Acupuncture for Osteoporosis

by BRENDA VANTA

Using Acupuncture to Treat Osteoporosis

Acupuncture is a medical system used for thousands of years , and is becoming more and more popular in the US. The fine needles are inserted into or through the skin at specific points. According to the practitioners of Traditional Chinese Medicine the root of diseases is an imbalance or blockage of the body's vital energy (or “qi”) which flows along meridians (invisible channels of energy). For example, a blockage of “qi” manifests as tenderness when the doctor palpates your body. By inserting the needles at specific “acupuncture” points , the proper flow of “qi “ can be restored. Based on this therapeutic system, there is a connection between kidneys, marrow, bone and brain and the kidney.

Research

A significant amount of research studies conducted in the last four decades support the benefits of acupuncture for osteoporosis. More than 40 medical conditions have been endorsed by World health Organization (WHO) as diseases that can benefit from acupuncture treatments.

In regard to treating osteoporosis, a detailed review of scientific literature was conducted by researchers from University of Sydney, Australia and published in 2011. Although some of these studies were small or conducted in animal subjects, the scientists suggest that acupuncture is an effective strategy to help with fracture related bone pain, and this therapy may promote bone health by improving bone formation, structure and density. In menopausal women, acupuncture helped increase the levels of estradiol, a hormone that protect against osteoporosis. In male animal subjects, the testosterone also increased (like estradiol, testosterone helps maintain healthy bones).

Do You Need to Prepare for an Acupuncture Appointment?

If you decided to try acupuncture and booked your initial consultation, you have to prepare for the appointment. Try to eat something light an hour or two before the consultation. Limit the consumption of coffee and avoid excessive painkiller medication prior to the appointment. Wear loose fitting clothes , although the doctor may provide hospital robes and coverings. Bring your medication and any lab tests or investigations you had done.

What Happens During an Acupuncture Appointment

The doctor will take a detailed medical history, and will ask questions to learn more about your physical and emotional health, as well as your diet, sleep, stress levels and lifestyle habits . He will examine your tongue (to evaluate your diet, stress levels and the health of your immune system) , take your pulse (to assess the lungs, cardio-vascular system, digestion and urinary system work) and perform various tests to asses the health of your muscles, nerves and joints. Besides acupuncture, you may receive manipulation, massage, electro-magnetic field and herbal therapy.

Is Acupuncture Safe?

Acupuncture is safe when performed by a licensed, well trained practitioner, according to World Health Organization. Minor risks such as bruising or feeling dizzy may occur. Serious side effects (i.e. nerve injuries, infections) found in studies were linked with practitioner errors rather than acupuncture as a therapy. Therefore, you should seek an experienced professional, who is licensed to practice Traditional Chinese Medicine in your state.