

Study shows acupuncture's effectiveness

ACADEMICS AT THE University of York with funding from the National Institute for Health Research, under its Programme Grants for Applied Research, have carried out a major study into the use of acupuncture compared with a range of other physical treatments.

The study makes use of a systematic review of the available research, together with a method of analysing the results called network meta-analysis. This can be used where interventions have not necessarily been studied or evaluated together, to compare their effectiveness.

There were 156 studies available for possible review; of these 114 were considered eligible. The conclusions which were drawn from this show that acupuncture can be considered one of the more effective physical interventions for treating pain associated with osteoarthritis of the knee, and that it should be considered as one of the treatment options for it.

Significantly, the network meta-analysis used to analyse the results, provides guideline decision makers with a first estimate of the relative effects of a treatment, and for this reason, among others, network meta-analysis is gaining popularity with them.

In recent years acupuncture has gained the recognition of NICE, the National Institute for Clinical Excellence. In 2009, it recommended that acupuncture be considered as a treatment for the management of persistent, non-specific back pain; and in 2012, treatment with acupuncture was recommended as a prophylaxis for migraine and tension headaches.

The British Acupuncture Council has over 3,000 members, who have all had a three-year degree level training that includes relevant Western biomedical training to enable them to correctly identify the need to refer to a medical practitioner. To find a qualified practitioner in your area please visit www.acupuncture.org.uk

