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## \$370,000+ NHMRC grant approved for new Australian Acupuncture Study.

### Overview:

There is evidence to suggest that Acupuncture can modulate both non-specific and specific immunity. Published literature suggests that this modulation is most prominent in subjects with chronic inflammatory diseases such as allergic rhinitis. Allergic rhinitis is a significant burden to the Australian community in quality of life and wellbeing, impaired performance, loss of productivity and health care costs. The total number of Australians who have allergic rhinitis is estimated to be in the order of 3.2 million and the prevalence of the disease is increasing. While there is evidence that acupuncture treatment is clinically beneficial for patients with allergic rhinitis, little is currently understood about the mechanisms of acupuncture in this or other chronic in-



flammatory diseases which involve changes in the mucosal immune response.

**John McDonald (School of Medicine, Griffith Health), Prof Allan Cripps (Pro-Vice Chancellor, Health, Griffith University), A/Prof Pete Smith (Bond University), A/Prof Caroline Smith (University of Adelaide), A/Prof Brenda Golianu (Stanford University) and Prof Charlie Xue (RMIT University) are all participating in this promising new research.**

The grant of approximately \$370,000 is for the years 2009 to 2011. This project has essentially become an

RCT on the clinical efficacy of Acupuncture for allergic rhinitis in which there are many details of immune modulation being studied at the same time.

The overall objective of this research is to investigate the effects of acupuncture on the mucosal immune response in the upper respiratory tract. To achieve this objective we have developed a research plan around 3 specific aims. In patients with allergic rhinitis we will:

- (i) Determine if acupuncture modifies the Th1/Th2 balance at the mucosal level of the upper respiratory tract,
- (ii) Determine if acupuncture modifies non-specific immunity at the mucosal level of the upper respiratory tract, and

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(iii) Examine potential mechanisms by which acupuncture may modify mucosal immune responses.

### Project Outcomes:

The growing use of unproven complementary and alternative therapies highlights a need for scientifically rigorous research to identify those that are based on sound biological mechanisms and that are safe and effective. This research will

identify essential new information that provides an understanding of how acupuncture influences mucosal immune response specifically in the upper respiratory tract.

This information may also have relevance to understanding modulation of mucosal immune response in the lower respiratory tract and the gut. New information on the mechanism of acupuncture in modifying mucosal

immunity would be likely to contribute to a better understanding of the mechanisms of acupuncture in a broader sense. Also by studying changes in particular cytokines, neurotrophins and neuropeptides simultaneously, the complex interactions between these three groups of inflammatory mediators may be further elucidated, in turn opening up new avenues for research into potential therapeutic interventions.

## Media gallery video - Cosmetic Acupuncture

Cosmetic acupuncture is a specialist field of acupuncture aimed at improving the skins appearance naturally. It is also known as acupuncture facial rejuvenation. It is a gentle yet effective alternative to western Cosmetic surgery, Botox, collagen injections, dermabrasion etc.



## Acupuncture / TCM events for November

**01****Sydney - Completing the Cycle**

Contact: Dr Soma Glick on (02) 9518 5311 or enquiries@artofhealth.com.au

This is a multi-day event ending on the 02/11

**08****Sydney - Oriental Medicine Paediatrics**

Contact: Dr Soma Glick on (02) 9518 5311 or enquiries@artofhealth.com.au

This is a multi-day event ending on the 11/11

**27****Melbourne - DUI YAO - The Art of Specificity**

When: 6.30pm - 9.30pm

Where: Hilton Hotel - 192 Wellington Parade

Contact: Emily Lewis on 1300 133 807 or emily@panaxea.com

This is a multi-day event ending on the 27/11

**29****West Croydon - Stop Smoking Workshop**

When: 10.00am - 1.00pm, Where: 245 Torrens Road

Contact: Anh Phung on (08)8346 7800 or newstar@sacw.com.au

*If you would like to add your own event to our calendar for free, visit us online .*

Acupuncture dedicated research  
archives available online.

featuring links to full text articles and search facility

# Massage for low-back pain.

**BACKGROUND:** Low-back pain is one of the most common and costly musculoskeletal problems in modern society. Proponents of massage therapy claim it can minimize pain and disability, and speed return to normal function.

**OBJECTIVES:** To assess the effects of massage therapy for non-specific low-back pain.

**SEARCH STRATEGY:** We searched MEDLINE, EMBASE, CINAHL from their beginning to May 2008. We also searched the Cochrane Central Register of Controlled Trials (The Cochrane Library 2006, issue 3), HealthSTAR and Dissertation abstracts up to 2006. There were no language restrictions. References in the included studies and in reviews of the literature were screened.

**SELECTION CRITERIA:** The studies had to be randomized or quasi-randomized trials investigating the use of any type of massage (using the hands or a mechanical device) as a treatment for non-specific low-back pain.

**DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS:** Two review authors selected the studies, assessed the risk of bias using the criteria recommended by the Cochrane Back Review Group, and extracted the data using standard-



ized forms. Both qualitative and meta-analyses were performed.

**MAIN RESULTS:** Thirteen randomized trials were included. Eight had a high risk and five had a low risk of bias. One study was published in German and the rest in English. Massage was compared to an inert therapy (sham treatment) in two studies that showed that massage was superior for pain and function on both short and long-term follow-ups. In eight studies, massage was compared to other active treatments. They showed that massage was similar to exercises, and massage was superior to joint mobilization, relaxation therapy, physical therapy, acupuncture and self-care education. One study showed that reflexology on the feet had no effect on pain and functioning. The beneficial effects of massage in patients with chronic low-back pain lasted at least one year after the end of the treatment. Two studies compared two different

techniques of massage. One concluded that acupuncture massage produces better results than classic (Swedish) massage and another concluded that Thai massage produces similar results to classic (Swedish) massage.

**AUTHORS' CONCLUSIONS:** Massage might be beneficial for patients with subacute and chronic non-specific low-back pain, especially when combined with exercises and education. The evidence suggests that acupuncture massage is more effective than classic massage, but this need confirmation. More studies are needed to confirm these conclusions, to assess the impact of massage on return-to-work, and to determine cost-effectiveness of massage as an intervention for low-back pain.

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