

## Acupuncture in the Management of Cancer Pain

### Systematic Reviews

The American Society of Clinical Oncology Clinical Practice Guidelines found acupuncture and massage were effective in improving pain. The reviewers categorized these findings as ‘evidence-based; benefits outweigh harms; evidence quality: low; strength of recommendation: weak’.

Paice JA, Portenoy R, Lacchetti C, et al. Management of Chronic Pain in Survivors of Adult Cancers: American Society of Clinical Oncology Clinical Practice Guideline. *J Clin Oncol*. 2016;34(27):3325-3345.

A subsequent 2016 systematic review with met-analysis of 29 RCTs found acupuncture to be effective for relieving cancer-related pain, particularly malignancy-related pain and surgery-induced pain. Reviewers suggest that acupuncture be adopted as part of a multimodal approach for reducing cancer-related pain.

Chiu HY, Hsieh YJ, Tsai PS. Systematic review and meta-analysis of acupuncture to reduce cancer-related pain. *Eur J Cancer Care (Engl)*. 2016.

A review on the management of **peripheral neuropathy induced by chemotherapy** found acupuncture among therapies that may be useful for PN, but not electroacupuncture.

Al-Atiyyat N, Obaid A. Management of peripheral neuropathy induced by chemotherapy in adults with cancer: a review. *Int J Palliat Nurs*. 2017;23(1):13-17.

In a systematic review with meta-analysis (15 trials) showed benefit for acupuncture over control in the treatment of diabetic neuropathy, Bell’s palsy, and carpal tunnel syndrome. Acupuncture is probably effective in the treatment of HIV-related neuropathy, and there is insufficient evidence for its benefits in idiopathic neuropathy.

Dimitrova A, Murchison C, Oken B. Acupuncture for the Treatment of Peripheral Neuropathy: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis. *J Altern Complement Med*. 2017;23(3):164-179.

### Studies

Cancer patients who received inpatient acupuncture at a major cancer center (MD Anderson Cancer Center in Texas) experienced significant improvement after treatment for pain, sleep disturbance, anxiety, drowsiness, nausea, and fatigue.

Garcia MK, Cohen L, Spano M, et al. Inpatient Acupuncture at a Major Cancer Center. *Integr Cancer Ther*. 2016:1534735416685403.

A study of integrative medicine (IM) therapies for oncology inpatients (1833) found moderate, major, and extreme illness severity were all significantly associated with higher odds of receiving IM therapy compared with hospital admissions of minor illness severity. IM therapies studied were bodywork, including craniosacral therapy, medical massage, and reflexology; mind-body and energy therapies (MBE), which was divided into separate mind-body and energy subcategories; and traditional Chinese medicine, which included acupressure, acupuncture, and Korean hand therapy. After receiving sessions of IM therapy patients had, on average, a 46.9% decrease in pain score and 56.1% decrease in anxiety scores.

Johnson JR, Crespin DJ, Griffin KH, Finch MD, Dusek JA. Effects of integrative medicine on pain and anxiety among oncology inpatients. *J Natl Cancer Inst Monogr*. 2014;2014(50):330-337.

### Combined therapy

In a randomized trial (n=138) providing massage and acupuncture in addition to usual care decreased pain and depressive mood among postoperative cancer patients when compared with usual care alone.

Mehling WE, Jacobs B, Acree M, et al. Symptom management with massage and acupuncture in postoperative cancer patients: a randomized controlled trial. *J Pain Symptom Manage.* 2007;33(3):258-266