

Acupuncture as Alternative Medicine

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Abstract

Acupuncture is one of the oldest and best known complementary or alternative therapies available in world. It is originated in china and is the most common treatment used to treat several medical conditions. Acupuncture involves stimulation of body points using needles and variety of techniques. It has been effective in treating Cancer, dental conditions, Infections, Respiratory disorders, Blood disorders, Neurological disorders, urogenital disorders, Psychiatric disorders, Skin diseases. As per the reviews available, during acupuncture application there will be an increase in levels of encephalin, endorphin and serotonin in brain tissue, which in turn results in sedation and recovery of motor functions, due to which they are used in treatment of pain caused due to different medical disorders. In this review I have presented the broad introduction to acupuncture along with its overall applications as an alternative treatment modality and mechanism of action involved in acupuncture.

Keywords: Acupuncture; Alternative Therapy; Acupuncture points

Introduction

Acupuncture is one of the oldest practices of medicine, originated 2,500 years ago which is used to treat several diseased conditions. **Acupuncture** means stimulation of body points, using a needle, where needles are used in at particular sites called as acupuncture points on the body depending on the disease site [1-4]. It is mostly practiced in china, japan, India and Korea, it has also earned popularity in America as well as other parts of world. The needles that are used for insertion in body are hair-thin and made of gold, silver or steel. Acupuncture is of different forms depending on the site and mode of mechanism involved, they are **moxibustion**, electric acupuncture that involves use of electric probes, on face, ear, scalp and hand acupuncture, microsystem acupuncture and photo acupuncture or **laser acupuncture** where lasers are used [5-9].

Acupuncture is performed by licensed, certified acupuncturist. There are almost 2,000 acupuncture points on body connected by different pathways called meridians, these points are site specific for various medical disorders and it is effective in treating over 40 disorders and diseases [10-14]. Acupuncture is safe as it involves drug free treatment with absolute zero side effects. Acupuncture is involved in activation of nerve fibres in muscles at the point of insertion which send or stimulates impulses to the **spinal cord** which results in activation of pituitary-hypothalamus and mid brain [15-18]. These results in increased levels of **encephalin**, endorphin and serotonin in **brain tissue**, which in turn results in sedation and recovery of motor functions, due to which they are used in treatment of pain caused due to different **medical disorders**.

American Association of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine is one of the oldest national membership organizations of acupuncture and oriental medicine involving the practitioners and supporters as members of the organisation with an aim serve to advance the profession and practice of Acupuncture [19-24]. The main mission of this organisation is to support the members of the acupuncture community through continuous education, sharing knowledge of latest advances in this field [25-26]. The American Academy of Medical Acupuncture is the society founded in 1987 by physicians in North America who have engaged acupuncture into their traditional medical practice. The main aim of this organisation is to promote and share concepts of traditional and modern integrated forms of acupuncture with Western medicine and training, which results in more comprehensive mode of health care to the society [27-32].

Group organizes conferences on alternative health care, which focus on the latest approaches in traditional and natural medicine and they are demonstrated by the experts in the related field [33-38]. They undertake international events every year, which are being hosted with the support of 1000+ government and private organizations. They aim for an everlasting relation of upcoming new strategies in the field of Alternative medicine with the scientific community and thereby giving everyone a healthier and quality life without any abnormalities. Recently the 4th International Conference on Acupuncture and Therapists Annual Meeting was held in Philadelphia which was a huge success and the main theme of this conference is to provide and share knowledge on Acupuncture and exploring the integrative approaches in acupuncture in achieving Global Health Care, in this conference some of the keynote presentations are Efficacy of electro acupuncture pudendal nerve stimulation in treating female stress incontinence presented by Wang S, Philosophical Thinking of Chinese Traditional Medicine presented by Dong J, and TCM as a basis of inter-professional education for acupuncturists presented by Jennifer Brett [39-44]. 5th International Conference and Expo on Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine is going to be held in Chicago, USA during July 27-29, 2017 and the conference proceedings include symposiums and keynote speeches, workshops, , poster sessions, panel discussion and plenary talks on recent advanced research developments in the field of Acupuncture [45-52]. These conference had offered a wide platform for alternative medicine professionals also gathered researchers, educators, clinicians, practitioners and other healthcare professionals, students, business delegates and young researchers all over the world which provides an opportunity to showcase and present latest advances in acupuncture research.

Mechanism of Action

The Acupuncture hypothesis explains that the within the human body there occurs a flow of energy which is utilized in balancing the health [53-57]. This energy flow is called qi, which moves throughout the body by different pathways called **meridians**. There are different meridians in the body that represents major organs and functioning of the body system [58-61]. **Acupuncture needles** are inserted through the skin at meridians and acupuncture points which are stimulated using hand or sometimes electric current. It involves the secretion of pain reducing components or natural painkillers like endorphins and **serotonin**. They also stimulate the release of cortisol from **pituitary gland**.

Applications

Many diseases and health conditions are treated using acupuncture; some of them include relief from chronic pain, osteoarthritis, post extraction pain in **dentistry**, arthritis, chronic pharyngitis, anxiety, **Acute rhinitis**, **insomnia**, migraine, **depression**, nausea, Headache and migraine, postoperative pain, Low back pain and obesity [63-77]. Acupuncture stimulates

certain nerve points of the body, and helps in relieving a wide variety of health conditions. Some latest applications of acupuncture are treating disorders such as sleep disorders, alcoholism, smoking, eating disorders and addiction.

Open Access Journals related to Rehabilitation and alternative therapies play major role in promoting the research and recent advances in almost all areas of Acupuncture and alternative medicine for benefit of society [78-82]. Some remarkable research findings and reviews have been published in **International Journal of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation**; it is a peer reviewed bimonthly journal that publishes the most reliable source of content and information on the latest discoveries and current interventions in rehabilitation and pain management studies [83-93]. **Journal of Traditional Medicine & Clinical Naturopathy** Presents a new platform to researchers and scientist to explore the developed and cutting-edge study trends in the field of alternative traditional medicine and treatment [94-97].

Conclusion

This review discussed an overview of acupuncture and its applications in medical field. The main purpose of the study is to focus on improving the latest practices of acupuncture and to share the knowledge of recent discoveries in delivering the best health to the world [98-100].

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