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ACUPUNCTURE REDUCES ANXIETY IN MOMS WHO HAVE CHILDREN ENTERING SURGERY

When a child is about to enter surgery, the most important person in their life can be a relaxed and caring parent. If the parent gets nervous or excited due to the stress of the event, the child's own anxiety level can rise and have a negative effect on their frame of mind – before and after surgery.

Acupuncture is known to have a positive effect on mood and is an effective way to reduce stress. Recently, a research project was conducted to see if Acupuncture could reduce anxiety levels in parents of children who were about to enter surgery.

The 3-year study was conducted by Dr. Shu-Ming Wang of the Yale University School of Medicine. She is an anesthesiologist. "I have personally witnessed crying parents enter a child's operating room, which invariably causes the child to cry and affects the procedure," said Dr. Wang. "All this anxiety distracts healthcare providers' attention away from the most important person in the procedure: the child."

A total of 66 mothers were involved in either a sham or Acupuncture intervention group during the course of the study. Mothers in the intervention group were treated using small needles inserted in the ear at "relaxation, valium and master cerebral points." The sham group received some needling in the shoulder, wrist or different ear locations. The treatment was administered approximately 30 minutes prior to the introduction of the child's anesthesia.

The mothers then remained with the child all the way up to the delivery of the anesthesia. None of the children received any sedative prior to the anesthesia. Dr. Wang and her team of researchers checked the anxiety levels of the children and also observed the mother's anxiety level and measured her blood pressure and her heart rate after the induction of anesthesia.

The study results were positive in two important ways. First, the mothers treated with Acupuncture had anxiety levels that were "significantly lower" than mothers in the control group. Second, and possibly more important, the children of mothers who received ear Acupuncture were demonstrably less anxious when entering the operating room where the anesthesia mask was introduced than were the children of the sham group mothers.

These significant results show that Acupuncture works and can be very helpful in conjunction with certain forms of Western medicine. "I do not believe that Acupuncture is for all illnesses and symptoms, but I strongly believe that if we can combine the best of Acupuncture with the best of allopathic medicine, we will achieve the best care for our patients," said Dr. Wang.