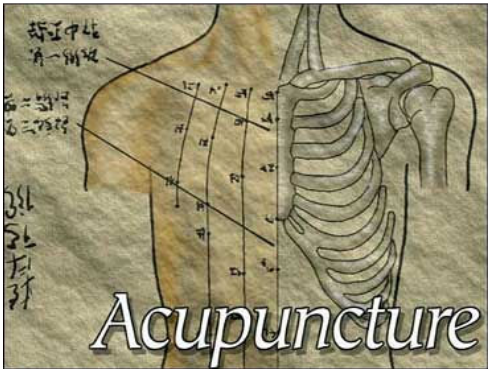


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(AP)

Fast Fact

Overall, the study showed that people who received acupuncture were 3.7 times more likely to report less suffering from headaches compared with those who received standard treatment alone.

(WebMD) Adding acupuncture to standard medical treatment may improve the quality of life for people who suffer from frequent headaches, according to a new study.

A new study shows that people who suffer from headaches most days of the month, a condition known as chronic daily headache, fared better when they received acupuncture treatment in addition to their medical treatment.

Although daily pain severity did not significantly improve, people who received acupuncture were nearly four times as likely to report less suffering than those who received standard medical treatment alone, such as pain relievers.

"The results showed that patients who received acupuncture reported significant improvement in many quality of life measures," says researcher Remy Coeytaux, MD, assistant professor of family medicine at the University of North Carolina School of Medicine, in a news release. "The patients felt better, and the vast majority who got acupuncture reported that their headaches had improved during the six weeks of treatment."

Acupuncture Helps Chronic Headaches

In the study, published in the journal *Headache*, researchers compared the effects of adding a course of 10 acupuncture treatments over a period of six weeks to standard medical treatment in a group of 74 adults with chronic daily headache. Half of the participants received traditional Chinese acupuncture by an experienced physician and certified acupuncturist in addition to medical treatment, and the other half received standard medical treatment alone.

The results showed that daily pain severity did not differ significantly between the two groups. However, people who received acupuncture improved by an average of three points on a scale of headache impact.

In addition, those who received acupuncture also reported an improvement of eight points or more on limitations caused by headaches on social functioning, general mental health, and physical problems.

Overall, the study showed that people who received acupuncture were 3.7 times more likely to report less suffering from headaches compared with those who received standard treatment alone.

Researchers say acupuncture has been shown effective at treating other types of headaches, such as migraine and tension headaches, but these results suggest that acupuncture may also help the approximately 4% of Americans who suffer from chronic daily headache.

SOURCES: Coeytaux, R. Headache, October 2005; vol 45: pp 1113-1123. News release, Public Communications, Inc.

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