



EVIDENCE POINTS TO ACUPUNCTURE

Whether brought on by a sudden injury like the blast of an improvised explosive device or developed over time from the heavy equipment service members carry, acute and chronic pain can be disabling and a major cause of lost work productivity, increased medical costs and decreased quality of life.

Much has been reported in mainstream media and by the Department of Defense (DoD) about overmedication of service members with pain. Approaches that may achieve greater pain relief with fewer medications are more appealing than ever. One promising solution is acupuncture, which combats pain while avoiding narcotic side effects such as depression, fatigue, drug misuse and isolation.

BATTLEFIELD ACUPUNCTURE

Although traditional acupuncture is based on more than 2,000 points along 20 pathways in the body called meridians; Battlefield Acupuncture simplifies the treatment by focusing on five easy-access points within the ear to provide pain relief. Battlefield Acupuncture gets its name from the ease and speed of treatment and training. The treatment takes minutes; the patient can remain fully clothed; and the provider of care can be a fellow service member.

After two promising pilot studies, the United States Air Force and Samueli Institute developed the first DoD training program to teach military primary care physicians this simple procedure. The 2008 training program brought Battlefield Acupuncture into primary care, where it can be used as a first-line treatment to quickly and conveniently deliver relief to patients presenting with acute and chronic pain.



EMPLOYING SMART STRATEGIES NATIONWIDE

Samueli Institute is currently working with all three services and the Veterans Administration on a program to evaluate Battlefield Acupuncture training; make the practice more widely available; assess the short- and long-term impacts on pain management; and measure the cost of treatment.

“We’re proud to work with our military partners to maximize the propagation of the Battlefield Acupuncture training across the Department of Defense. Our goal is to ensure that the training can be efficiently and effectively rolled out nationwide,” said Samueli Institute’s chief operating officer Joan Walter, JD, PA.



By collaborating with the military, Samueli Institute has helped expand the use of therapeutic tools to help improve performance, deal with pain and cope with the trauma and stress of war.

Learn more at www.HealingOurWarfighters.org

A DECADE OF SAMUELI INSTITUTE'S ACUPUNCTURE RESEARCH

Samueli Institute has worked with DoD clinicians, researchers and leaders to study the feasibility and impact of introducing acupuncture into pain treatment in primary care, specialty pain programs, and even in preparation of wounded and ill members for aircrav from Germany.

- A recent look at the literature analyzing the value of acupuncture showed where acupuncture has been found effective and which areas required more research. Acupuncture was found to be effective for treating headaches and is a promising treatment option for anxiety, sleep disturbances, depression and chronic pain.
- An ongoing study looks at how Battlefield Acupuncture compares with full-body acupuncture and conventional treatment for headaches due to a traumatic brain injury.
- An epidemiological data analysis study is currently evaluating the impact of acupuncture utilization on narcotic load and additional utilization of conventional interventions within a chronic pain population.