Treating Anxiety With Acupuncture

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Balancing Mind and Body

Can you stimulate an acupuncture/acupressure point the next time you're anxious and experience actual results?

According to a 2001 study at Yale, the answer is most likely yes, if you exhibit similarities to the volunteers used in the study. Fifty-five adults who were scheduled to undergo surgery were selected and had their anxiety levels monitored. The adults were divided into three groups:

1. A group that received acupuncture at the shenmen point of the ear.
2. A group that received acupuncture at the relaxation point of the ear.
3. A third group received acupuncture at a fake point on their ear.

The needles were of a type that could stay implanted in the ear for forty-eight hours.

Below is the exact location of each of these points in the ear:

Shenmen point
On your ear, in the upper one-third, there's a large depression called the triangular fossa. The shenmen point is located in the 'corner' of the fossa near the midline of the ear.

Relaxation point
The relaxation point is also located within the triangular fossa of the ear. It's at the opposite end of the triangular fossa, at the top point where the fossa meets the outer edge of the ear.

The volunteers who received acupuncture at the relaxation point in the ear had significantly less anxiety at thirty minutes and forty-eight hours, compared to the shenmen group and the placebo group. There was no difference in the blood pressure and heart rate between the different groups.

What to Do When Suffering From Anxiety

When you're experiencing anxiety, you don't have to see a licensed acupuncturist (although I would recommend doing so). A trained acupuncturist might discover that other health conditions you experience necessitate the use of more important acupuncture points for treatment.

In the meantime, you might try pressing the acupuncture point on the ear called the relaxation point; hold it for one minute, and repeat this several times throughout the day. This process is called acupressure, and it's great because anyone, even a child, can learn how to do it.

Interestingly, there are acupuncture and acupressure points for anxiety, others for constipation, muscle aches and pain, gas and bloating, anxiety memory loss, lack of concentration and many more. The Chinese have determined

these points in the body over the last two thousand years, and all you have to do is take advantage of their knowledge! Several are on the ear; many are on the back, hands and feet and throughout the rest of the body.

Here are several such points:

CV 17, (Conception Vessel 17, a point that relieves stress)
This point is located at the center of your breastbone and is considered an *Emotional Balancing Point* in the body.

Foot Point
To find this point, follow your big toe back to where it meets the middle of your foot. This point is perfect for mind and body connections and great for relieving anxiety, worry and apprehension.

Make it a goal to learn a few points on the body for different conditions and practice them every month. Add new ones monthly. Within six months, you'll start to feel more in control of your health.

Resource:

Wang, S.M. and Kain, Z.N. Auricular acupuncture: a potential treatment for anxiety. Anesth Analg 2001 Feb; 92(2): 548-53.