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RESEARCH SHOWS ACUPUNCTURE CAN LOWER BLOOD PRESSURE AS MUCH AS 40 PERCENT

From the Susan Samueli Center for Integrative Medicine at UC Irvine

IRVINE, Calif. - The Susan Samueli Center for Integrative Medicine at the University of California, Irvine, dedicated to advancing patient care through education, evidence-based research and applied integrative medical therapies, today released findings that show acupuncture can help normalize blood pressure - lower pressure when it is elevated or raise pressure when it is too low - and complements treatments for cardiovascular patients. The Center found that acupuncture combined with low levels of electrical stimulation can lower elevations in blood pressure by as much as 40 percent.



In treating patients at their clinics, the Center also found once-weekly 30-minute acupuncture sessions will give substantial pressure reductions of 15-25 mmHg in three to four weeks. Acupuncture is a 3,000-year-old form of Chinese medicine that involves inserting needles at specific points on the body to help cure disease or relieve pain.

"At the Samueli Center, we are dedicated to promoting the integration of ancient healing practices with modern medical treatments to help develop optimum treatment solutions for patients," said Dr. John Longhurst, director of the Susan Samueli Center for Integrative Medicine and study leader. "We believe these new findings on acupuncture and hypertension will help educate both Western and alternative medical practitioners while encouraging dialog on developing integrative treatment solutions."

An Alternative Solution

Though drug therapy and healthy lifestyle changes related to diet, exercise and weight loss are typically employed to treat high blood pressure, some patients are looking for alternative solutions. "In our real world of clinical practice, we're encountering patients who find it difficult to make these changes or who continue to have high pressure despite making real changes. They're looking for something else, and acupuncture is a potential solution that's relaxing and relatively painless," said Dr. Longhurst.

Slow Onset, Prolonged Effects

The Samueli Center's research also found that acupuncture has a slow onset and prolonged effect. If treatments were stopped, the pressure would stay down for another month or so, and then comes back up over a period of weeks.

How it Works

Elevated blood pressure is due to either increased vascular constriction and stiffness, or to the heart pumping excess volume into the blood vessels. Diuretics and other antihypertensives typically help

with the latter; acupuncture appears to help with the former. Other recent studies from the Susan Samueli Center indicate that acupuncture relaxes vessels mainly through action in the central nervous system. For additional information on the Center's research findings or to schedule an interview with Dr. Longhurst, please contact the Center's public relations' agency listed below.

About SSCIM

Founded in 2000, The Susan Samueli Center for Integrative Medicine at UCI successfully promotes integrative medicine by conducting rigorous fundamental and clinical research on complementary healing practices; educating medical students, health professionals and the public about these practices, and creating a model of clinical care that emphasizes healing the whole person. The Center is rapidly becoming recognized for providing new knowledge bridging complementary and conventional treatments - all for the singular purpose of achieving better health. For more information, contact the Center at (949) 824-5763 or visit www.sscim.uci.edu

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