

Complementary Therapy

(BMHP5001_LON)

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Introduction

This report is analysing the acupuncture therapy. It defines the complementary therapy, it describes the history of acupuncture, it presents its uses and efficacy, but it also discusses the contraindications identified through research.

Acupuncture is an ancient therapy, originating from China that can involve a mix of inserting needles on designated points on the skin, massage or heat application that is meant to treat or to anaesthetise the different parts of the body (Slomski, DeAngelo, 2020).

When analysing the concept of acupuncture it can be found an array of information on the benefits of the treatment and the comparison with other standard treatments, but it is acknowledged that there is a lack of systematic evidence towards the efficacy and safety of the treatment.

The western medical acupuncture it is offered to the patient after it is realise an investigation and a medical diagnosis is given. The process involves the usage of needles to stimulate the sensory nerves situated under the skin and in the muscles. Through this process it is stimulated the production of natural substances such as endorphins which has a pain relief effect. Usually in order to have a more beneficial effect, the acupuncture has to be perform over a period of time (Cassidy, 2002).

History

The roots of this complementary therapy relate to the Chinese life philosophies, where “chi” or “qi” represents the internal energy source that exist in everything around. It is considered that this energy has a vital role in stabilising the chemical composition of matter. In order to release the energy the matter has to be broken down and through acupuncture the energy is stimulated for healing and reducing pain.

Acupuncture has a long history, being used in China 300 BCE. It is thought that it has been discovered by priest that observed that combat wounds can disappear suddenly or a wound in a specific area can influence other injuries. Their observations highlight the importance of location of the wound on the body and how body can respond positively to a pinprick stimulation. Along time they used fish bones, bamboo splinters, but later on when metal was used proper needles were created. The development of the acupuncture has been realised in

time, by observation and analysis of specific points to specific conditions, meridian points. Acupuncture had increased popularity and peoples from other continents had started to use it (Jia-Liang et al, 2021).

Uses

The medical practice of acupuncture is to manipulate the needles along 12 specific “chi” channels and meridians in the body. The meridians have specific names that relate to the area that is treated. The concept of “chi” in the acupuncture distinguishes two categories “Tsang” the organs that are associated with blood such as heart, lungs, spleen, liver, kidneys and “Fou” the organs responsible for food absorption, digestion and expelling. The therapy assumes that the energy has an undisrupted flux through the organs and when an organ does not function properly it affects the energy. The purpose of the therapy is to correct any disruptions in the energy by interfering with the nerve impulses from the organs in order to ensure strength and continuous and efficient circuit.

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The modern medical practice of acupuncture emphasis the connection of the meridian points and the nervous system. The uses of acupuncture works by changing the stimulation pattern from peripheral to the central nervous system and further to remove pain which is associated with the disease (Stux, Pomeranz, 2003).

The anatomical description states that the meridians correspond to nerves and vessels and connective tissue. Through acupuncture there are controlled the chemical receptor in order to reduce the sensitivity. The needles can vary in size and diameter and can be made from different types of metal. It has been researched that infection from needles is rare as it is part of the therapy to use sterilised needles and to clean the skin before treatment. The insert of the needles can be realised in three different ways: perpendicular, oblique, and horizontal and it depends on the patient. The techniques and the duration of the treatment varies in accordance with the

patient needs and require great skills in order to be most effective. The selection of the acupuncture points is very important as it is aimed for precision to obtain maximum effect (Mann, 2000).

Acupuncture can be used to treat allergies, dermatologic disorders, gastrointestinal, circulatory, musculoskeletal disorders, genital disorders, neurologic, and psychiatric disorders (NHS, 2021).

Acupuncture is used to control pain as it can numb parts of the body and it is used for analgesic purposes. It is used for surgical patients, for women in labour, but it is not as reliable as chemical anaesthesia. It can also be used to calm patients before surgery or even to reduce bleeding. Post operation the acupuncture can be used to relief pain instead of drugs.

It has been identified that acupuncture can improve exercise performance as it helps with recovery of the heart rate and oxygen regulation from the modulation of the autonomic nervous system (Nakahara et al, 2021).

Efficacy

When analysing the efficacy of acupuncture for analgesia it has been researched that is less reliable than chemical ones. Also it takes longer to induce the analgesia and the instruments have to remain attached to the patient. It requires great skills and knowledge in order to keep the number of needles to a minimum and can require electric supplementation in order to maintain the analgesia.

The acupuncture practitioners recommend the treatment when there is a chronic long pain, headaches and migraines, musculoskeletal or joint, dental and postoperative pain. It is not very clear the efficacy of the treatment in opposition to other standard treatments and it is mostly available privately.

The number of people choosing acupuncture has increased in the latest period of time. Studies had identified the efficacy of the treatment for many health conditions. It has been found that acupuncture is very efficacy to relieve anxiety and create well-being feeling. It can be very useful for addiction treatment and rehabilitation. Other studies had identified that acupuncture can also be an efficacy treatment for asthma, rhinitis, dysmenorrhea, stroke and many other disorders and just contribute to the improvement of the patient life quality (Ernst, White, 2000).

Contraindications

The World Health Organisation Guidelines focuses on the safety in the acupuncture and the importance of training for the practitioners. The acupuncture therapy is contraindicated for children under seven and for pregnant women. It is also contraindicated for people who suffer with haemophiliacs. Because of the usage of needles for the treatment it is contraindicated for the persons who have a fear of needles. The patients who have uncontrollable body movements can not have are at high risk for using acupuncture.

In the latest period it has been reported that acupuncture can be very concerning if the practitioners do not have the proper knowledge and training. It can be very dangerous for the patient health as it can lead to damages of the body.

Acupuncture is contraindicated for patients with active infection because of the high threat of spreading neoplastic cells and severe neutropenia. It is contraindicated especially for the cuteness and malignancy infections and the practitioner judgement is paramount.

The Acupuncture Association of Chartered Physiotherapists (AACP) offers clear guidance regarding the contraindications for acupuncture and it divides two distinguished groups absolute contraindications and relative contraindications. For the first group the acupuncture treatment is forbidden and for the second group it requires careful analysis of the patient health (Physio-pedia, 2021).

Effectiveness

The effectiveness of the acupuncture has been under scientific review and it has been debated overtime. It has been noticed that acupuncture can be very effective in cases of postsurgical wound healing, incontinence, substance abuse, depression, autism, cerebral palsy.

The exact benefits of the acupuncture are still unclear, despite that acupuncture has become popular and many studies have been evaluated the therapy. In the United Kingdom acupuncture it is limited through NHS as it is considered to have unclear effectiveness in comparison to other standard treatments (NHS, 2021).

Conclusion

In conclusion acupuncture is an ancient therapy that was developed in China, but it is currently used worldwide and has been embraced as a method of treatment by modern medicine.

This report had analysed various sources of information and had explored both traditional and modern use of acupuncture.

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