

Effectiveness of Acupuncture in Alleviating Musculoskeletal Pain: A Comprehensive Analysis

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Description

Musculoskeletal pain is a prevalent and debilitating issue in modern medicine, affecting individuals across various age groups. Despite advancements in pharmacotherapy and physical therapies, effective management remains a continuous challenge. Musculoskeletal conditions, ranking as the fourth leading cause of disability in the adults, have prompted ongoing research and clinical exploration. The Disability-Adjusted Life Year (DALY) index, encompassing years of life lost and lived with disability, highlights the significant impact of musculoskeletal conditions on overall health.

Acupuncture, an ancient practice rooted in Traditional Chinese Medicine, has gained traction in Western scientific circles as a potential therapeutic approach for managing musculoskeletal pain. By stimulating specific points on the body with thin needles, acupuncture aims to alleviate pain. While traditionally holistic, recent studies have delved into its efficacy in treating musculoskeletal pain, with promising results.

This study aims to contribute to the growing body of evidence by evaluating the effectiveness of acupuncture in treating musculoskeletal pain. Data collected over a 14-year period from an Acupuncture clinic in Turin form the basis for this evaluation. The Numeric Rating Scale (NRS) was employed to analyze changes in pain perception across different body regions.

Data from 932 patients with musculoskeletal conditions, aged between 23 years to 94 years, were collected from 2008 to 2022. These patients underwent acupuncture treatment following Traditional Chinese Medicine guidelines. The NRS was utilized to assess pain levels at the beginning and end of treatment. The statistical analysis involved the use of JASP 0.17.2.1 software.

Results indicated an average NRS reduction from 7.49 to 4.27, reflecting a 43% decrease in pain. The reduction varied across body regions, ranging from 40% to 55%. Statistical significance was confirmed through the Wilcoxon test ($p < 0.001$). Further analysis,

utilizing the Kruskal-Wallis test and Dunn test, revealed varying effectiveness among different conditions.

Patients with lumbar, cervical, hip, knee, foot, shoulder, elbow, and hand problems exhibited significant pain reduction. Elbow-related conditions showed the greatest effectiveness, with a 55% reduction in pain. However, it's essential to acknowledge that the sample size might influence these results, emphasizing the need for further research, especially for less-represented conditions.

The extensive analysis of over 1,000 patients over 14 years highlights acupuncture's effectiveness in reducing musculoskeletal pain. The overall 43% decrease in pain, with variations among body regions, suggests acupuncture's potential as a valid treatment option. The findings underscore its applicability across a broad spectrum of conditions.

Interestingly the potential influence of acupuncture on inflammatory responses, as suggested by recent research. This opens avenues for managing pain associated with inflammatory conditions. This study's limitations, including sample size discrepancies among anatomical regions, emphasize the need for continued research to validate and extend these findings.

In conclusion, this study provides valuable insights into the efficacy of acupuncture in alleviating musculoskeletal pain. The significant reduction in pain levels across diverse conditions, particularly in elbow-related issues, highlights its potential as a therapeutic option. However, the study's limitations necessitate caution in generalizing the results, emphasizing the need for more extensive and diverse studies.

The encouraging outcomes from this research pave the way for future investigations, aiming to refine and optimize acupuncture's therapeutic approaches for specific body regions. Acupuncture emerges as a promising treatment option for musculoskeletal pain, offering substantial benefits with minimal reported side effects. The absence of significant conflicts of interest ensures the integrity of the study's findings.