

Acupuncture Treats Neurological Pain

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Acupuncture is very effective at relieving the pain associated with neurological conditions and restoring normal function.

Neurological pain is one of the most difficult kinds of pain for people to tolerate. Nerve pain usually presents as a sharp shooting pain or a constant burning sensation. It will generally present in the same location with each episode and can often be traced by the patient along the nerve pathway. There may also be weakness or impaired function in the affected area and the skin may be either overly sensitive or numb.

Nerve pain can arise from trauma (including surgery), inflammation, stroke, disease, infection, nerve degeneration, and even exposure to toxic chemicals. However, many times the origin of nerve pain is unknown though it does tend to affect the older population more often.

Some of the more common kinds of nerve pain are: trigeminal neuralgia (also called Tic Douloureux) which affects the face, sciatica which usually starts in the lower back and runs down the leg, shingles which affects one side of the body, usually in the chest and back and is the after effect of a herpes zoster (shingles) attack and diabetic neuropathy which often affects the feet. Other potential causes are AIDS or HIV, multiple sclerosis, chemotherapy, alcoholism and amputation.

How Acupuncture Can Help

Not only can the pain from these and other neurological conditions be debilitating in its intensity, pain medications are generally ineffective in treating the discomfort. Fortunately acupuncture; often used with electrical stimulation in treating nerve conditions, is very effective at relieving the pain and restoring normal function. There are several ways this is thought to work, all of which have been carefully researched.

- Acupuncture stimulates the brain to release chemicals (neurotransmitters and opioids) into the body that reduce sensitivity to pain and normalize the nervous system.
- Acupuncture activates nerve receptors that decrease or "gate-out" (like a gate being closed) pain signals.

Acupuncture with electrical stimulation interrupts the pain signal allowing the nerve to calm down thereby reducing pain.

Acupuncture increases the amount of endorphins in the body and focuses them on the affected areas. These natural chemicals reduce inflammation that can cause, or be a result of, nerve pain. Acupuncture promotes actual healing by altering the body's electrical system to allow the transfer of material and electrical energy between normal and injured tissue thereby reducing the amount of recovery time.

The electrical stimulation that is used is not painful, in fact, often patients state that it feels very good. It may take several treatments to achieve long lasting results but patients usually feel better after the first treatment. In the case of a degenerative disease, complete relief may not be obtainable but the quality of life can be improved by reducing pain, increasing function and slowing the degenerative process. An acupuncture treatment for nerve pain takes about a half an hour from start to finish.