

THE EFFECTS OF ACUPUNCTURE AND AROMATHERAPY ON THE TREATMENT OF
STRESS

A Capstone Proposal
Presented to the
Doctoral Faculty of
Pacific College of Oriental Medicine

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine

By

East Haradin, L.Ac.

San Diego, 2013

ABSTRACT

Objectives: The aim of this study was to determine if aromatherapy combined with acupuncture was more effective than acupuncture alone in reducing stress levels.

Design: Randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled pilot study.

Participants: Fourteen (14) women with high stress levels were recruited from an in-house residential drug and alcohol rehabilitation center.

Intervention: Participants were randomly assigned to either an aromatherapy group (N=6) or a placebo group (N=8). All participants received an acupuncture treatment once a week for six consecutive weeks.

Outcome Measures: The Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) and SF12v2 Health Survey (quality of life measurement) were the instruments used in this study.

Results: The stress levels as measured by the PSS were significantly reduced in both groups ($p < 0.05$) independently. The aromatherapy group experienced a greater reduction in PSS and a greater increase in SF12v2 Healthy Survey scores compared to the placebo group. A between groups analysis did not result in a significant difference for the PSS scores ($p > 0.05$). However, a statistical difference was found between groups for SF12v2 scores ($p < 0.05$).

Conclusions: Between groups analysis did not support the hypothesis that aromatherapy combined with acupuncture reduces stress significantly more than acupuncture alone. However, the aromatherapy group experienced a significantly higher increase in the quality of life scores compared to the placebo group. These results may be due to a small sample size and more research is warranted.

Key Words: acupuncture, aromatherapy, stress.