

## Acupuncture for pain management and addiction prevention

Report to Legislative HHS committee Sept 11, 2012

With the numbers of New Mexicans experiencing chronic pain and addiction issues, we need many alternatives for treatment and prevention because some treatments do not work for all people.

Acupuncture is an accessible, effective and safe treatment for treatment and prevention of pain and addictions.

### 1. Acupuncture is Accessible

- Inexpensive
  - Auricular acupuncture for addictions can be administered by non-acupuncture staff of substance abuse treatment programs.
  - Pain can be treated inexpensively in a community acupuncture clinic.
  - Materials cost \$1 per person/treatment
- Acceptable  
Acupuncture is acceptable for many populations - women, veterans, elderly, homeless all ethnicity/races, people in acute detox, people at risk for substance abuse, drug court, DWI, and jail programs.
- Trained workforce available
  - 170 trained Auricular detoxification specialists, ~50 currently practicing around NM.
  - 625 trained acupuncturists (Doctors of Oriental Medicine), ~500 practice around NM.
  - Our programs gave close to 6,000 treatments for addictions during more than 1000 session at 23 sites last year. An estimated 10,000 treatments around the state were given.

### Kinds of Acupuncture available in NM

Acupuncture style	What is it?	Training Needed	Cost per treatment	# Active licenses/certifications in NM	e.g. cost for 10 treatments
Auricular Detoxification	5 needles in each ear for addictions only	32 hours and 40 client internship	\$1-\$5	66	\$50
Doctors of OM - Community Acupuncture Style	Acupuncture (and herbs) in group setting for many issues	2400-3600 hours	\$15-40	10 practice to date (out of 625 DOMs)	\$250
Doctors of OM - Individual practice style	Acupuncture and herbs in private setting	2400-3600 hours	\$50-150	625	\$1,000
Doctors of OM - Expanded Practice style	Acupuncture and herbs in private setting + naturopathic style modalities	2400-3600 hours +144 hours	+\$15-200	~50	\$1,000 +\$1,000

### 2. Acupuncture is Effective

- Acupuncture has long been proven effective for pain and addiction problems - (see WHO and evidence handout).
- Elderly clients in our clinics use acupuncture to control pain.
- Our addictions clients experience success and staff of substance abuse treatment programs report success in reducing withdrawal symptoms.

### *Addiction Client Quotes*

"If I'd known about these treatments before I'd be in a lot less trouble about stay'n clean because I have to give UA's. I've noticed I don't have any cravings for drugs and am not wishing I could use either. They also help me out a lot because due to my pregnancy I'm not taking my psychotropic drugs. It's help with my anxiety, agitation and insomnia."

"Acudetox has been a god-send to me and helped me with my cravings and my addictions. ... I smoke half the amount I used to. I know that acudetox has made a tremendous difference in my life. In some ways, it actually has saved my life!!"

"When I do the acupuncture I feel relaxed and I don't think about the way I feel. Although I can't remember when I was in my past, I just want to move forward in life and be clear minded and sober."

"I am extremely grateful for the help that you guys as a whole have provided for me. I was jumped and beaten badly 5 days ago and have been in extreme pain. ... today I have not felt tranquility like [this] in my entire life. I never would have thought that this could actually help take away my pain, and anxiety."

"It makes me feel very calm. My mind gets very clean and it really does help in my sleeping. If time permits when I get out, I would like to continue with this process."

### *Treatment Program Staff Quotes*

"Clients have reported that acupuncture helps calm their emotions. Some have also verbalized that they crave drugs and alcohol less after a treatment. Some have noticed they are more relaxed after a session." 2006 Angela Oliver. Counselor. 8th Judicial District Drug Court

"The patients are not lining up for their medications since acudetox was offered (meds are given out at noon to those who feel they need them)" 2008 Gabrielle Meese & Marie Romero, Substance Abuse Technician Bernalillo County MATS

"While we had full body acupuncture available at Turquoise Lodge, we saw drastic reductions in people needing medical care for headaches, body aches and such. People would fall asleep during classes so we had to change the time for acupuncture to the end of the day."  
2006 Mitch Simson, MD. Turquoise Lodge Residential Program

### 3. Acupuncture is Safe

- Serious side effects or adverse reactions are extremely rare (see evidence handout)
- Acupuncture does not interact with medications so can be safely used alongside standard treatments and with pregnant women.

### Conclusion

*Acupuncture is accessible, effective and safe treatment for pain and addictions and could be a valuable component of New Mexico's substance abuse prevention and treatment plan and of New Mexico's general health prevention plan.*



## Diseases and disorders that can be treated with acupuncture

### 1. Diseases, symptoms or conditions for which acupuncture has been proved—through controlled trials—to be an effective treatment:

Biliary colic

Dysmenorrhoea, primary

Epigastralgia, acute (in peptic ulcer, acute and chronic gastritis, and gastrospasm)

Facial pain (including craniomandibular disorders)

Headache

Knee pain

Low back pain

Neck pain

Pain in dentistry (including dental pain and temporomandibular dysfunction)

Periarthritis of shoulder

Postoperative pain

Renal colic

Rheumatoid arthritis

Sciatica

Sprain

Tennis elbow

### 2. Diseases, symptoms or conditions for which the therapeutic effect of acupuncture has been shown but for which further proof is needed:

Pain

Abdominal pain (in acute gastroenteritis or due to gastrointestinal spasm)

Cancer pain

Cholecystitis, chronic, with acute exacerbation

Cholelithiasis

Earache

Eye pain due to subconjunctival injection

Facial spasm

Fibromyalgia and fasciitis

Gastrokinetic disturbance

Gouty arthritis

Labour pain

Neuralgia, post-herpetic

Osteoarthritis

Pain due to endoscopic examination

Pain in thromboangiitis obliterans

Postoperative convalescence

Radicular and pseudoradicular pain syndrome

Sore throat (including tonsillitis)

Spine pain, acute

Stiff neck

Temporomandibular joint dysfunction

Ulcerative colitis, chronic

Urolithiasis

Addiction

Alcohol dependence and detoxification

Opium, cocaine and heroin dependence

Tobacco dependence

## Acupuncture for Addictions – Evidence

**Biological mechanisms of acupuncture for substance use.** Acupuncture modulates the mesolimbic dopamine neurons and affects several neurotransmitter systems involved in dopamine release (Yang, 2008), GABA (Lee, 2008; Yang, 2010), and serotonin (Guo, 2008; Yoshimoto, 2006;) as well as the more widely known effect on the endorphin (endogenous opiate) system (Lee, 2009; Guo, 2008)

**Auricular and body acupuncture for withdrawal symptoms and associated disorders.** There is evidence to support body and auricular acupuncture's use to reduce some of the symptoms of drug withdrawal such as: cravings (Han, 2011; Chang, 2010;), anxiety (Chang, 2010; Pilkington, 2007); anxiety associated with addiction (Courbasson, 2007;), depression (Courbasson, 2007), insomnia (Phillips, 2001; Ruan, 2009), PTSD (Hollifield, 2007), and body aches and pains (Lin, 2009; Madsen, 2009; Linde, 2009; Usichenko, 2008;).

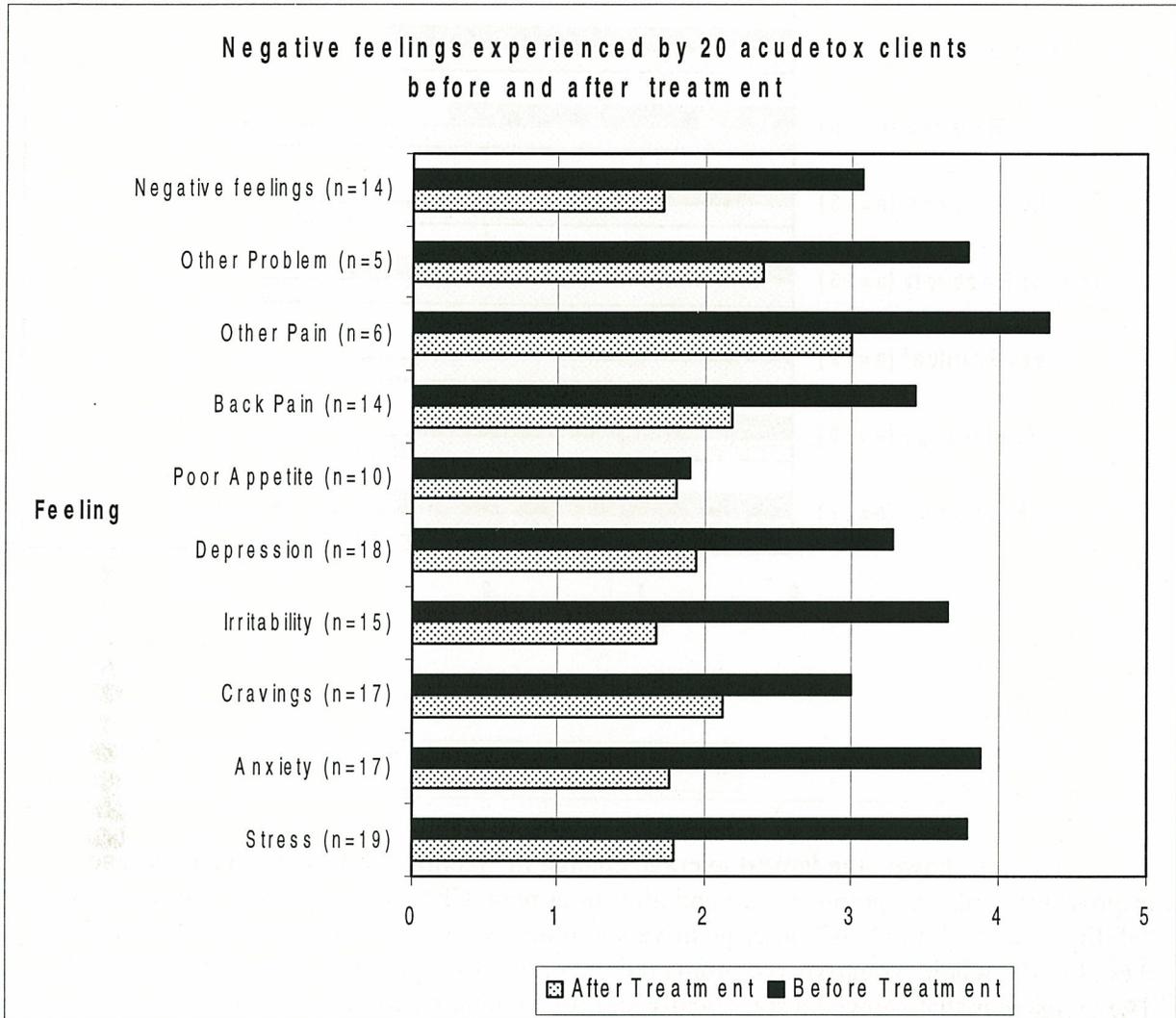
**Auricular and body acupuncture for increasing client compliance and reducing recidivism.** Gurevich (1996) found significant improvement for outcomes related to compliance, AMA discharge rate, length of stay, acceptance of discharge instructions, and follow-up treatment attendance in an acupuncture treated group. The National Institutes of Health concluded that acupuncture for addictions, "may be useful as an adjunct treatment or an acceptable alternative or be included in a comprehensive management program" (Acupuncture. NIH Consensus Statement 1997).

**Safety of Acupuncture.** Adverse effects of ear acupuncture are rare and usually minor including local hematoma and bleeding (3.0%), or rarely fainting or nausea (0.8%) (Yamashita, 2000). A series of prospective surveys have established a very low rate of serious adverse events for acupuncture in general (MacPherson, 2004; Witt, 2009; Zhang, 2009).

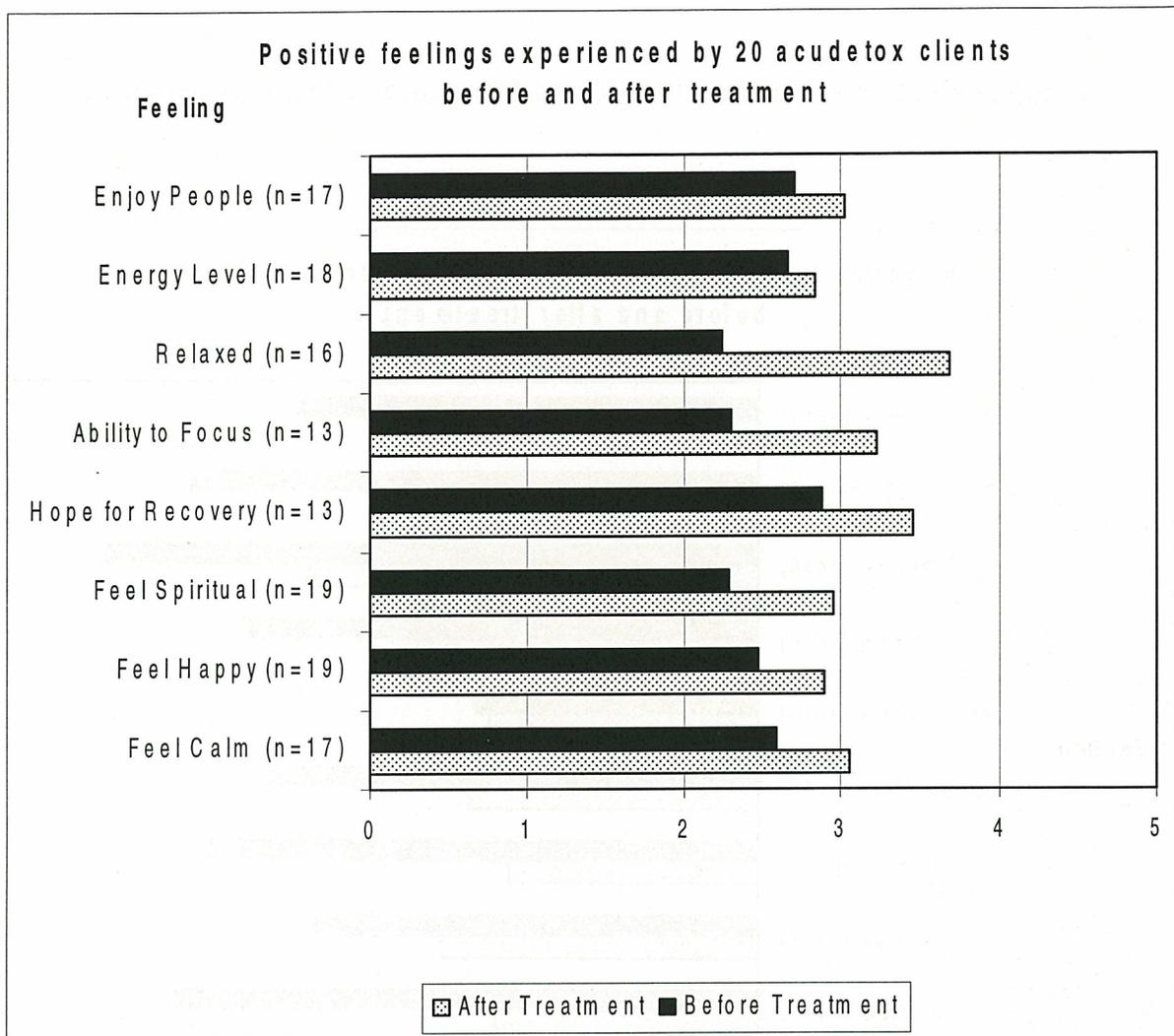
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## Examples of Symptom Outcomes for an Albuquerque Acudetox Program



Clients showed the largest average change in levels of stress, anxiety and irritability levels with an average improvement of 2 or more points before and after treatment (2.00, 2.12, 2.00 respectively). There was not much change for the symptom of poor appetite (0.10) and a small improvement in cravings symptoms (0.88). Other symptoms showed an average improvement score from 1.25 to 1.40 points.



Clients showed the largest average change in “feeling relaxed” with an average improvement of 1.44 points before and after treatment. Clients also showed improvement in “ability to focus” (0.92) All other positive symptoms showed an improvement from 0.17 to 0.66. On the whole, negative symptoms reduced more than positive symptoms increased. The symptoms that showed a statistically significant change are listed below.

Clients paired sample t-test for before and after treatment symptoms scores.

	Before Mean	After Mean	Mean Difference	Std Dev	95% CI Lower	95% CI Upper	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Stress	3.600	1.700	1.900	1.518	1.189	2.611	5.596	19	0.000
Anxiety	3.300	1.500	1.800	1.399	1.145	2.455	5.753	19	0.000
Irritability	3.056	1.389	1.667	1.572	0.885	2.448	4.499	17	0.000
Depression	2.950	1.750	1.200	1.399	0.545	1.855	3.835	19	0.001
Back Pain	2.526	1.605	0.921	1.377	0.257	1.585	2.916	18	0.009
Negative Feelings	2.150	1.200	0.950	1.538	0.230	1.670	2.762	19	0.012
Feel Relaxed	2.556	3.833	-1.278	1.776	-2.161	-0.395	-3.053	17	0.007

# Public Health Acupuncture of New Mexico

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**O**ur mission is to promote the use of acupuncture to improve the health of New Mexicans, to reduce health disparities, and to develop a public health acupuncture practitioner workforce for New Mexico. With over 400 licensed acupuncturists and 50 certified auricular detoxification specialists (ear acupuncture for addictions), New Mexico is in a unique position to incorporate acupuncture into its healthcare plan.

## *Provide support for starting up acupuncture addiction programs*

- We hold NADA (National Acupuncture Detoxification Association) Trainings to increase the acudetox workforce.
- We provide technical support to substance use treatment programs and staff.
- We support DOM acudetox supervisors
- We evaluate programs and write reports
- We work with Harm Reduction Programs.

## *Clinical services for substance users*

- Acudetox clinic open to all eligible clients.
- Promote and disseminate information about acudetox clinics to the public.

Programs we helped from July 2011-June 2012 gave 5953 acudetox treatments to substance users during more than 1000 clinics at 23 sites around NM.

## What we do:

- Promote the use of acupuncture for public health applications
- Provide accessible low-cost acupuncture clinic
- Provide support for starting up acupuncture addiction programs
- Train practitioners in public health acupuncture skills
- Promote integrative health programs
- Evaluate programs and communicate results

## *Promote the use of acupuncture for public health applications*

- Give informational talks and presentations about acupuncture and acudetox on invitation to various organizations around the state. Examples include St Vincents Hospital, NM Highlands University, Project ECHO.

## *Train practitioners in public health acupuncture skills*

- Provide acupuncture continuing education with an emphasis on public health acupuncture skills.

## *Provide accessible low-cost acupuncture clinic*

- Community acupuncture clinic in Albuquerque costing \$15-35 a treatment provides accessible acupuncture to the public. 90% of our patients have not had acupuncture before or within several years due to the high cost.

We will always thank you for your referrals:  
CAA Clinic - 505 266 2606  
[www.CommunityAcupunctureAlbuquerque.org](http://www.CommunityAcupunctureAlbuquerque.org)

