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ACUPUNCTURE IMPROVES LIFE FOR RHEUMATOID ARTHRITIS SUFFERERS

Problems and help for rheumatoid arthritis sufferers have received very little attention from researchers who do Acupuncture studies. Now some new research into this type of arthritis finds that Acupuncture may hold benefits to people who suffer from the condition.

Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA) causes inflammation and swelling of joint linings. It results in a painful condition for people who suffer from it and may even lead to some deformities over the long-term. Research efforts in the past have put more attention onto solutions for osteoarthritis where actual degeneration of bone joint tissue occurs.

Recently, 25 subjects participated in a study in Seoul, Korea, to determine if Acupuncture could be considered as an effective treatment to provide symptom relief and pain management for RA patients. Researchers were mainly associated with the Colleges of Korean Medicine at Sangji University and Kyung Hee University.

Each of the RA sufferers were given a series of 14 Korean Acupuncture sessions over a period of 6 weeks. Several known assessment tools were used to determine a person's amount of joint tenderness, amount of joint swelling, morning stiffness and general quality of life.

What was interesting in this study was that each person received a type of Korean Acupuncture that was tailored to their own needs. Their individualized programs each involved five principles used in Sa-am Acupuncture, one of Korea's most traditional approaches. RA is considered to be a problem of overheat and excessive dampness in Acupuncture terms, so the points chosen to treat were to assist with heat control, water balance in the body and for dampness control.

Acupuncture needles were generally inserted into the more unaffected side of the body where less RA pain was present. If pain was equal in both sides, needling was done on the left-hand side for men and the right-hand side for women. Needle manipulation usually lasted for about 20 minutes.

The results of the study were considered to be statistically significant in that 48 percent of the participants showed improvements over their initial measurements. Patients had a reduction of pain, less joint swelling and a higher quality of life. Some of the patients were also taking medication for their condition. There was no significant difference between those taking medication and those who did not. Researchers felt that Acupuncture alone could bring about positive results without the potential for harmful drug interactions or side effects.

Researchers said that no adverse effects of any kind were reported in the study. The Acupuncture delivered in this pilot study was completely safe and well tolerated by all participants. Continued investigation into RA pain management with Acupuncture is definitely warranted. The results of this study were published in the May 2008 issue of *Clinical Rheumatology*.

Source: *Acupuncture Today*. "Acupuncture Improves RA Symptoms." June 2008.

<http://www.acupuncturetoday.com/mpacms/at/article.php?id=31734&MERCURYSID=2675fff4711ed6b85865985c722981f8>