

Health Studies Page

THE PLACE TO LOOK FOR INFORMATION ON AREA CLINICAL TRIALS

Testing acupuncture against side effects

By Carol Sorgen

Studies have shown that complementary medical therapies, such as acupuncture, can be highly effective in controlling symptoms of disease without the unpleasant side effects many traditional therapies have.

GBMC and Mend Acupuncture are cur-

rently conducting a study to look at the use of acupuncture during cancer treatment as a cost-effective, non-drug tool for symptom management.

The trial is sponsored by the Center for Healthcare Innovation, and is being led by investigator Dr. Neri Cohen, GBMC's Division Chief of Thoracic Surgery.

The study will investigate the impact of acupuncture on managing symptoms such as pain, nausea, dry mouth and loss of taste in 60 head and neck adult oncology patients currently being treated at GBMC.

Physicians and patients will be informed about the trial and identified as potential study candidates. Enrollment in the trial is ongoing.

"Recently we've seen a trend among physicians looking at a more whole-patient care approach, as well as being more mindful of cost-effective interventions. Patients, too, are in search of non-pharmaceutical options.

"The result of these changing trends is that acupuncture's use has doubled in ten years," said Sarah O'Leary, founder of Mend Acupuncture.

"Offering this kind of measured care through the trial — especially for the participants who are undergoing such a life altering experience — is not only innovative, but hopefully will yield profound results," O'Leary added.

About the study

Patients will be randomized to receive either standard cancer treatment or standard treatment plus acupuncture therapy twice a week for 12 weeks. The sessions will take place at GBMC as well as at any of Mend's three Baltimore-area patient centers.

For more information about the study, or to see if you qualify, call (443) 849-3470 or contact your physician.

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Help with pain and nausea

"Patients with head and neck cancers experience an array of unpleasant symptoms due both to their disease and from the side effects of conventional treatments like surgery, chemotherapy or radiation therapy," said Cohen.

"Unfortunately, pharmacological [drug] interventions are sometimes ineffective or not well tolerated by patients. Acupuncture is beginning to be woven into oncology care plans for the treatment of nausea, dry mouth, fatigue, anxiety and pain.

"Moreover, acupuncture has been shown to boost red blood cell counts and enhance lymphocyte and natural killer cell activity," Cohen added.

BEACON BITS

Apr. 10

END-OF-LIFE COMFORT

What is the difference between hospice and palliative care? How do you recognize when that care is needed and where do you find services? Hospice of the Chesapeake physician Dr. Rudolph Willis and certified registered nurse practitioner Genevieve Lightfoot-Taylor will answer these and other questions about finding comfort with chronic illnesses and end-of-life care on Tuesday, April 10 from 7 to 8:30 p.m. at the Glen Burnie Regional Library, 1010 Eastway. This event is free. Registration is not required, but seating is limited. For more information, call (443) 837-1527 or visit www.hospicechesapeake.org.

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Principal Investigator: Lawrence J. Appel, MD, MPH
Protocol #IRB0006

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Principal Investigator: Dr. Michelle Eakin, Ph.D.
IRB Approval Number: IRB00091482