



ACUPUNCTURE IS A SAFE ALTERNATIVE

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Two new studies published in issues of the British Medical Journal show that Acupuncture is a safe alternativetreatment.

According to Hugh MacPherson, PhD, lead author of the study, Research Director of the Foundation for Traditional Chinese Medicine in York, England, "The popularity of Acupuncture has been growing and people are asking, 'is it safe;' our survey looked at a very large sample and found no serious adverse events."

In the first study, British Acupuncturists mailed in reports of any problems occurring during or after Acupuncture treatment. They reported 34,000 treatments during one month, and in 2000, no serious adverse events were reported.

In the second study, 78 doctors and physiotherapists recorded any problems between June 1998 and February 2000. No serious problems were reported and 671 minor problems, such as bleeding or pain upon needle insertion, were reported, per 10,000 Acupuncture treatments.

"Non-physician Acupuncturists are the fastest-growing category of health professionals in the United States," according to James Dillard, MD, DC, LAc. "People are looking for alternatives to surgery and conventional drugs because they are concerned about adverse reactions and side effects and prefer a gentler form of treatment."

Available research indicates that Acupuncture is particularly effective in treating pain and nausea, Dillard said. "The best papers have been done on arthritis, facial pain, low back pain, and nausea," hesaid.

When adverse event rates of Acupuncture were compared with those of drugs that are routinely prescribed in primary care, it suggested that Acupuncture is relatively safe, with no serious adverse events; whereas such drugs as non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDS) cause GI bleeding, which can lead to death.

SOURCE: British Medical Journal, September 2001; WebMDHealth, www.webmd.com, September 4, 2001.