

Acupuncture Helps with Fibromyalgia Symptoms

The June 2007 edition of the Mayo Clinic Proceedings reports on a study that found acupuncture helpful in treating the fatigue and anxiety commonly experienced by fibromyalgia patients. The study lends credence to patients' belief that nontraditional methods may improve their health. In Mayo's trial, patients who received acupuncture to counter their fibromyalgia symptoms reported improvement in fatigue and anxiety, among other symptoms. Acupuncture was well tolerated, with minimal side effects.

In the double-blind study, Mayo Clinic doctors gave 25 fibromyalgia patients acupuncture, and 25 "sham" acupuncture treatments. Patients received six treatments during the two- to three-week study. Their answers to the Fibromyalgia Impact Questionnaire revealed that those who received acupuncture treatments reported less fatigue and anxiety one month following after treatment than did the "sham" group.

"The results of the study convince me there is something more than the placebo effect to acupuncture," says David Martin, M.D., Ph.D., lead author of the acupuncture article and a Mayo Clinic anesthesiologist. "It affirms a lot of clinical impressions that this complementary medical technique is helpful for patients."

Fibromyalgia is a disorder considered disabling by many, and is characterized by chronic, widespread musculoskeletal pain and symptoms such as fatigue, joint stiffness and sleep disturbance. No cure is known and available treatments are only partially effective.

Dr. Martin says Mayo's study demonstrates that acupuncture is helpful, and also proves physicians can conduct a rigorous, controlled acupuncture study. Future research could help physicians understand which medical conditions respond best to acupuncture, how to apply it to best relieve symptoms, and how long patients can expect to their symptoms to decrease after each treatment

Dr. Martin performed the study at Mayo Clinic Rochester with co-authors Ines Berger, M.D.; Christopher Sletten, Ph.D.; and Brent Williams. The study used only two acupuncturists and examined only patients who reported more severe symptoms, offering better experimental

control. Still, the Mayo Clinic doctors urged more study to see how acupuncture can best be used in treating fibromyalgia patients.

Source: Mayo Clinic (2006, June 13). Acupuncture Relieves Symptoms Of Fibromyalgia, Mayo Clinic Study Finds