HEALTHY TIPS

# Acupuncture may Replace Antidepressants, Researchers Claim

By bestfolkmedicine · 21/06/2019 · 2 min read



*Unfortunately, around 10 percent of US citizens are depressed, according to the NIH, or more than 20 million individuals. What's more, in the last 15 years, there has been a major increase in the use of antidepressants or to be more precise, 65 percent.*

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*Knowing the side effects linked with these meds and their high price, a lot of people with depression have turned to alternative methods for treatment, including acupuncture.*

*Namely, in a study, it was discovered that this traditional Chinese practice may be as beneficial as antidepressants and another one revealed that it may be of aid in the treatment of the side effects from these meds.*

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**Could Acupuncture Offer Relief for Depressive Individuals?**

During an acupuncture session, the practitioner inserts specialized needles into the skin at the body points believed to correspond with some organs.

According to proponents of acupuncture and research, the needles have the power to activate the natural pain destroyers in the brain and thus, better the functioning by reducing the body imbalances.

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A study from the *Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine* discovered that electroaccupuncture was as beneficial as Prozac in decreasing depression symptoms. This type of acupuncture involves a mild electric current being transmitted through the needles.

For a period of 6 weeks, the participants underwent either this practice 5 times per week or were given a daily dose of Prozac. The researchers who specialize in traditional Chinese medicine assessed the symptoms of the participants every two weeks as well as the level of GDNF, a neuroprotective protein.

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At the end of the study, both groups had similar symptom improvements and both groups restored the protein's levels to normal. However, the acupuncture worked faster and reduced the symptoms more dramatically at weeks 2 and 4 than the medication did.

A different study also points out that acupuncture may be of aid with one challenging depression aspect, i.e. the sexual side effects from some meds. Namely, 12 weeks of acupuncture aided men and women in regards to their sexual function.

And, there is a growing evidence amount in the benefit of acupuncture for treatment of several health problems, including anxiety, nausea, and chronic ache.

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**How Does the Brain Respond to Acupuncture?**

One of the depression signs is an amygdale with an abnormal size. The amygdale is located in the brain and it is a part of the limbic system.

This system is a grouping of several structures linked with some of our stronger emotions and sense of memory. These emotions include grief, sorrow, sadness, anger, fear, pleasure, and sexual arousal.

Having an oversized amygdale, those with depression can wrongly interpret and create emotions, resulting in indifference, emptiness, and other negative feelings.

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Acupuncture can help reduce the stress in the limbic system and teach the brain to have a better response. Consequently, the amygdale may be “trained” to adopt a more positive outlook on experiences and situations.

Sources:

PSYCHIATRIC TIMES

SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN

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