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ACUPUNCTURE REDUCES PAIN, SAVES DRUG \$\$

Acupuncture could become the means to reduce a person's reliance on pain medication and on anti-inflammatory drugs. According to the findings of a recently published study, an individual who receives Acupuncture treatment can reduce their intake of drugs and enjoy noticeable savings on drug purchases. Researchers in Spain under the direction of Dr. Jorge Vas, M.D., surveyed 5,981 patients who received Acupuncture treatment over a 9-year period. Their aim was to determine the effectiveness of treatment programs in helping patients deal with pain. A telephone survey was conducted to interview each of the patients. Persons with cancer-related pain were not included in the study.

In undertaking this task, researchers recorded the type of pain medications taken by each patient prior to beginning their Acupuncture regimen and at the end of their treatment plan. They also recorded information about the retail cost of those drugs. A 5-point scale was then used to assess consumption of the pain-reducing drugs, as follows:

- 0: No painkillers were required.
- 1: Occasional painkiller use, but below the recommended amount.
- 2: Using the recommended dosages in accordance with clinical guidelines.
- 3: Taking an increased dosage from the recommended amount.
- 4: The continued increase of painkiller types and amounts.

First off, it was interesting to note from the study's findings that of the 5,670 patients who completed the survey, there were no adverse reactions recorded from Acupuncture treatment. Next, headache sufferers enjoyed the greatest relief from their pain. In addition, headache sufferers had the greatest dollar savings on drugs. Finally, persons with sub-acute (less than severely sharp) pain experienced a greater degree of relief than those with continuing or chronic painful symptoms.

Upon further assessing the information collected, here is what the researchers discovered about Acupuncture and drug cost savings:

1. The average savings in drug costs was \$9.70 per week per patient.
2. The greatest savings was for patients with headaches at \$35.70 per week.
3. The smallest savings was for patients with neck pain at \$9.02 per week.

"The favorable response rate obtained for most of the patients, the absence of severe adverse events and the reduction in the consumption of analgesic (pain reducing) and anti-inflammatory drugs all suggest that our experience could profitably be extended to other primary healthcare clinics for the treatment of nonmalignant pain," said the researchers.

Source: Acupuncture Today. October 2007.

<http://www.acupuncturetoday.com/mpacms/at/article.php?id=31586>

Wade J. Rex, D.O.M, L.AC, BSN, CMT
Acupuncture & Chinese Medical Center LLC