

# Acupuncture Heals Neck Disc Pain - New Research

on 08 December 2013.

New research concludes that acupuncture is more effective than medications for the treatment of



cervical intervertebral disc herniations (CIDH). **Local Neck Acupuncture** A randomized, controlled study of 420 patients with CIDH consisted of two comparative groups. Group 1 consisted of 210 participants receiving electroacupuncture. Group 2 consisted of 210 participants receiving an oral medication. The results demonstrated that electroacupuncture “has better therapeutic efficacy than the medication group.” The researchers concluded that electroacupuncture “is better than medication in comparing both short-term and long-term therapeutic efficacies in treating CIDH.”

Group 1 received electroacupuncture at acupuncture points GV14 (Dazhui), UB11 (Dazhu) and SI3 (Houxi). Group 2 received oral administration of meloxicam, a non-steroid anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID), in tablet form. Meloxicam is conventionally used to reduce pain and swelling. It is commonly used in the treatment of joint

stiffness, especially in the case of arthritis.

## The Acupuncture Points

The acupuncture point selection made by the researchers is one of distal point selection. None of the acupuncture points are physically located on the neck in the region of the physical abnormality as is the case with local neck acupuncture. GV20 (DU20), according to Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) theory, is a Sea of Marrow point that clears the senses, calms the spirit, extinguishes liver wind and stabilizes ascendant Yang. Traditional indications for the use of GV20 include headache, vertigo and general dizziness, tinnitus, nasal congestion, shock, coma, mental disorders, prolapsed rectum and prolapsed uterus. GV20 is located on the top of the head approximately at the midpoint of the line connecting the apex of the ears.

UB11 (BL11), according to TCM principles, is the influential point of the bone and is a Sea of Blood point. Traditional indications for needling UB11 include headache, common cold including cough and

fever, neck pain and back pain. UB11 is located 1.5 cun lateral to T-1 at the lower border of the spinous process of the first thoracic vertebra.

SI3, according to TCM principles, is a Shu stream point, mother point, wood point and confluent point of the governing vessel (GV). SI3 functions to relax the muscle channels, open the GV channel and clear the spirit. Traditional indications for the use of SI3 include stiff neck, tinnitus, deafness, mania, malaria, lower back pain and sprain, night sweats, febrile diseases including tidal fevers, finger spasms, shoulder and elbow pain and intercostal neuralgia.

### **Not Alone**

This research is not isolated. Numerous studies have demonstrated that acupuncture is beneficial to patients with neck pain, including disc herniations. Perhaps most striking was a large scale, multi-year study of approximately 18,000 patients. Published in the prestigious *Archives of Internal Medicine*, researchers concluded that acupuncture is effective for the treatment of neck and back pain, osteoarthritis, headaches and shoulder pain. The investigators noted, "Acupuncture is effective for the treatment of chronic pain and is therefore a reasonable referral option." In a similar investigation, researchers from the University of Maryland School of Medicine, Baltimore, and the Shanghai University of Traditional Chinese Medicine concluded that, "Recent clinical trial and systematic review results clearly show acupuncture to be more beneficial than conventional standard care for many pain conditions...."

### References:

Wu, Yao-chi, Jun-feng Zhang, Yi-jun Sun, Cheng-fei Huang, Ping Shao, and Gui-zhen Liu. "Clinical study on electroacupuncture for cervical intervertebral disc herniation." *Journal of Acupuncture and Tuina Science* 11, no. 6 (2013): 371-374.

Vickers AJ, Cronin AM, Maschino AC, et al. Acupuncture for Chronic Pain: Individual Patient Data Meta-analysis. *Arch Intern Med*. Published online September 10, 2012.

Saudi Med J. 2012 May;33(5):526-32. Needle acupuncture for osteoarthritis of the knee. A systematic review and updated meta-analysis. Cao L, Zhang XL, Gao YS, Jiang Y. Department of Orthopedic Surgery, Shanghai Sixth People's Hospital, Shanghai Jiaotong University, Shanghai, China.

Shifen Xu and Lixing Lao. *Medical Acupuncture*. March 2012, 24(1): 10-14.

- See more at: <http://www.healthcmi.com/Acupuncture-Continuing-Education-News/1212-acupuncture-heals-neck-disc-pain-new-research#sthash.19LAbRQu.dpuf>