

# Acupuncture Can Help Reduce High Cholesterol

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More than 30 million Americans have high cholesterol (hyperlipidemia), a proven risk factor for heart attack or stroke. Despite the availability of non-drug interventions, medication is too often the first option. Fortunately, even when medication is prescribed, acupuncture reduces cholesterol levels compared to medication alone.

Case in point: a new study by H. Jin, et al., in which 90 patients with chronic high cholesterol (average age: 59; average years with hyperlipidemia: eight) received 10 mg atorvastatin daily, with half of the patients also receiving acupuncture once daily for six days (constituting one course), followed by a one-day break and then repeated seven times (eight courses overall). Acupoints included ST 36 (Zusanli), PC 6 (Neiguan), ST 40 (Fenglong), CV 12 (Zhongwan) and ST 25 (Tianshu).

During each session (30-minute needle retention), Bu (tonifying) manipulation was applied every 10 minutes for ST 36; Xie (attenuating) for PC 6 and ST 40; and Ping Bu Ping Xie (mild tonifying and attenuating) for CV 12 and ST 25.

All patients were evaluated at baseline and following each treatment course. Patients receiving acupuncture in addition to drug treatment showed improvements relative to total cholesterol, triglycerides, low-density lipoprotein or "bad" cholesterol (LDL-C) and homocysteine levels (all lower); and nitrogen monoxide, vascular endothelial growth factor and high-density lipoprotein or "good" cholesterol (HDL-C) (all higher) compared to the drug-only group. Overall, the total treatment effective rate was significantly higher in the acupuncture group vs. the drug-only group.