



Depression symptoms caused by the worst summer ever - Acupuncture and Depression 11.10.2007

Dismal weather has turned this year's promised summer sizzler into a summer fizzler. The miserable conditions have caused many people to suffer from SAD Syndrome (Seasonal Affective Disorder). Normally this condition is common during the winter months of December, January and February, but with the lack of sunshine this year more and more people are becoming depressed.

Currently there are an estimated two million people a year in the UK suffering from depression*. Research shows that with one in 20 of us visiting our GP because of the condition, it is definitely a modern day epidemic. The World Health Organisation (WHO) recommends acupuncture as a proven treatment for depression.

Many people are unaware that acupuncture has a long history of use in the treatment of psychiatric disorders in China. It is now increasingly being used both on its own and in conjunction with other therapies, such as psychotherapy and antidepressants, in the UK.

How can acupuncture help?

Chinese Medicine acknowledges that emotional factors play a part in health and that emotional life cannot be separated from the physical. Acupuncturists talk about seven main emotions: joy, worry/overthinking, anger, sadness, grief, fear and fright. It is human nature to experience these feelings - the real problem occurs when we experience them to an excessive degree or don't experience them at all. For example, a person can get stuck in anger due to harbouring resentment over many years, which in turn may manifest in physical or emotional conditions such as anxiety, depression, or insomnia.

Neil Quinton, acupuncturist and British Acupuncture Council member explains how it can help: "My experience has shown that acupuncture has a lot to offer people suffering from all kinds of depression. It really can be an effective alternative treatment for the condition. I have seen many patients change their lives and move on from a very difficult period - it's as though acupuncture acts as a catalyst for change. Because it regulates the body's functioning and with the interconnectedness of mind and body, patients always find that as they feel better their physical complaints improve too.



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"Acupuncture treatment offers patients the chance to see the relationship between their mind and body - how they eat, drink, and exercise impacts on their mental health. It is a great way of empowering patients to care better for themselves in the future."

Research into acupuncture and depression

- o A double blind study was conducted among women suffering from depression. The results found that acupuncture was significantly better in treating depression than either sham acupuncture or no treatment at all (1998, Allen et al)
- o A further study (2000) found that acupuncture gave significant clinical improvement to depression sufferers. The patients were treated by true acupuncture ten times in two weeks and when compared to sham treatments showed a marked improvement. It was found to be especially good for treating anxiety symptoms (2000, Eich et al)
- o A 1998 study at University of Arizona into the treatment of depression in 33 women by acupuncture was fairly widely reported in the acupuncture profession and elsewhere. The study found that 64% of the women experienced full remission of depression following depression-specific acupuncture treatment, appearing to show that acupuncture can provide significant symptom relief at rates comparable to standard treatments such as psychotherapy or pharmacotherapy.
- o A 2004 study found that acupuncture was an effective treatment for depression during pregnancy. (University of Stanford)

<http://www.acupuncture.org.uk/content/news/news.asp?id=58>



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