

# Acupuncture Research Update

"Quiet thoughts mend the body." - Chinese Proverb

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## Ear Acupuncture for Acute Sore Throat



In a 2015 study published by the Journal of the American Board of Family Medicine, researchers found auricular acupuncture treatments, provided extended pain relief and people needed fewer dosages of pain medications. According to the study, a specific type of acupuncture, known as Battlefield Acupuncture (BFA) was used to treat 56 patients who were afflicted with an acute onset of a sore throat. All the participants were monitored for pain levels and dosages of medications taken at the 15-minute mark, six-hour mark, 24-hour mark and 48-hour mark. In both areas, the group of participants who received Battlefield Acupuncture reported decreased pain levels and less need for pain medications. This study concludes Battlefield Acupuncture is associated with reduced levels of pain for up to 24 hours and decreased dosages of pain medication for up to 48 hours.

A sore throat can be more than just an annoyance. It can be painful and costly when missing work becomes

a necessity. Unfortunately, in the United States, many people cannot afford to take time off work for illness because they don't get any paid leave. This can exacerbate the issue and sometimes make it even more severe, turning it into something like strep throat, which can lead to severe health complications.

The typical treatment for a sore throat is non-steroidal anti-inflammatories like ibuprofen and possibly antibiotics when deemed appropriate. But Traditional Chinese Medicine treats a sore throat differently. In TCM there are two common causes of an acute sore throat, an attack by wind-heat or an attack by wind-dryness. There may be others also, but these are the two most common. This is how TCM differentiates the causes of the affliction. TCM theory states there are certain elements that can attack the body and create illness. Because a sore throat is almost always accompanied by some form of inflammation, there is usually heat generated.

A wind-heat invasion occurs when the Wei Qi (pronounced "way chee") is weaker than the invading force or pathogen. The Wei Qi is thought to be the defense that protects our bodies from outside forces. Think of Wei Qi as our immune system. When the Wei Qi is depleted or decreased, pathogens can break through and take root. With a wind-heat attack there may be fever, chills, sweating, headaches, body aches, a cough and a sore throat. A wind-dryness invasion is very similar to a wind-heat invasion, but there are more predominant signs of dryness, such as dry nose, mouth and throat and a dry cough. Regardless, the way to tackle either attack is by clearing heat and boosting the Wei Qi. This can be done fairly quickly through the use of acupuncture and herbs.

Acupuncture and in particular, Battlefield Acupuncture can bring quick relief to those suffering from a sore throat. Battlefield Acupuncture involves placing needles at specific points in the ear. When these points are stimulated, they help to balance the flow of the body's energy. Studies show using these points can inhibit certain neurotransmitters and inflammatory markers, as well as release endogenous opioids that fight off pain.

As with any type of illness, the sooner somebody receives treatment, the sooner the illness may clear up. The same goes with an acute sore throat. If you feel a sore throat coming on, schedule an appointment with a local licensed acupuncturist. You might just be surprised at the results. acupuncture treatments, osteoarthritis sufferers can effectively manage this debilitating disease.

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