



ACUPUNCTURE NOW AUSTRALIA

CONTACT: Sarah George

PHONE: 0409 729 118

EMAIL: info@acupuncturenow.org.au

FACEBOOK: www.facebook.com/acupuncturenowaustralia

DATE: 27th July, 2021

MEDIA RELEASE

SAFE, EFFECTIVE PAIN RELIEF BACKED BY EVIDENCE: ACUPUNCTURE IS ESSENTIAL TO NATIONAL PAIN WEEK DISCUSSIONS

A convincing body of evidence supports acupuncture for pain relief and yet the research findings are often a best kept secret in Australia. With National Pain Week upon us, and a worldwide opioid crisis around us, there is a compelling case for a low-risk therapy like acupuncture, which can produce significant pain relief, to be included in the pain management discussion.

Acupuncture has many strings to its bow when it comes to managing chronic pain. A [meta-analysis of over 20 000 patients with chronic pain](#) in 39 trials found that acupuncture is effective in the treatment of chronic musculoskeletal, headache and osteoarthritis pain, with treatment effects persisting over time (85% pain relief at 12 months). A [review by the UK National Institute for Health Research \(NIHR\)](#) in 2017 concluded that acupuncture is more effective than both usual care and sham acupuncture for chronic pain based on the most robust evidence from high-quality trials of acupuncture for chronic pain.

The pain relieving effect applies also to acute pain with [research conducted in a hospital Emergency Department and published in the American Journal of Emergency Medicine indicating acupuncture had a higher rate of pain relief](#) (92%) when compared to IV Morphine (78%), faster acting pain relief and with far less adverse effects. Comparable effects between

acupuncture and pharmacotherapy were seen in a [randomized controlled trial](#) conducted in here in Australia at four Melbourne-based hospitals for pain relief of low back pain, ankle sprain and migraine.

With the contributions acupuncture can make to the management of pain, it is essential to consider the therapy's safety profile, and it's good news there. A [systematic review](#) found that acupuncture can be considered inherently safe in the hands of well trained practitioners*. When it comes to well trained practitioners, Australia has a [professional group of over 4800 AHPRA registered acupuncturists](#), each qualified with the minimum of a bachelor degree (or equivalent) specifically in acupuncture and/or Chinese Medicine.

And lastly, is acupuncture just a placebo? Not so, according to a [meta-analysis](#) of 17 922 patients treated with acupuncture that found significant differences between true and sham acupuncture, indicating that acupuncture is more than a placebo.

The body of evidence supporting the use of acupuncture by well trained practitioners for pain relief is growing. The therapy may be fast acting for acute pain, long lasting for chronic pain, performs well when compared to some pharmacological approaches and is considered safe. Acupuncture provides a low-risk and often effective pain strategy which may be of benefit to many Australians.

**Acupuncture is generally considered to be safe but occasionally may be associated with possible adverse reactions in individual cases.*

- ENDS -

Interviews with Dr John McDonald (Director – Acupuncture Now Australia) can be arranged. Dr John McDonald, PhD, has been involved in acupuncture for 50 years as an acupuncture practitioner, a lecturer, an academic administrator, a writer, a conference speaker and more recently as a researcher.

If you would like more information or to arrange an interview please contact Sarah George on 0409 729 118 or info@acupuncturenow.org.au.