

## ACUPUNCTURE FAQs

### **What is the purpose of this study?**

- To see whether acupuncture can help decrease headaches in Service Members with Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

### **Where does this study take place?**

- All study visits are conducted at the TBI Clinic at Fort Belvoir Community Hospital

### **Who is eligible to participate?**

- Previously deployed Service Members with headaches and mild to moderate TBI

### **What does the study involve?**

- Subjects will be randomly assigned to 1 of 3 groups:
  - Traditional Chinese acupuncture
  - Ear acupuncture
  - Usual care
- Subjects will complete: (1) daily headache diary and (2) questionnaires about their general health, symptoms and health behaviors at baseline, week 6 and week 12.
- Those in the usual care group will continue with their current medical regimen and complete (1) daily headache diary during their 6-week treatment period and (2) questionnaires at week 12. Those who elect to receive 6 weeks of ear acupuncture treatment will do so between weeks 6 and 12.

### **What are the differences between the three groups?**

- Traditional acupuncture group
  - An acupuncturist will examine and evaluate subjects before inserting thin, sterile stainless steel needles at specific points on their body.
- Ear acupuncture group
  - An acupuncturist will insert sterile stainless steel needles and an ASP ear needle into various points in subject's outer ear. The ASP is a shorter needle that will stay in the participant's ear for a few days.
- Usual care group
  - No acupuncture during the 6 week study time period
  - Continue to receive medical care for headaches and other symptoms
  - Subjects can elect to receive up to 10 ear acupuncture treatments between weeks 6 and 12

### **How long is this study?**

- 12 weeks

### **What happens during the study visits?**

- There are 3 research visits (at baseline, week 6 and week 12) during which participants complete questionnaires. These visits take approximately 60 - 90 minutes.
- There are 10 acupuncture treatment visits plus an initial assessment over 6 weeks.
  - Ear acupuncture: 45 minutes/treatment session
  - Traditional Chinese acupuncture: 60 minutes/treatment session

### **Are there any risks?**

Acupuncture when administered by trained and licensed acupuncturists is relatively safe. However, some possible risks include:

- Expected likely risks: discomfort, slight bleeding and bruising at needle insertion sites
- Ear acupuncture risks: small chance of developing an infection of the outer ear

### **What are the benefits to participating in the study?**

- Acupuncture groups: possible improvement of some symptoms, including headaches; possibility that some may not experience any direct benefit
- Usual care group: no direct benefits, but their participation may help others in the future

### **Can study participants change their mind about the study?**

- Participation is voluntary
- Study participants may withdraw from this study at any time but some testing or period of observation by the investigators may be recommended in order to safely terminate participation

### **Who can I contact for questions about the study?**

- Charmagne Paat, Research Coordinator, 703-299-4841 or
- Ashley Price, Research Coordinator, 703-299-4869 or
- Email [acupuncturestudy@siib.org](mailto:acupuncturestudy@siib.org)