safe in the hands of well-trained practitioners (MacPherson et al., 2001). However it is important to note that not all acupuncturists have the same training and some have none at all. AFPA members are professionally regulated and have a minimum of 3 years (3,600 hours) specialist training in acupuncture which is the highest level of acupuncture training in Ireland.

Effective and Evidence-Based

The most up to date research definitively shows that acupuncture performs *better* than “sham” acupuncture and the effectiveness of acupuncture can no longer be claimed to be due to the placebo effect (Lundeberg et al., 2011; McDonald & Janz, 2017).

The evidence for the efficacy and effectiveness of acupuncture is demonstrated in *The Acupuncture Evidence Project*, published in January 2017, which provides the most up to date comprehensive review of evidence regarding acupuncture (McDonald & Janz, 2017). There are over 8,000 acupuncture clinical trials published and the efficacy of acupuncture in 117 conditions has been confirmed from studies using the highest levels of rigorous scientific methods i.e. systematic reviews and meta-analyses thus confirming the place of acupuncture as an evidence-based therapy.

More Effective than Usual Care

Musculoskeletal issues, depression, chronic pain and IBS are gaps in conventional care identified by UK GPs and acupuncture has been shown to be more effective than usual care for these conditions (Thomas et al., 2006; Macpherson et al., 2012; MacPherson et al., 2013; Macpherson et al., 2013; McDonald & Janz, 2017).

Acupuncture is Recommended in Clinical Guidelines

As the evidence for acupuncture has increased so too have the number of international clinical guidelines recommending acupuncture. 2189 positive recommendations were found for the use of acupuncture. Of these, 1486 were related to 107 pain and 703 were related to 97 non-pain indications (Birch et al., 2018). The American College of Physicians 2017 clinical guidelines strongly recommend acupuncture as first line treatment over pharmacologic treatment for acute, subacute and chronic low back pain (Qaseem et al., 2017).

Acupuncture is Recognised by Private Health Insurers

Acupuncture treatments in Ireland are reimbursed by private health insurers if the treatment is given by a member of the AFPA.

Conditions Treated

Since Chinese medicine is a complete system of medicine, acupuncture is used for a wide range of conditions and not all of these have been researched as yet. The World Health Organisation (WHO, 2003) provides a categorised list of conditions for which acupuncture has been researched (see below). More recently (McDonald & Janz, 2017) found the highest levels of evidence for positive effect of acupuncture relating to 8 conditions: Migraine prophylaxis; Headache; Low Back Pain; Knee Osteoarthritis Pain; Allergic Rhinitis; Chemotherapy-induced Nausea & Vomiting; Post-Operative Nausea & Vomiting; and Post-Operative Pain. A further 38 conditions were found where acupuncture treatments have evidence of potential positive effect.

Professional Acupuncturists in Ireland

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.

Acupuncture Foundation Professional Association (AFPA) the Professional Regulator

Established in 1987, the AFPA is the longest established independent professional register of acupuncturists and practitioners of Traditional Chinese Medicine in Ireland. Our practitioners are professionals who work within the guidelines set out in 2006 by the Department of Health and Children and are required by virtue of their training and adherence to codes of ethics and practice, to refer patients to other more appropriate healthcare providers when warranted. Patients attending an Acupuncturist registered with the AFPA are assured that their practitioner:

- Has the highest level of training in Ireland
- Is subject to Professional oversight
- Possesses professional indemnity insurance
- Adheres to a code of ethics and practice
- Undertakes Continuous Professional Development
- Has 3 years training in **Traditional Chinese Acupuncture**
- Uses single-use sterile needles
- Is recognised by private health insurers

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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 gastropasm)
 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