Acceptance of Acupuncture into Western Medicine due to Medical Advantages

Student Name

POLYTECH High School of Kent County, Woodside, Delaware
Abstract

After three thousand years, the Traditional Chinese Medicine of acupuncture continues to be a successful type of medicine in treating various conditions and disorders. While many controversies have arose as to whether acupuncture is successful, the ability to cure many neurologic, ophthalmologic, and cardiorespiratory conditions leaves no argument as to whether acupuncture is effective. The aptitude to relieve pain also confirms acupuncture’s high efficacy. Through extensive research, scientists are now able to discover new facts about how it works through clinical trials and experimenting on animals. Despite a current deficit of scientific research at a molecular level, Western medicine should accept the practice of medicine as a legitimate one.
Acceptance of Acupuncture into Western Medicine due to Medical Benefits

Acupuncture, a Traditional Chinese medicine, has been able to withstand the test of time and is still prevalent in today’s expeditiously flourishing society. Although Western medicine does not currently accept the controversial medical practice, acupuncture is still a legitimate form of medicine, effective in curing and preventing various illnesses, as well as treating certain disorders. While this ancient method is often associated with its immensely advantageous aptitude to alleviate pain, acupuncture also efficiently treats neurological, ophthalmological, and cardiorespiratory diseases and disorders. Multiple studies have confirmed a high efficacy in not only humans, but in less-intelligent beings as well, such as dogs, horses, and cattle. Despite a current deficit of scientific research at a molecular level, Western medicine should accept the practice of acupuncture as a legitimate one.

Origin and Use of Acupuncture

The origin of Acupuncture dates back 3000 years ago. The original intent was to relieve pain, but acupuncture has evolved to treating many other illnesses as well. There are various types of acupuncture, but the most predominant ones are Dry Needle Acupuncture and Electro-Acupuncture. Dry Needle Acupuncture is the insertion of fine, sharp needles into the skin at acupuncture points. Electro-Acupuncture is the application of the same needles containing a mild electrical shock on these same acupuncture points. Other forms of acupuncture include heat, pressure, manual massage cupping, and herbal medicines (How Acupuncture Can Relieve Pain and Improve Sleeping, Digestion, and Emotional Well-Being, 2015). The rationale behind acupuncture relates to the balance between the universe and body. In Traditional Chinese medicine, the Chinese had the theory that the body was healthy when the universe and body held perfect balance. The flow of energy through energy channels in the body is what creates this
balance. If this energy does not flow well, the forces become unbalanced. This unbalance is what supposedly occurred if someone was ill. According to the ancient Chinese, acupuncture releases the blocked energy in order for other energy to flow regularly. Overtime, the rationale behind acupuncture’s success has changed. The most prominent theory now is that acupuncture release endorphins, or natural painkillers, into the bloodstream (Dupler, Newton, Odle, 2015). However, regardless of how acupuncture does work, the more essential aspect to focus on is acupuncture’s success.

**Use of Acupuncture for Pain Relief**

The primary use of acupuncture is for pain relief. An abundance of studies, both on humans and animals, has proven that Dry Needle acupuncture and Electro-Acupuncture are able to relieve pain with minimal side effects. Experiments contrasting Electro-Acupuncture and other pharmaceuticals demonstrate that the ability to relieve pain was approximately equal for Electro-Acupuncture and other pain-relieving drugs, such as butorphanol (Xie, & Wedemeyer, 2012, p. 36). Other research shows that acupuncture can replace surgical anesthetics. In a controlled experiment, acupuncture successfully eliminated pain from 87.5% of the subject when applied at dorsal, located on the back of the body, acupuncture points. Acupuncture is also in use for musculoskeletal conditions in order to minimize the pain. In conditions such as osteoarthritis, acupuncture is effective in decreasing joint pain and improving mobility in the patients. Despite decades of research dedicated to pain relieving, prescription drugs, the ability to decrease pain has not become better in comparison to the ancient method of acupuncture.

**Neurological Benefits of Acupuncture**

Dry Needle Acupuncture and Electro-Acupuncture have both been in use for treating neurological disorders. These practices have been common in veterinary medicine, especially in
the study and treatment of Intervertebral Disc Disease. This disease is common in dogs, and multiple studies conducted observe how acupuncture can affect the dogs. After a group of dogs with Thoracolumbar Intervertebral Disc Disease treated with Dry Needle Acupuncture and Electro-Acupuncture, their neurological deficits decreased. The dogs can now able to perform diversions and tasks such as walking independently, which they cannot normally do. Out of the dogs that were tested, acupuncture had a much higher success rate than the control group, who did not receive any acupuncture. The treatment of epilepsy also proves the neurological benefits of acupuncture. For this treatment, specialists use a special type of acupuncture in which they place gold beads on acupuncture points (Xie & Wedemeyer, 2012, p. 37). This technique was successful in reducing the amount of seizures of epileptic dogs by up to 50%. There have been some clinical trials to test acupuncture effect of acupuncture, but they have been minimal. Although most of the research for neurological benefits has been on animals, the likelihood of acupuncture working on the same human conditions is high.

**Optical Advantages of Acupuncture**

Numerous scientists have studied the effects of acupuncture on ophthalmological disorders and conditions. The result is that acupuncture, specifically Electro-acupuncture, is effective in treating conditions as well as enhancing vision. Electro-acupuncture has shown to decrease the latency in subjects with Visual evoked potential latency, a condition where the subject experiences deficits in optic nerve functioning. Through a closer look, acupuncture demonstrates the ability to enhance the choroid blood flow to improve optic function. Clinical ophthalmological conditions such as glaucoma are also in observation to identify the affect acupuncture has on it. After testing Electro-acupuncture on monkeys, the pressure in the eye decreased for up to forty-eight hours (Xie & Wedemeyer, 2012, p. 38). Improved vision and
treatment of conditions both show how acupuncture can be useful in ophthalmology, and scientists have been able to theorize on how it works at a molecular level.

**How Acupuncture Benefits the Cardiorespiratory System**

While the study of how acupuncture affects cardiorespiratory disorders is constrained, some evidence implies that it can be helpful. A major benefit of using acupuncture for this purpose is the treatment of those who have high blood pressure. Research exhibits that acupuncture significantly reduces systolic and diastolic blood pressure, potentially by increasing plasma nitric oxide concentrations in the blood. Using anesthesia in veterinary practices often leads to apnea, or the cessation of breathing. In a study of sixty-nine cats and dogs, 100% of respiration rates were restored by the use of acupuncture during the anesthesia, without any cardiac complications (Xie, & Wedemeyer, 2012). There is a lot of research into the other benefits of acupuncture. Cardiorespiratory research is limited, but there is enough sufficient evidence to prove that acupuncture is successful in these cases.

**Why Acupuncture and the Placebo Effect have no Relation**

A common argument from cynics as to why acupuncture is not effective is the idea that it only works due to the Placebo effect. According to this theory, a practice will only work because the subject has a pre-conception that the practice is supposed to work. Since there is minimal evidence as to why acupuncture works, many people result to the Placebo effect to explain the promising results acupuncture has in curing, treating, and preventing illnesses in humans. However, many experiments and tests completed on less intelligent beings, such as dogs, cats, horses, cattle, monkeys, and more, exhibit that the animal lacks the knowledge of what the practice is supposed to do to them. Therefore, there is no prior expectation about the procedure in their mind. In these experiments, acupuncture has worked in treating dogs with
epilepsy, diminishing pain in cattle, and increasing optic nerve function in monkeys (“Doctor, What’s this Acupuncture all about?” n.d.). Also, this claim is false due to new discoveries in science that speculate reasons why acupuncture works on a molecular level, such as the idea that acupuncture releases endorphins to alleviate pain. This dissent raised by opposing viewpoints are clearly untrue and evidence disproves these disbeliefs, leaving no doubt as to whether acupuncture is truly effective.

Throughout the world, many people suffer from various medical problems that restrain them from reaching their full potential of healthiness. Acupuncture provides an alternative practice of medicine to treat many neurological conditions, cardiorespiratory disorders, vision latency, and pain. This alternative produces an equal level of efficacy as their pharmaceutical counterparts. Previous research adds to the reasons already developed about how acupuncture works. Often just as effective as prescription drugs, there is not any reason as to why acupuncture should not be accepted a legitimate medical practice in Western medicine.
References

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