

Acupuncture as a Complementary Therapy

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The medical world is consistently acknowledging complementary and alternative therapies that positively impact patient outcomes. Acupuncture is one of the complementary therapies that are currently in use across medical facilities in different parts of the world. The therapy involves the insertion of extremely thin needles through the skin in strategic places. It is traced originally to have been used in China more than 3,000 years ago. It is useful as it is believed to have drastic pain relief and stress control benefits. Not many clinical examinations have been done concerning the therapy. Still, it is acknowledged to have vast benefits, especially among people who have lower back, neck, and dental pains, among others. Based on its nature, acupuncture has some side effects such as soreness, minor bleeding, and bruising. Therefore, it is risky when one has a bleeding disorder, has a pacemaker, and in some cases, among pregnant women. Literature studies focusing on acupuncture have justified it, and based on personal experience, I would recommend it as an effective complementary therapy. It is rarely a painful experience, and patients may only witness slight pain upon insertion. The effect on some patients is drastic, while others may need several sessions for them to reap benefits from the process.

From the native origin of acupuncture, the practice was used to rectify and imbalance between different aspects of life. About 365 acupuncture points are defined, and they are located in different locations in the body where the flow of energy was originally determined. In a common setting, about 30 to 36 needles are used and are inserted in different identified points. Sometimes low-intensity electric current is linked to a pair of needles that provided electric stimulation (Manyanga et al., 2014). A conventional session takes at least thirty minutes, and the needles could be retained at a single point for the utmost 20 minutes, after which they are removed and placed in a different location. The needles are made of stainless steel, which is

surgically accepted. Given the medical costs, an average acupuncture session costs \$75. It is readily available and is offered in many facilities, even in the United States in numerous private and public facilities.

According to Bauer and Koppelman (2016), acupuncture has critical restorative benefits in the body. As was originally known in Chinese society, it allows the free flow of a natural phenomenon called the 'vital energy.' When initiating acupuncture, the Chinese believed that the body has its internal regulation systems blocked. Based on this concept, acupuncture is carried out in those strategic points. The needles spread across the body, stimulate the nervous system, changing the experience of pain and stress. Acupuncture specialists induce that the result of the process is an improved balance of the biochemical factors, which, in return, cause a better sense of emotional and physical wellbeing.

Though standard therapies have been medically approved for pain relief, acupuncture is highly contested, but there is compelling evidence that its benefits in pain relief and improving mental health. To understand how effective it is, Mayo Clinic researched in 2013, where it sought to explore the number of people who had undertaken the therapy and their clinical outcomes. The study proved that major adverse effects of the process, such as death and hospitalization, accounted for 0% (Chon & Lee, 2013). For minor negative outcomes such as vomiting, fainting, and prolonged existence, the symptoms ranged between 0% and 1.1% (Chon & Lee, 2013). Besides, Monzani et al. (2010) informed that a medical consensus had been reached, and the World Health Organization (WHO), subsequently, had listed many diseases whose patients would benefit from it. Crucial individuals who could benefit from it are people with different kinds of pains, irritable bowels, anxiety, depression, and diabetes. Complementary therapy was also ascertained to be effective among people who suffer post-operative or after-

chemotherapy pains, addictions, and even stroke rehabilitation. Other than its traditional use, recent scientific appreciation of the therapy backs it up as beneficial in clinical settings.

Just like any other therapy, acupuncture is not entirely safe. At the same time, studies have indicated that the risk is minimal. The process is rarely regulated, which means that there is a possibility to encounter a practitioner who is not fully informed of the processes. However, the risk is low since most of the practitioners are certified and competent. Moreover, personal reactions to the treatment could limit individuals from indulging in it. Soreness, minor bleeding, and bruising are common (Chon & Lee, 2013). However, these side effects could pose an instrumental threat when the patient has a bleeding disorder. Chances of bleeding more than expected when one has the disorder are high and could possibly lead to a worse clinical state. Also, in case one has a pacemaker and mild electric pulses are applied to the needles, its operations may be interfered with. Lastly, pregnant individuals could be negatively affected since some types of acupuncture have been satisfied to stimulate labor and could lead to delivery before time. Nonetheless, the risks associated with the therapy are minimal and are rarely encountered.

In conclusion, I would recommend acupuncture. Though having been traditionally started in China, scientific evidence has been tagged to the activity. I have tried complementary therapy, and I ascertained that it relieved my back pain and anxiety. It is an almost painless activity and is affordable to most users. Scores of literature studies support acupuncture's benefits in relieving various pains and even providing psychological benefits. Its risks ideally are also rare and are not life-threatening. Therefore, if utilized well, people suffering pains and deteriorating mental health can reap vast benefits that would improve them mentally and physically.

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