

## **Auricular and Body Acupuncture in the Management Of Chemical Dependency and Stress in Sickle Cell Disease**

Sickle Cell Disease predominantly affects Africans and African-Americans. However it has been shown that all races are affected. An estimated 72,000 people in the United States of America have the disease. Some Chemotherapeutic agents like hydroxyurea, isobutyranide and bone marrow transplantation have been tried in the management of this disease. Some undesirable side effects have been noted these include carcinogenesis, pancytopenia, severe epigastric pain, convulsion and intracranial hemorrhage.

Although acupuncture is fairly new to this country, it has been practiced in the Africa and Asia for several thousands years. Acupuncture treatment for addicts started in Hong Kong when a doctor applied electrical acupuncture to surgery patients for pain. Several of these were heroin addicts, who reported less or no withdrawal symptoms. In this country, both medical doctors and acupuncturists have spent many years testing acupuncture treatments for substance abuse. Results of their work helped develop the treatment we use today. In fact acupuncture is now used very successfully for alcohol addiction, other substance abuse and chemical dependency.

Sickle Cell Anemia is a hereditary blood disease, which produces severe pain and stress. Acupuncture is accepted as a treatment that relieves stress, craving, and withdrawal symptoms in substance abuse and chemical dependent patients. Sickle Cell patients, because of the frequent usage of narcotics, can often become chemically dependent. Presently, addiction and chemical dependency in Sickle Cell Disease is a common occurrence. Addiction or chemical dependencies in Sickle Cell Disease are a result of Meperidine and Opiates use for pain. Acupuncture offers a very simple procedure, which can be applied in almost all chemical dependency treatment setting by a wide range of health professionals. Addictive Substances in which Detox Acupuncture is effective in treating are alcohol, heroin and opiates, methadone, barbiturates, cocaine, crack, methamphetamines, cigarettes, and prescription pharmaceuticals.

In light of the scientific evidence of the effectiveness of auricular and body acupuncture on chemical dependency and stress, it seems feasible and beneficial that we implement this treatment in Sickle Cell Disease patients.

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