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ACUPUNCTURE PROVES BEST IN REDUCING POSTOPERATIVE PAIN

Pain following orthopedic surgery is a common occurrence. Frequently, medications are administered to help ease the amount of postoperative pain the patient suffers. Now, the results of a recently completed study in China point toward Acupuncture as the preferred treatment in reducing patient discomfort.

The test was conducted in Henan, China, at the Third Affiliated Hospital of Luohe Medical Higher Training School. Here 60 patients who had undergone orthopedic surgery were divided into two equal groups. The first group of 30 received Acupuncture and the second 30 comprised a medication group.

The patients in the Acupuncture group received treatment at two separate points. The first, known as Xuanzhong (GB39) is a specific point located several inches above the malleolus bone near the ankle joint. (This is the pronounced bump on the outside of the ankle just above the heel.) A second location of Acupuncture treatment known as an Ashi Point was also used on each person. (An Ashi point is a general term for a tender or painful place on a person's body where Acupuncture is performed. These are not fixed points but are unique to each individual.) Acupuncture treatments lasted for 30 minutes.

The members of the medication group were treated by intramuscular injection of Bezoxazocine. They received a 20 mg injection a total of 3 times each day.

The results of the study showed that Acupuncture provided superior pain reduction over treatment with medication. The criterion used was the "good rate" of pain reduction at 24 hours and at 48 hours respectively following surgery.

Members of the Acupuncture group showed good rates of 89.2% at 24 hours while the medication group only achieved 81.4%. At 48 hours, the good rate for Acupuncture was 100% with the medication group achieving 96.3%. From these results, the researchers were able to report that Acupuncture at the GB39 and Ashi points has a better analgesic effect than does the more commonly used injection of medication.