

Acupuncture can relieve arthritis pain

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According to a new study, acupuncture significantly reduces pain and improves function in those suffering osteoarthritis of the knee.

Acupuncture has received mainstream acceptance, particularly for pain relief, in recent years and new research suggests the ancient Chinese needle treatment can reduce pain and boost mobility.

The latest study by the US National Institutes of Health (NIH) is one of the largest and longest clinical trials to show such conclusive effects and patients who underwent acupuncture treatment reported a 44 per cent average reduction in pain and a 40 per cent improvement in mobility.

Researchers enrolled 570 patients aged 50 or older with arthritis of the knee, who had significant pain in their knee the month before joining the study. They were randomly assigned to receive one of three treatments: acupuncture, sham acupuncture, or participation in a control group that followed the Arthritis Foundation's self-help course for managing their condition.

Overall, those who received acupuncture had a 40 per cent decrease in pain and a nearly 40 per cent improvement in function compared to baseline assessments.

Brian Berman, of the University of Maryland School of Medicine, Baltimore, said: "We have demonstrated that traditional Chinese acupuncture is an effective complement to conventional arthritis treatment and can be successfully employed as part of a multi-disciplinary approach to treating the symptoms of osteoarthritis."