

5th International Conference and Expo on

Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine

July 27-28, 2017 Chicago, USA

Acupuncture in hospice and palliative care

Torii Black

National Association of Hospice and Palliative Care Acupuncturists, USA

Statement of the Problem: The United States' geriatric population increases daily by over 10,000 people. This trend continues until 2060, when the projected number of people over 65 peaks, at 96 million. The average life span is 78.8 years, so hospice and dying populations will similarly increase. Acupuncture is a safe, effective, and economic treatment for symptoms control in the dying. Despite numerous research studies, there are no collective records on the amount, type, or frequency of acupuncture treatments at the end of life. The Hospice Medicare benefit and other insurance plans do not cover acupuncture treatments, leaving patients underserved.

Methodology & Theoretical Orientation: The projected aging population of the United States was compared against the most recent estimated patient populations in active hospice care. An extensive review and analysis of available research on hospice and palliative care patients who received acupuncture for symptom relief was completed, and compared to the World Health Organization's (WHO) list of diseases, symptoms or conditions for which acupuncture has been proved through controlled trials to be an effective treatment.

Findings: Research has proven the effectiveness of acupuncture for common physical, emotional, and spiritual symptoms in hospice and palliative care. Data collection and statistical analysis methods in studies show significant variations, making consolidation or standardization of treatment models difficult. A hospice acupuncture protocol is an emerging and promising practice. It requires time, consistent application, and large patient numbers to be proven clinically significant.

Conclusions & Significance: Hospice philosophy upholds the ideals of integration and holism. Acupuncture is underutilized in the US hospice medical interdisciplinary team model, despite research which proves its effectiveness. Hospice Acupuncture is an emerging practice, with the ability to improve the dying patient's comfort level. To advance this field, and best serve the growing patient populations, education, research, and insurance coverage must be achieved.

NAHPCA@gmail.com