



Questions and answers

Welcome to the Q & A Library. Here you can find articles providing information regarding commonly asked questions about Acupuncture and its effectiveness with certain conditions. These articles are made for the general public and are made to be easy comprehensible.

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If you wish to ask a question about your health and Acupuncture please click [here](#).

Asthma

What is asthma?

People with asthma have sensitive airways in their lungs. When exposed to certain triggers their airways narrow, making it hard for them to breathe.

Three main factors cause the airways to become narrow:

- The inside lining of the airways becomes red and swollen (inflammation)
- Extra mucous (sticky fluid) may be produced
- The muscle around the airways tightens (bronchoconstriction)

Why do people get asthma in the first place?

The causes of asthma are not really understood but there is often a family history of asthma, eczema or hayfever. Asthma can begin at any age and change over time. Unborn babies whose mothers smoke during pregnancy, and children exposed to smoke in early childhood, have a higher risk of developing childhood asthma.

How do you recognise asthma?

- A dry, irritating, persistent cough, particularly at night, early morning, with exercise or activity
- Chest tightness
- Shortness of breath
- Wheeze

Asthma triggers

- Colds and flu
- Exposure to cigarette smoke
- Exercise/activity
- Inhaled allergens (e.g. pollens, moulds, animal dander and dust mites)
- Environmental (e.g. dust, pollution, wood smoke, bush fires)
- Changes in temperature and weather
- Certain medications (e.g. aspirin)
- Chemicals and strong smells (e.g. perfumes, cleaners)
- Emotional factors (e.g. laughter, stress)
- Some foods and food preservatives, flavourings and colourings (uncommon)

Figures

Today we live in a community where:

- Over 2 million Australians have asthma.
- Approximately 15% of children have currently diagnosed asthma (or one in six children have currently diagnosed asthma).
- Approximately 11% of adults have currently diagnosed asthma (or one in ten adults have currently diagnosed asthma).
- Indigenous Australians have more problems with asthma than other Australians.
- The majority of people with asthma do not have a written asthma action plan.
- Many people with asthma who could benefit by using regular preventer medication are not using it.
- Asthma is one of the most common reasons for hospital admissions in children.
- 397 people died due to asthma in 2002.

Every person's asthma is different. Not all people will have the same triggers, nor will they react to every trigger listed above. You may not always know what triggers your

asthma. It is helpful to identify triggers in order to avoid them however this is not always possible (e.g. colds and flu).

Acupuncture Treatment

Acupuncture and Traditional Chinese Medicine can be very effective for respiratory disorders including Asthma. There are many studies relating to the success of acupuncture treatment for asthma which have been reported in the medical journals. (1)

In 1979 the World Health Organisation listed 40 diseases for which acupuncture was considered to be beneficial and diseases of the respiratory tract including asthma and bronchitis were included in that list (2).

In a study conducted at the Department of Anaesthesia and Intensive Care in the University Hospital of Vienna revealed that over 70% of patients with long-standing asthma reported a significant improvement of their ailments after ten weeks of acupuncture treatment. (3)

Traditional Chinese Herbal Treatment

18/10/2005 - An oral combination of three Chinese herbal extracts: Ling-Zhi (*Ganoderma lucidum*), Ku-Shen (*Radix Sophora flavescens*) and Gan-Cao (*Radix Glycyrrhiza uralensis*) could be as effective as conventional medicines at alleviating asthma symptoms but without such severe side effects, report Chinese and American researchers. Full details of this research article available [here](#).

1990 - There has been one positive study involving a Chinese herb called Xifukang (a compound preparation of Chinese herbs) which was published in 1990. The results of treatment of 53 patients indicated that the clinical symptoms including cough, sputum production, chest pain, weakness, etc. were markedly improved and measurements of pulmonary function significantly enhanced. The researchers concluded that the therapeutic mechanism of Xifukang included promoting blood circulation to eliminate blood stasis, increasing ventilation, protecting dust-cells, resisting fibrosis, regulating immune function, enhancing lung clearance, and postponing and preventing development of silicosis. (4)

Advanced Practitioner Information:

The following information is suitable for students and practitioners of Acupuncture/TCM and contains content which requires advanced knowledge in this field.

[> Acupuncture & Traditional Chinese Medicine Treatment for Asthma](#)

References

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(1) Aldridge d & Pietroni P (1987) Clinical assessment of Acupuncture in Asthma Therapy: a discussion paper. *Journal of the Royal Soc of Med*, 80, 222-4.

Jobst KA et al, (1986) Controlled trial of acupuncture for disabling breathlessness. *Lancet* 2, 1416-9. Fung KP et al (1986) Attenuation of exercise induced asthma by acupuncture *Lancet* 2, 1419-22.

(2) reported by Dr S Fulder MD in *The Handbook of Complementary Medicine (Coronet)*.

(3) Beneficial effect of acupuncture on adult patients with asthma bronchiale. Zwolfer W; Keznickl-Hillebrand W; Spacek A; Cartellieri M; Grubhofer G Department of Anaesthesia and Intensive Care, University of Vienna, Austria. *Am J Chin Med (UNITED STATES)* 1993, 21 (2) p113-7

(4) [Clinical therapeutic effect of xifukang in 53 patients with silicosis] Ye Y; Wang X; Zhong Y. Yiyang Serpentine Mine Occupational Hospital, Jiangxi. *Chung Hsi I Chieh Ho Tsa Chih* Jul 1990, 10 (7) p420-1, 389

Related research archive articles:

[1.\) Effects of acupuncture at "Zusanli" \(ST 36\) on eosinophil apoptosis and related gene expression in rats with asthma](#)

[2.\) Considerations for Use of Acupuncture as Supplemental Therapy for Patients with Allergic Asthma.](#)

[3.\) Dorsal root ganglion: the target of acupuncture in the treatment of asthma.](#)

Diabetes

Q Can Acupuncture help Diabetes?

A There is much scientific evidence to suggest that Acupuncture will help Diabetes.

A combination of Acupuncture therapy, herbal therapy, chinese dietary therapy and chinese exercise therapy would be very beneficial for Diabetic patients.



Australia has one of the highest rates of diabetes in the developed world. It is estimated that 7.5 percent of adults aged 25 years and over have diabetes and a further 16 percent of adults are at risk of developing Type 2 diabetes.⁽¹⁾

Diabetes is caused primarily by dysfunction of the pancreas and is characterised by impaired carbohydrate metabolism due to inadequate insulin action or secretion. The condition is classified as Type I and Type II. In Traditional Chinese Medicine diabetes is referred to as "Wasting and Thirsting disorder".

Acupuncture Therapy:

Scientific studies and clinical tests in international research centers in the past 10 years have shown that acupuncture can help diabetic patients in many ways by lowering the blood glucose content, lowering the release of pancreatic glucagons and attenuate symptoms of polyphagia (the urge to eat too much), polydipsia (excessive thirst) and polyuria (excessive passage of urine).⁽²⁾

Herbal Therapy:

Chinese medicine, relying mainly on herb formulas, but also on acupuncture, has been utilized extensively in East Asia to reduce blood sugar in persons with diabetes, especially those with the most common type (non-insulin dependent diabetes mellitus, NIDDM). Based on extensive laboratory and clinical evaluations, about 20

herbs have emerged as primary candidates for herbal treatment of diabetes. (3)

Exercise Therapy:

A team from The University of Queensland found that by performing the Chinese exercises Qigong and Tai Chi, participants significantly improved several indicators of metabolic syndrome including HbA1c, blood pressure, bodyweight and waist circumference. This effect on metabolism may play a role in developing secondary prevention strategies for Type 2 diabetes. For more information on this research click [here](#).

Research:

27/08/06 - Berberine, found in the roots and barks of some plants, has been documented in Chinese literature as being able to lower glucose levels in diabetics. Now scientists have found that studies on rodents support this claim. For more information on this research click [here](#).

30/06/06 - A Gardenia fruit extract traditionally used in Chinese Medicine to treat the symptoms of type 2 diabetes does indeed contain a chemical that reverses some of the pancreatic dysfunctions that underlie the disease, researchers report in the June 7, 2006, Cell Metabolism. For more information on this research click [here](#).

08/12/05 - A recent study conducted by Dubai Wellbeing Center led by 17 experts showed that acupuncture and Chinese treatments are a better alternative than existing treatments and have no side effects. Doctor Li Dong, head of diabetic treatment & research at "Cha-slu", Dubai Wellbeing Center said: "Many assume that acupuncture is only suitable for treating pain, perhaps because the initial introduction of acupuncture to the west in 1972 was with flashy stories about analgesia provided by acupuncture during surgery. However 1 out of 3 patients coming in to our center has Diabetes. After attending a seminar in New York about the diabetics and seeing that some American Chinese doctors have succeeded in treatment, I wanted to conduct the study in UAE. The results are excellent and we have started working closely with western doctors now to treat the patients with these new techniques." For more information on this research click [here](#).

References:

- (1) Xin, Liu - Traditional Chinese exercise research paper - University of Queensland.
- (2) Yin Lo, PhD (November 2003) Diabetes and Acupuncture - Monrovia, California
- (3) Dharmananda, Subhuti. Ph.D. (January 2003) Treatment of Diabetes with Chinese Herbs and Acupuncture - Institute for TraditionaI Medicine, Portland, Oregon

Fertility

Q

My husband and I have been trying to have a baby for the last 18 months. We have had fertility tests done which have shown everything to be normal. We are not using IVF. Is it true that Acupuncture can help with fertility.



A

Acupuncture can play a role in the fertility of both the male and female.

In approximately 40% of infertility cases the problem is a male factor (eg. sperm dysfunction), 40% is a female problem (eg. ovulation failure, blocked or damaged fallopian tubes) and the remaining 20% the cause is unknown (idiopathic). (1)

Good candidates for trying Acupuncture are people who have *afunctional*, rather than a *structural* reason for infertility. (Eg: damaged fallopian tubes are structural). Men or women with functional infertility would be encouraged to try acupuncture.

Acupuncture can be used to encourage optimal sperm production and function in the male and adjusting endocrine function and balancing hormones in females. Some treatment principles would be to:

- Ensure all organs are nourished and meridians are balanced.
- Ensuring all aspects of health and wellbeing are addressed to make sure there is no external cause of a disharmony. This could include factors such as stress, diet and emotional issues.
- Identifying harmful environmental and occupational risk factors.
- Dietetics and herbs to correct any underlying nutritional or organ deficiencies.

Male Fertility: Studies confirm that environmental factors, such as pesticides, exogenous estrogens, and

heavy metals may negatively impact male sperm count. A number of nutritional therapies have been shown to improve sperm counts and sperm motility, including carnitine, arginine, zinc, selenium, and vitamin B-12. Numerous antioxidants have also proven beneficial in treating male infertility, such as vitamin C, vitamin E, glutathione, and coenzyme Q10. Acupuncture, as well as specific botanical medicines, have been documented in several studies as having a positive effect on sperm parameters. (2)

Female Fertility: Research has shown that acupuncture may adjust endocrine function of the generative and physiologic axis of women, thus stimulating ovulation. (3)

Research has also shown that auricular Acupuncture seems to offer a valuable therapy for female infertility due to hormone disorders. (4)

Treatment: There are many different treatment methods for infertility including Acupuncture needling, electronic stimulation of Acupuncture points, dietary therapy, herbal therapy, exercise therapy and of course general lifestyle advice. Your Acupuncturist will determine which method or combination of methods is best suited for your individual condition.

Research:

(1) 3 Access: Australia's National Infertility Network. (1996) Infertility: A Factsheet for Family and Friends

(2) Sinclair, S. (2000) Male infertility: nutritional and environmental considerations. Green Valley Health, Hagerstown, MD 21742, USA.

(3) Mo X, Li D, Pu Y, Xi G, Le X, Fu Z (1993) Clinical studies on the mechanism for acupuncture stimulation of ovulation. Journal of Traditional Chinese Medicine - June 13(2):115-9

(4) Gerhard I, Postneek F. (1992) Auricular acupuncture in the treatment of female infertility. Gynecology Endocrinology - Sep;6(3):171-81

Fibromyalgia



Can Acupuncture treat Fibromyalgia?



Acupuncture has been shown to relieve the symptoms of Fibromyalgia. These symptoms include numbness and tingling, headaches, fatigue, difficulty sleeping, abdominal bloating and

constipation and depression.

Fibromyalgia is a widespread non-inflammatory painful condition affecting certain muscles and their attachments. It has a lot in common with Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS) and the same patient may be diagnosed as having either or both, depending on the practitioner. ⁽¹⁾

The patient will rarely present with the muscle pains alone and there are usually other accompanying systemic symptoms.

Symptoms often present are:

- Numbness and tingling
- Headaches.
- Fatigue
- Difficulty sleeping
- Abdominal bloating and constipation
- Depression

In Traditional Chinese Medicine Fibromyalgia is seen mainly as a stagnation of Qi in the body, and can often be accompanied by a deficiency in Blood (Xue).

Much research has been done into Fibromyalgia. In one study patients with Fibromyalgia were treated with six sessions of acupuncture. The group had experienced significant symptomatic improvement compared to a group given simulated acupuncture sessions. "This study shows there is something real about acupuncture and its effects on fibromyalgia," says David Martin, M.D., Ph.D., Mayo Clinic anesthesiologist and the study's lead investigator. More information on this research is available [here](#).

A typical treatment would include regulating the Qi of the body and nourishing the blood. Depending on your practitioner you may receive a combination of either needling, herbs, and exercises.

Advanced Practitioner Information:

The following information is suitable for students and practitioners of Acupuncture/TCM and contains content which requires advanced knowledge in this field.

[Acupuncture & Traditional Chinese Medicine Treatment for Fibromyalgia](#)

References

(1) Legge, David (2003) [Close to the Bone](#)

Low Back Pain.

Q

I am a 55 year old male and I have been experiencing a gradually increasing pain in my lower back region. It is sometimes hard for me to stand up straight at times requiring me to sit or lie down. What can Acupuncture do for low back pain?



A

Low back pain is the second most common complaint received at an Acupuncture clinic. It just so happens that it is one of the many conditions that Acupuncture can treat very well.

The lower back includes the lumbar spine, the sacrum, the lumbo-sacral joints, the sacro-iliac joints, the coccyx and associated soft tissues, including the large lumbar spinal muscles, strong ligaments and the intervertebral discs. Pain may arise from a problem in any one or more of these areas. This pain may be seen as a structural related problem. The type of pain depends on the individual, their anatomy, other external factors and possible underlying body deficiencies.

A common finding is that a nerve that exits the spine into the trunk of the body may have been "pinched" by another structure which may be causing the pain.

The low back is subjected to considerable mechanical stress, with the L5/S1 segment being particularly vulnerable. It is frequently overloaded, either suddenly or over a longer period of time, to the point where it becomes painful - between 65 and 90% of us will experience low back pain at some time in our lives.

There has been an enormous amount of speculation and disagreement among the various experts as to the nature and causes of low back pain and there is still no clear consensus. It seems as though most tissues of the low back are capable of producing pain - the muscles, ligaments, intervertebral synovial joints (apophyseal joints) and intervertebral discs. The actual response depends on the weaknesses and circumstances of the individual.

The western medical standard treatment would include drugs to alleviate the pain and surgery may be required in severe cases. The drugs are not the most ideal solution as they do not treat the underlying problem and surgery always has risks involved.

Your Acupuncturist can work out the cause of your back pain during their diagnosis. It may be found to be a stagnation of energy (qi or blood) in the low back and in this case the treatment goal of your practitioner would be to move this stuck energy which in turn will alleviate the pain.

The pain may also be caused by an underlying deficiency in the kidney's in the way that they function in Traditional Chinese Medicine. The kidneys are responsible for the growth and development of the bones among many other things. Acupuncture can tonify this deficiency which will strengthen the lower back. A common treatment method for kidney deficiency is the use of chinese herbal therapy.

Acupressure has been found effective in reducing low back pain in terms of disability, pain scores and functional status as found by doctors at the National Taiwan University. Acupressure is the pushing of the fingertips at the same points on the

body used in acupuncture. The doctors found an 89 percent reduction in physical disability compared with physical therapy and the benefits of the treatment were sustained for six months.

There are many different therapeutic techniques available for the treatment of low back pain including acupuncture needling, acupressure and herbal therapy. The length of treatment depends on the cause of the pain. If an underlying deficiency (kidney) is found then this may take longer to treat than a stagnation of energy (qi and blood). It also depends much on the individual. Nethertheless, acupuncture can provide an effective treatment for low back pain.

Research:

20/09/06 - In a two year study of 241 back pain sufferers, researchers at the University of York found that a short course of acupuncture is effective in treating patients with low back pain and the benefits appear to improve with time. Click [here](#) for more on this research.

20/04/06 - Herbal medicine is effective in treating lower back pain and in some cases is just as effective as pharmaceutical drugs. Devil's Claw, in a standardized daily dose of 50 mg or 100 mg harpagoside, seemed to reduce pain more than placebo; a standardized daily dose of 60 mg reduced pain about the same as a daily dose of 12.5 mg of Vioxx. While Willow Bark, in a standardized daily dose of 120 mg and 240 mg of salicin reduced pain more than placebo; a standardized daily dose of 240 mg reduced pain about the same as a daily dose of 12.5 mg of Vioxx. Click [here](#) for more on this research.

16/03/06 - German researchers have also reported that Acupuncture improves lower back pain compared with no treatment in what they believe is the largest trial to assess the effectiveness of acupuncture for lower back pain. Click [here](#) for the research article.

22/02/06 - "Acupressure was effective in reducing low back pain in terms of disability, pain scores and functional status," doctors at the National Taiwan University reported in the current issue of the *British Medical Journal*. "The benefit was

sustained for six months." To find out more about the research into Acupressure and its effectiveness in reducing low back pain click [here](#).

Advanced Practitioner Information:

The following information is suitable for students and practitioners of Acupuncture/TCM and contains content which requires advanced knowledge in this field.

[Acupuncture & Traditional Chinese Medicine Treatment for Low Back Pain](#)

[Western Scientific Method Treatment for Low Back Pain](#)

References

This information has been used with permission from [Close to the Bone](#) by David Legge.

Menstrual pain and discomfort (Dysmenorrhoea)

Q

I have been experiencing pain over the past year with cramps occurring a week before menstruation which radiates to my back. A friend recommended that I try Acupuncture and I was wondering if it could help?

A

The pain that you are experiencing is a common feature during the onset of a menstrual cycle. This pain usually occurs in the lower abdomen and may occur in the low back as you have



experienced.

The term given to the occurrence of painful menstrual cramps of the uterus is Dysmenorrhoea. It is one of the most common gynaecological conditions that women face.

A little pain and discomfort is considered to be normal and is referred to as primary dysmenorrhoea. If the pain and discomfort increases over time then further tests may be required to rule out any other causes of the pain. Secondary dysmenorrhoea is caused by an underlying process occurring. In teenagers, an inflammatory condition called endometriosis is a common cause. Other causes of secondary dysmenorrhoea are polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS), infection, miscarriage or ectopic pregnancy.

The usual Western Medical therapy involves non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs or the oral contraceptive pill. Both these methods reduce muscle activity in the uterus. These drugs have several side effects. These treatments are aimed at the symptomatic relief of the condition.

Acupuncture is indicated as a useful method for treating dysmenorrhoea. The acupuncture will work well for the pain which depending on the person will usually subside after a few treatments.

Your Acupuncturist will ask several questions to identify the underlying cause of your discomfort. Lifestyle factors such as stress, diet and emotional factors may be contributing to the problem.

There are many different treatment methods for menstrual pain and discomfort including Acupuncture needling, electronic stimulation of Acupuncture points and herbal therapy. Your Acupuncturist will determine which method is best suited for your condition.

Migraines

Q

I have been experiencing migraines for the past ten years. Can Acupuncture help me?

A

Acupuncture can help reduce the severity and recurrence of migraines. Studies have also shown that Acupuncture is just as effective as the standard drug treatment for migraines.



There are many causes of migraine in Traditional Chinese Medicine and a lot of these can be related to lifestyle, diet or emotional stress.

It is always advisable to avoid excessive physical or mental activities that may cause fatigue which may bring on migraines. Certain foods and beverages such as alcohol, caffeine, dairy, chocolate, wheat and spices should also be avoided or moderated as they may trigger a migraine.

It would be ideal to monitor and log your daily routine (foods and beverages consumed and daily activities) to see if there is something that may be contributing to the problem.

During an attack of migraine there are some things you can do to help reduce the pain being experienced. Try some of the following:

- Lie down in a dark room away from any bright lights.
- Acupressure (Press or massage) the fleshy area between your thumb and forefinger.
- Tilt your head to one side and then to the other side to stretch out your neck muscles. Try massaging any tight muscles

you encounter.

Your Acupuncturist can work out the cause of your migraines during their diagnosis. Treating and alleviating the pain is usually part of the initial treatment. Depending on the individual and their symptoms your practitioner may recommend ongoing treatments to help maintain or control the symptoms. Your practitioner may find that the cause of your migraines is a deficiency in the body and this will be addressed in the ongoing treatments.

Research:

A recent study published on March 2 by *The Lancet Neurology* shows that Acupuncture is as effective as drugs for treating migraines. It was found 47% of those receiving traditional acupuncture, compared to 40% of those in the drug treatment group had been migraine-free for at least 50% of the time. Full details of this research can be found [here](#).

Muscle Strain

What is Muscle Strain?

When muscular or tendinous tissue is stretched and torn an inflammatory response is triggered. The complex of damage and response is called a strain. They can occur as a result of one severe trauma, usually when a contracted muscle is forcefully stretched, or from a series of very small, even microscopic tears.

They can occur:

- in a muscle belly (common in hamstrings, abdominals)
- at a musculo-tendinous junction (e.g. gastrocnemius)
- in a tendon (e.g. supraspinatus)
- at a tendino-periosteal junction (eg. adductor longus)

They are usually acute and, because muscle tissue is well supplied with blood, heal well.

A mild strain (grade I) will be painful on movement but there will be little or no loss of strength. A more severe strain (grade II) will cause a loss of strength and mobility. The most severe strains (grade III) involve a complete rupture of a tendon. These cases present with obvious deformity and usually require surgical repair.

Signs and Symptoms:

- Localized pain at site of strain - worse on movement (especially active resisted)
- No pain in mid range of passive movement
- Tenderness at site of strain
- Loss of strength in more severe cases
- Swelling and heat if strain is severe

- A history of trauma or intense activity followed by the onset of symptoms.

Acupuncture Treatment

Acupuncture is indicated for treatment of muscle strains.

In the first 24-48 hours the RICE (rest, ice, compression, elevation) protocol should be used.

- **Rest**
Reduce regular exercise or activities of daily living as needed. Your health care provider may advise you to put no weight on an injured area for 48 hours. If you cannot put weight on an ankle or knee, crutches may help. If you use a cane or one crutch for an ankle injury, use it on the uninjured side to help you lean away and relieve weight on the injured ankle.
- **Ice**
Apply an ice pack to the injured area for 20 minutes at a time, 4 to 8 times a day. A cold pack, ice bag, or plastic bag filled with crushed ice and wrapped in a towel can be used. To avoid cold injury and frostbite, do not apply the ice for more than 20 minutes.
- **Compression**
Compression of an injured ankle, knee, or wrist may help reduce swelling. Examples of compression bandages are elastic wraps, special boots, air casts, and splints. Ask your provider for advice on which one to use, and how tight to safely apply the bandage.
- **Elevation**
If possible, keep the injured ankle, knee, elbow, or wrist elevated on a pillow, above the level of the heart, to help decrease swelling.

In the sub-acute stage Acupuncture and Moxibustion (heat) may be applied by an Acupuncturist.

Advanced Practitioner Information:

The following information is suitable for students and practitioners of Acupuncture/TCM and contains content which requires advanced knowledge in this field.

[> Acupuncture & Traditional Chinese Medicine Treatment for Muscle Strain.](#)

References

This information has been used with permission from [Close to the Bone](#) by David Legge.

Neck Pain

Neck pain can be very frustrating and irritating; so much so that the phrase "a pain in the neck" has become a metaphor for all kinds of other irritants.



Most neck pain originates in the muscles and joints of the neck, which simplifies the search for the offending tissues. The pain is often accompanied by restricted movement.

Pain originating in the neck, can be referred to the head, shoulder, arm or upper thoracic area. The distribution of the referred pain gives an indication of the location and nature of the disorder.

Diagnosis:

Myofascial trigger points are palpable nodules that are said to be small contraction knots. The points are a common cause of pain and have characteristic patterns of referred pain which can be recognised if they are familiar.

If the pain or paraesthesia (a skin sensation, such as burning, prickling, itching, or tingling) is distributed along a dermatomal region this indicates disorder at the relevant spinal nerve or adjacent structures.

Two types of underlying dysfunction, while not necessarily producing pain themselves, are frequent contributors to the development of neck disorder. These are degeneration of the spinal tissues and excessive muscular tension.

Common disorders:

- Degeneration of the lower cervical spine.
- Excessive tension in the muscles that support and move the neck and head.
- Acute stiff and painful neck (Wry neck)
- Cervical joint disorder - C3 - C7 / Posterior cervical muscle triggers.
- Levator scapulae trigger points
- Whiplash
- Upper cervical pain and stiffness
- Tight neck with no stiffness
- Neurological signs and symptoms arising from within the neck
- Scalene trigger points.
- Chronic neck pain

Treatment:

There are many approaches to neck pain that your practitioner may

decide to utilise during a treatment.

Traditional Chinese Remedial Massage:

A common therapeutic method used for neck pain is Traditional Chinese Remedial Massage (also known as An Mo Tui Na). Remedial massage applied to the neck area will loosen up the muscles.

Acupressure:

Acupressure, pressing of the fingers on Acupuncture points can also be used on local Acupoints that affect the neck.

Acupuncture can be applied to the neck area to release any muscles that may be tight and requiring release.

Research:

27/08/06 - Acupuncture offers relief from chronic neck pain, while there is little reliable evidence on the effectiveness of massage, according to two new systematic reviews. Click [here](#) for more information on this research.

27/06/06 - Researchers from Charite University Medical Center in Germany have found that treatment with Acupuncture added to routine care in patients with chronic neck pain is associated with improvements in neck pain and disability compared to treatment with routine care alone. Click [here](#) for more information on this research.

Advanced Practitioner Information:

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Osteoarthritis

What is Osteoarthritis?

Osteoarthritis is a degenerative process beginning in the articular cartilage. The irritation caused by the degeneration eventually leads to inflammation. Degenerative changes appear long before the onset of symptoms, and many cases (especially of spinal pain) have been wrongly diagnosed as osteoarthritis from signs of degeneration found on X-ray.

It usually manifests after middle age and, contrary to popular belief, is not just a normal ageing process. At the very least there will be factors that reduce the strength of articular cartilage or increase the forces to which it is subjected.

Predisposing causes :

Excessive load eventually damaging the cartilage

- 1) Total force is too great due to excess heavy work, obesity, dysfunction elsewhere throws excess weight onto the affected joint, eg: an ankle problem on the other leg.
- 2) The force is distributed through an area that is too small due to malalignment of joint, deformity (congenital or acquired), dysfunction elsewhere altering the line of weight distribution.

Previous injury or disease, e.g. gout, rheumatoid arthritis, damaging the cartilage.

Pathology

- The cartilage becomes generally undernourished and wears most in the areas of increased stress, giving it an irregular and pitted appearance. Eventually it becomes calcified and pieces can flake off and become embedded in the synovium.
- The underlying bone becomes sclerosed.
- The joint capsule becomes more fibrous leading to a shrinking of the joint space and a reduced range of movement of the joint.
- The bone at the margins of the joint can become hypertrophied, forming projections known as osteophytes.

Signs and Symptoms:

- Pain - after rest and sustained use, at the end of passive range.
- Tenderness around joint line.
- Stiffness - initially only after rest but can increase until constant.
- Deformity - capsule shrinkage, muscle weakness and wasting, swelling, osteophytes.
- Giving way - due to nipping of synovial fringe or the presence of a loose body within the joint (possibly an osteophyte breaking off)
- X-ray - a decreased joint space, sclerosis of pressure area and subchondral bone, presence of osteophytes.

Acupuncture Treatment

31/10/2006 - Acupuncture shows significant improvements in symptoms and quality of life in patients with chronic pain due to Osteoarthritis of the knee or the hip. More information on this research can be found [here](#).

15/02/2006 - Researchers at the University of Maryland School of Medicine have found that traditional Chinese acupuncture significantly reduces pain and improves function for patients with osteoarthritis of the knee who have moderate or more severe pain despite taking pain medication. Patients receiving the acupuncture reported a 40 percent improvement in both pain and function from their baseline scores. More information on this research can be found [here](#).

15/09/2005 - Acupuncture can reduce pain and improve joint functioning in the short-term for people with osteoarthritis of the knee. Click [here](#) to see the full research article.

Advanced Practitioner Information:

The following information is suitable for students and practitioners of Acupuncture/TCM and contains content which requires advanced knowledge in this field.

[> Acupuncture & Traditional Chinese Medicine Treatment for Osteoarthritis.](#)

References

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