Hebden Bridge Acupuncture Centre Patient Information Sheet

Lower Back Pain

Lower back pain is a common reason for patients to visit an acupuncturist in the UK. This is not surprising as back pain is one of the commonest forms of medical complaint in the western world and lower back pain in particular makes up a considerable percentage of these cases. Recent studies have suggested that around 49% of the adult population in the UK suffered from a period of lower back pain (LBP) during the year 2000 alone (University of Westminster 2003).

Western Medicine and Lower Back Pain

So where does lower back pain originate from? In Western medicine there are 4 main aetiological roots:

1) Joint Disorders – Rheumatoid Spondylitis, Tuberculous Spondylitis
2) Intervertebral Soft Tissue Disorders – Chronic Lumbar Muscular Sprain, Fibrofascitis
3) Pressure on the Spinal Nerves – Spinal Compression
4) Local causes, Disease or Organ disorders – Kidney diseases, Pancreatitis, Uterine Disorders, Prostatitis.

Treatment predominantly consists of bed rest, and anti-inflammatory medication, however in more serious cases spinal surgery may be prescribed such as a Laminectomy.

Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) and Lower Back Pain

From a TCM perspective there are 3 main aetiological areas that cause back pain:

1) Invasion or Accumulation of Pathogenic Factors such as Wind, Cold & Damp possibly caused by living in cold and damp environments.
2) Underlying Kidney Deficiency – Deficient Kidney Essence will leave the lumbar region undernourished and cause pain. There are a variety of different reasons that cause Kidney Deficiency including congenital weakness, old age, chronic prolonged illness, pregnancy and childbirth, lack of exercise, excessive mental or physical strain and excessive menstrual bleeding.
3) Qi and Blood Stagnation in the lower back caused by physical trauma, muscle sprain from sudden movement, excessive walking, standing bending or carrying heavy loads. The lower back is a key area such damage as it is one of the main areas of movement in the body with very little muscular support. Qi and Blood Stagnation may also be the result of long term stress or emotional disturbance such as anger or depression causing a stagnation of Qi that blocks the Yang channels of the back.

Although patient recovery rates vary for all conditions according to the individuals own constitution and lifestyle, their are, to date, several studies, such as the randomised control trial of Meng et al (2003) that have concluded that acupuncture is an effective, safe adjunctive treatment for back pain.

How We Can Help

At the **Hebden Bridge Acupuncture Centre** we offer a combined therapeutic approach to the treatment of back pain including acupuncture, massage, dietary and lifestyle advice, and simple breathing exercises (Qi Gong) to promote the body's own natural healing processes.

For more information on how we can help you please contact us:

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References

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