

# Acupuncture Research Update

“Be yourself; everyone else is already taken.” - Oscar Wilde

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## Acupuncture for Weight Loss



An article published in the *Journal of Acupuncture and Meridian Studies*, substantiates the usage of acupuncture and traditional Chinese herbal formulations can help in the treatment of obesity and weight loss. The article reviewed four clinical studies and 16 animal studies on the effects of traditional Chinese medicine for treating obesity. There were different methods, but the results were ultimately the same. Obesity can be a result of total body inflammation or hormonal imbalances, and because of this, all the studies that were reviewed, had different approaches for treating the disease. All of the studies confirmed obesity can be managed utilizing Traditional Chinese Medicine techniques.

Obesity has become an epidemic in the United States. As many as one quarter of all Americans are considered overweight. And because of this, nearly \$33 billion will be spent annually on weight loss programs. However, almost 85 percent of those trying to lose weight, will fail. There are many reasons why Americans are getting larger waistlines, but ultimately, the burden falls upon the individual. There are methods that can help people lose pounds and maintain a healthy weight though.

TCM is a non-invasive, safe and effective method for helping with weight loss. Unfortunately, a vast majority of people tend to look for the “quick fix” and this is definitely not what TCM provides. But, if a person is willing to take control and be held accountable for their actions and decisions, then TCM can be quite helpful with regards to shedding pounds.

Multiple studies have shown when TCM modalities, such as acupuncture and herbal formulas, are combined with traditional methods of weight loss, the patients actually lose more weight. TCM views the body and how it functions differently than Western medicine. Everything in TCM is based upon the fact that every cell in the human body is a form of energy. When there is an imbalance of energies throughout the body, then disease or illness may arise. Obesity is a disease that requires balancing. When it comes to weight loss, there are two or three main areas that TCM practitioners focus on, the spleen, liver and kidney meridians.

The three areas that focus on weight loss in TCM, the spleen, liver and kidney meridians, are the powerhouses of the body. The kidney meridian equates to the endocrine system and this is treated to reduce water retention and to rebalance hormone levels. The spleen meridian is targeted to regulate sugar metabolism. The liver meridian is treated to reduce stress, which can lead to binge eating and other unhealthy eating habits. Increased levels of stress can also deplete the hormones that are responsible for metabolism in the body.

Acupuncture for weight loss is not a silver bullet and traditional methods should be used in conjunction with acupuncture. Obviously monitoring the diet and getting proper exercise and rest are all crucial when trying to lose weight. But if all these things are done together, losing weight should not be extremely difficult. It will still take time, but it can be achieved.

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