

Acupuncture Research Update

"If you know the art of deep breathing, you have the strength, wisdom and courage of ten tigers." – Chinese Proverb

Acupuncture Treatment for Stressed College-Goers



Arizona State University conducted a study on the effects of stress on college students and staff in a "large urban college population." The study was a two-group, randomized controlled trial where the participants underwent either sham acupuncture or verum acupuncture. The participants included college students, faculty and staff at a large public university and the study was approved by the university's institutional review board with the consent of each participant.

Prior to the study beginning, each participant answered questions in the Cohen's Global Measure of Perceived Stress questionnaire at 5 different parts of the study. The intention behind this step was to measure how stress changed or did not change for each participant throughout the course of the treatment.

The acupuncture points that were used within the study were as follows: **GV 20 / PC 6 / HT 7 / Yingtang / Four Gates / CV 17 / CV 6 / ST 36.**

These points were given to the treatment group which were set to undergo verum acupuncture. Each group reported to the acupuncture clinic once a week for a 30 minute session.

The second group (considered the control group) received sham acupuncture in 3 points that are not known to have any effect on stress. These points on the body that are located between meridians and were inserted unilaterally and without stimulation or manipulation to ensure that de qi would not occur.

After the study was completed, each participant was questioned on the levels of stress that they each endured after 6, 12, 18 and 24 weeks post-treatment. Between the first treatment and the 24th week post-treatment, the verum acupuncture group reported a 45.8% improvement in the perception of stress. The sham acupuncture group reportedly showed a 40.3% difference in stress levels between the start of the study and post-treatment. However, at 3 months post-treatment, the sham acupuncture group had shown a decrease in their stress-scores.

To reduce the amount of error in the study, they "treated every participant with the same point combination, no matter what their underlying energetics may have suggested." This was to keep the acupuncture points as consistent as possible in order to obtain the most accurate results possible.

The study did determine that stress was reduced through the use of acupuncture on the participants within the study but that a larger sample size would aid in obtaining more statistically consistent results.

This study appears promising for determining the effects of reducing stress on university-goers through the treatment of acupuncture. However, further study and testing would be necessary for more conclusive results.

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