



British  
Acupuncture  
Council

ANKYLOSING SPONDYLITIS  
AND  
ACUPUNCTURE

# ANKYLOSING SPONDYLITIS

- Signs on Xray of sacroiliitis and spinal changes
- Low back pain > 3 months, insidious onset
- Improves with exercise/worse with rest
- Limited spinal movements and chest expansion
- Progressive, with flare ups

# A.S. SYMPTOMS

- Spinal and chest pain and stiffness
- Pain and inflammation in hips, knees, ankles
- Plantar fasciitis, uveitis
- Inflammatory bowel disease
- Respiratory difficulty
- Psoriasis
- osteoporosis

# MANAGING A.S.

- NON MEDICAL OPTIONS
- PHYSIOTHERAPY AND EXERCISE - YES
- ACUPUNCTURE - ?
- TAI CHI AND QIGONG - YES

# ACUPUNCTURE AND NON INFLAMMATORY BACK PAIN

- NICE 2009 Guidelines
- recommend acupuncture for back pain
- Anecdotal reports from Pain Clinic and Primary care suggest patients with A.S can enjoy benefit
- Pain Control, reduced inflammation and stress management

# ACUPUNCTURE MECHANISMS FOR ANALGESIA AND STRESS CONTROL

- Pain relief by Endorphinergic descending inhibition ( Zhao 2008)
- Reduces inflammation, by releasing vascular and immunomodulatory factors ( Kavoussi 2007)
- Improves muscle stiffness and joint mobility by increasing local microcirculation ,( Komovi 2009)
- Reducing serum corticosterone ( Park 2010)
- Regulating levels of neurotransmitters associated with negative affective states – serotonin, noradrenaline, dopamine, GABA, , ( Lee 2009)
- Reversing pathological changes from inflammatory cytokines associated with stress reactions, ( Arranz 2007)

# ACUPUNCTURE BENEFITS

- Reduction in analgesia , ( Thomas 2006)
- Cost effective in long term, ( Witt 2006)
- Gloucestershire CCG Primary care Audit of Acupuncture Service 2014 – 180 patients ( not pub)
- 18% stopped analgesia, 6% reduced analgesia
- Reduction in GP visits 78% - 32 %
- 60% reduced OTC medication
- 65% improved mobility
- 92% would recommend acupuncture



British  
Acupuncture  
Council

- 3000 members have completed 3 yr Bsc
- Trained in Western Medical anatomy, pathology, physiology and pharmacology
- Trained in Traditional Acupuncture; a system evolved over 2000 years which identifies patterns of health and illness through particular examinations and history taking.
- Traditional Chinese Medicine includes Tai Chi and Qi Gong remedial exercises ( recommended by PCRS)
- Treats the person not the illness for both specific and non-specific improvements in health and well-being



# ACUPUNCTURE TREATMENT AND COSTS

- NICE recommend 12 tx over 3 months
- Clinical benefits usually apparent within 4-6 tx
- Back pain benefits increase over time
- Usual sessions 30-45 minutes and may include needles, moxa, cupping, electroacupuncture
- Average cost £ 45 per session
- Limited NHS availability for Acupuncture
- Few side effects – Short term euphoria, sedation, bruising



British  
Acupuncture  
Council

## SUMMARY

No specific evidence for acupuncture and A.S

Good evidence for back pain and stress  
reduction

Traditional links between Traditional  
Acupuncture and remedial exercise

Good patient compliance and satisfaction

Few side effects and medicine interactions