

Acupuncture for chronic neck pain--a cohort study in an NHS pain clinic.

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The study investigates the outcome of acupuncture for chronic neck pain in a cohort of patients referred to an NHS chronic pain clinic. One hundred and seventy two patients were selected for acupuncture over a period of 6.5 years. Treatment was given by a single acupuncturist and consisted of a course of needle acupuncture for an average of seven sessions per patient. Treatment outcome was measured by an oral rating scale of improvement at the end of treatment and at follow up six months and one year after treatment. Nineteen patients were withdrawn from treatment for various reasons, two for adverse events. One hundred and fifty three patients were evaluated, of whom 68% had a successful outcome from acupuncture, reporting an improvement in pain of at least 50%. The success rate was higher in patients with a short duration of pain: 85% in patients with pain for up to three months and 78% with pain for up to six months. Long-term follow up showed that 49% of the patients who completed treatment had maintained the benefit after six months, and 40% at one year. **The results indicate that acupuncture can be an effective treatment for selected patients with chronic neck pain.**

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