

Acupuncture

Introduction

I chose to research acupuncture because I have always been curious about this procedure and have always wanted to have it done. I wasn't sure what it is used to treat or where it came from or even if it actually worked, so looking up Web sites about the topic really helped me understand it a lot more. It was difficult to find Web sites that were credible in their information about acupuncture, but I did find a few. A lot of the sites that I found were private practice Web sites that just told about their treatment and things of that nature. The sites that told me background information and research seemed very similar to me so I had a hard time distinguishing between the two. Also, I could not use Healthy People 2010 as a site because they do not cover acupuncture in their recent articles. Instead I used a Web site called the National Institutes of Health on their NCCAM (National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine) page. This is a government organization out of the United States that has been researching medicines and procedures for over ten years. This was the best government health Web site that I could find for acupuncture in replacement for Healthy People 2010. It was very difficult trying to locate Web sites that contained statistics about acupuncture. I only found one that was remotely close to what I was looking for, and I am not even sure if I can trust it completely. I think the best way to find statistics about acupuncture is to look in journals, encyclopedias, or books that are specifically about acupuncture because the Internet wasn't a good place to find statistics for this topic. Overall this project taught me about acupuncture in good ways and in bad. I found out a lot of useful information that I can use if I ever decide that I want or need to get acupuncture. Most importantly however, this project showed me that the Internet is not always the most reliable place to find information about a specific topic. Some Web sites that looked or seemed like they were good ones were actually the worst ones. The internet is a huge database that is full of Web sites that just about anyone can develop, so when looking for research your best bet is to look for Web sites that have URL extensions of .gov, .edu, and sometimes .org. If you come upon a Web site that is simply just .com, you have to make sure that you look around for the credibility of the Web site to determine if it is reliable or not.

Section 1: Background and Problem Statement

Web site #1: Acupuncture in Southampton, Lyndhurst, and Hampshire
(Score: 28)

Web address: <http://www.acupuncturist-southampton.co.uk/about-acupuncture.html>

Information:

I thought this Web site was very user friendly, however it isn't from the United States it is from the United Kingdom. When looking for information about a medical

procedure or treatment, you typically would want to look for a Web site that is based out of the place that you live. I thought that this Web site gave some good information about where acupuncture came from and how it works. This Web site states that acupuncture is over 2,000 years old, but seems to leave out where acupuncture originated, which is pretty important when looking for background information about this topic. This was one of the only Web sites that I found that actually showed a picture of what acupuncture looks like on the skin. This was one of the only Web sites that I found that had actual statistics on it, but I didn't want to use it for statistics because once again they aren't based out of the United States. Even though I gave this Web site a relatively good score, I wouldn't recommend using it when trying to locate information about acupuncture. It is easy to read and gives some good information about how acupuncture works, but it is pretty vague.

Web site #2: Active Health and Pain Relief Centers
(Score: 30)

Web address: http://activehealthllc.com/custom_content/42276_acupuncture.html

Information:

This was one of the best Web sites that I found throughout this whole process. The only point that I had to deduct was from the Web site not having a URL extension of .gov, .edu, or .org. This Web site had some of the best information and even had an interactive body chart. You can use this body chart to click on any part of the body to see what using acupuncture in this area would treat. This Web site tells you what acupuncture is, how doctors perform this treatment, and how it can help you. It explains that acupuncture is safe as long as you do your research when finding the right clinic to go to. They should be using clean and sterile needles to prevent infection and spread of diseases. Also this Web site explains that this process is virtually painless and very relaxing for most patients. As a newcomer to acupuncture, one would like to see this in a Web site so they know what to look out for. This Web site has a lot of consumer information in it, but it also contains background information and the virtual body simulator, which is why I chose to use it in this category.

Web site #3: Web MD
(Score: 29)

Web address: <http://webmd.com/fibromyalgia/tc/acupuncture-topic-overview>

Information:

I typically always use Web MD when I have signs or symptoms of a cold. However, I never thought to use this Web site to find information about treatments like acupuncture. I gave this site a 29 because I thought that it had some good information about acupuncture and explained what it is in a way that pretty much anyone can understand. However, trying to find acupuncture on the Web MD Web site was pretty difficult. Luckily it came up when I searched acupuncture on Google.com or I would have never found it. When you type in acupuncture in the search bar on the Web MD

Web site it brings up many links that have to do with acupuncture, but only one of them was for background information (and it wasn't the first choice either). This is a better Web site to turn to when looking for where it came from because it actually says that it originated in China. Also this site gives you some things that acupuncture can treat. I never knew that menstrual cramps could be treated by acupuncture until I read this site.

Web site #4: American Academy of Medical Acupuncture
(Score: 29)

Web address:

http://www.medicalacupuncture.org/acu_info/articles/aboutacupuncture.html

Information:

This Web site contained a lot of good information. It gives a lot of background information about what acupuncture is, how it works, and even goes into how much it costs which many other Web sites failed to do. This Web site is easy to read so it is definitely one that anyone can use. This Web site explains that acupuncture definitely works and you do not have to "believe" in it for it to be successful. It explains that acupuncture has worked on dogs and cats so believing in the procedure has nothing to do with the results. I thought this was interesting because I have heard many people say that acupuncture doesn't work and it is all about the mind working with the body. I like how they included the point about the dogs and cats because that proves that it does work. However, I couldn't find a bibliography so I am not sure where this Web site got this information, and they do not have any evidence that this is true. The information is copyrighted and it is also an .org Web site so until it is proved wrong I am believing what this Web site says.

Section 2: Research

For the research aspect of this project I could not find any good research articles and Web sites on the sites that you provided for us, so I had to find ones separately.

Web site #1: TCM Health Information
(Score: 18)

Web address: <http://tcm.health-info.org/WHO-treatment-list.htm>

Summary of the research:

This Web site researches how effective acupuncture is for different types of disorders. The one I chose to look at was neurological disorders. This Web site basically says that using acupuncture for headaches, migraines, neuralgia, and even paresis after stroke has been shown to be effective. It also says that acupuncture treatments have been effective for treating hemiplegia due to cerebral hemorrhage. This Web site overall is very confusing and hard to understand. It gives some good information about how acupuncture treats many different issues, but if you can't understand it then what good is

that? This Web site also has a black background, which makes it hard to see certain things. I wouldn't recommend using this Web site for research.

Web site #2: Society for Acupuncture Research
(Score: 31)

Web address: <http://www.acupunctureresearch.org/>

Summary of the research:

To read this Web site you have to provide them with your email address, however it is worth it if you want the information. This Web site has its own quarterly newsletter all about acupuncture research that gives you updates on the latest finds and discoveries that have to do with acupuncture. This society began in 1991 and has grown into a huge organization. Many people turn to this society for the information that they need and that is why I gave this Web site a perfect score. If you are willing to give away your email address, you can gain all the information you can imagine about research pertaining to acupuncture.

Web site #3: Gateway to Chinese Medicine, Health, and Wellness
(Score: 28)

Web address: <http://acupuncture.com/research/>

Summary of the research:

This Web site deals with how effective acupuncture is for malignant tumors. It explains how the research was performed and it shows the results. The results show that the difference in the tumors of the group of people that had the acupuncture treatment and the group of people who didn't was significant. It proved that acupuncture can enhance cellular immune function, which can in turn be beneficial in anti-cancer treatment. This Web site is simple and easy to read. It doesn't just have information about malignant tumors but about a wide variety of topics. I like this Web site because it has clear links and headings that allow you to know where you are going on the Web site and it also gives you the bibliography, which shows that the information can be trusted.

Web site #4: Internet Health Library
(Score: 24)

Web address: <http://www.internethealthlibrary.com/Therapies/Acupuncture-Research.htm>

Summary of the research:

This Web site is another one that gives you many different topics to chose from for research. The one I thought sounded the most interesting was acupuncture and coughs, colds, and flu. The study shows that acupuncture can be very helpful to someone that is suffering from acute respiratory infections. In a study of out of fifty-seven people, twenty-seven of them were marked as "effective" meaning that the treatment helped their

symptoms. I thought that this was interesting that acupuncture can be an alternate to medicine when you have a cold. Some people who don't like taking prescription or OTC drugs may want to look into getting acupuncture to help with their cold symptoms.

Section 3: Statistics

For the statistics section, I had a hard time in general finding sites that gave me even some kind of statistics. So, once again I could not use Web sites that had the correct URL extension for all of them. I actually only found one .org that worked in this section.

Web site #1: Daniel Lee Acupuncture
(Score: 19)

Web address: http://acupuncturebydrlee.com/Acupuncture_Infertility_rate_06.html

Summary of the statistics:

The statistics show that acupuncture helped people that had trouble having children get pregnant. Women that were between the ages of 25 to 49 participated in the research and out of 187 of them, 118 got pregnant with the use of acupuncture treatment. Only 81 did not. This means that there was a success rate of 63%. This Web site only shows statistics for infertility rates, and they are somewhat hard to read. They are shown in charts that are small and not labeled very well. I wouldn't recommend looking at this Web site for statistics at all.

Web site #2: Brian Carter's Pulse of Oriental Medicine
(Score: 19)

Web address: <http://pulsemed.org/acupuncture-statistics.htm>

Summary of the statistics:

This was the best Web site that I found for statistics. It was confusing to navigate through the site and is confusing to read in a way, but it gives the best information. This is also the only site that I found that had the .org URL extension. It says that in a 2004 survey from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, out of a large group of Americans (31,044) only 4% said that they had tried acupuncture. Also this Web site says that out of 132 surveyed acupuncture patients, 75% said that their physical symptoms were relieved. Besides the fact that this Web site is hard to read and difficult to navigate through, I would recommend checking out this Web site because it is one of the few Web sites I found with useful statistics.

Web site #3: Joelle Dussuyer L.Ac.
(Score: 23)

Web address:
http://www.sf-acupuncture.com/acupuncture_success_stories.html

Summary of the statistics:

This Web site was not very good at all. Even though I gave it a good score, I do not think that it is very useful when looking for statistics. It is easy to read and may be helpful and interesting to a future acupuncture patient, but it doesn't show actual statistics. Again, I had a really hard time finding Web sites that had statistics so this was the closest I came. It gives success stories from patients who had acupuncture. There are no numbers involved, only stories of people who liked the acupuncture treatment that they received. It shows that for many people, acupuncture is very successful.

Web site #4: BMJ Medical Publication of the Year
(Score: 25)

Web address: <http://www.bmj.com/cgi/content/abstract/328/7442/747>

Summary of the statistics:

This article is part of a big Web site called BMJ, which is the medical publication of the year. It is based out of England however, so some of the articles may not be true in the United States. It was found on the Google Scholars search so it is a reliable source. The article talks about the cost effectiveness of acupuncture in management of chronic headache. The results show that acupuncture is in fact a cost effective way to treat chronic headache. Although this site may be considered more effective for research, it shows that out of 401 patients with chronic headache, it was cheaper for more than half of them to use acupuncture over medication per year. This is a good statistic to look at when considering acupuncture for an alternative medicine. I wouldn't recommend using this article, but I believe the Web site has some good information. Just make sure you look out for things that don't pertain to the United States because it is not a Web site from this country.

Section 4: Consumer Information

Web site #1: Mayo Clinic
(Score: 30)

Web address: <http://www.mayoclinic.com/print/acupuncture/SA00086/METHOD=print>

Summary of the information:

This was a good Web site to go to for consumer information because it tells you exactly what happens during an acupuncture session. It explains that it is common to have twelve sessions, which is a good piece of information because that can help you determine how much your sessions are going to cost you. It also says that the sessions usually last about 30 minutes and goes into detail about how the needles feel and how they are placed into your skin. This information is very useful to patients looking to use acupuncture treatment because they are very detailed and you will know what to expect going into your first session. Even though this Web site doesn't have the proper URL

extension, it comes from the National Institutes of Health Web site, which does have the right URL extension.

Web site #2: American Cancer Society
(Score: 31)

Web address:

http://www.cancer.org/docroot/ETO/content/ETO_5_3X_Acupuncture.asp?sitearea=ETO

Summary of the information:

I really liked this Web site because it is so easy to navigate and the information is very clear and straightforward. This Web site gives you so much information about what acupuncture is, what to look for in an acupuncturist, and how it can help you. What I really liked about this Web site is that it also gives you the risks that are involved with acupuncture treatment. Some of these risks include feeling dizzy, internal bleeding, convulsions, hepatitis B, nerve damage, and increased pain. Another aspect of this Web site that I really like is that they give addiction resources right at the bottom of the page so if you want more information about something you can find it very easily.

Web site #3: NCCAM
(Score: 21)

Web address: <http://nccam.nih.gov/health/acupuncure/>

Summary of the information:

This Web site was one of my other favorites when it came to consumer information. It explained the key points about acupuncture, which no other Web site did. It provided a picture of a dummy that had needles in all the acupuncture pressure points. It also gave treatment costs and how to find a qualified practitioner. This Web site is one of the easiest to navigate because of the simplicity of the links and graphics. The information is very reliable on this site because it comes straight from the United States' government. Because of these reasons I would definitely say that this is my favorite consumer information Web site.

Web site #4: Office of the Professions
(Score: 28)

Web address: <http://www.op.nysed.gov/acupunbroch.htm>

Summary of the information:

This site is very much like most of the other Web sites when it comes to the kind of information you are going to find. Some of the headings of this Web site are what is a licensed acupuncturist?, how do acupuncturists treat health conditions?, and what records does my acupuncturist retain?. This information can be useful to anyone looking into acupuncture. This is another site that it easy to read. The only bad thing about this site is that it is based completely out of New York so the information about costs and the

acupuncturists you will find on the site are all from NY, so make sure you look up your own state if you want the right information.

Conclusions

Section 1: Background and Statement

The best Web site is the Active Health and Pain Relief Centers Web site because it had the easiest information to read, and it also had the interactive chart of the body. Many people are visual learners so actually seeing what points in your body can affect what is very interesting.

The worst Web site for background information was Web MD. It didn't give as much information as many of the other Web sites did. If you had to chose between them I wouldn't chose Web MD as the first choice.

Section 2: Research

New information I learned was that acupuncture can be used to treat menstrual cramps. I didn't think that using pins would get rid of much of anything, but it is proved that it does. Also I didn't know that acupuncture was very successful for helping to become pregnant.

Section 3: Statistics

New statistics I learned include only about 5% of the population has tried acupuncture. Also I learned that out of a survey of about 200 people who had tried acupuncture, 75% said that their physical symptoms were relieved.

Section 4: Consumer Information

The best Web site for consumer information is the NCCAM Web site. This Web site gave the most valuable information for people who may be interested in using acupuncture. It gave costs and eligibilities, pictures, how to find a quality acupuncturist and much more.

The worst Web site for consumer information was the Office of Professions for NY site. This Web site gave good information, however the information that it gave only pertained to the state of New York in some cases, which wouldn't help people like me who live in Connecticut. The information provided in this Web site can be found in other ones as well, so I wouldn't say to use this Web site as your first choice.

Presentation Outline Template

- **Background/Problem Statement**
 - Why is your topic a Public Health Issue?
 - Because it is an alternative medicine that people can use other than prescription and OTC drugs
 - Definition:
 - A Chinese medical practice or procedure that treats illness or provides local anesthesia by the insertion of needles at specified sites of the body.
- **Research**
 - Most interesting finding:
 - Acupuncture can be used for people who can't get pregnant to help them become pregnant
 - Why is it interesting?
 - Because most people wouldn't think that sticking pins in your body could help you become pregnant
- **Statistics**
 - Most interesting finding:
 - Only about 5% of the population has tried acupuncture
 - Why is it interesting?
 - Because this is a very small amount
- **Consumer Information**
 - Most Interesting information:
 - That acupuncture is actually cheaper than medicine so if it works to treat your problems it may be economically better than drugs
 - Why is it interesting?
 - Because medication has become so expensive and many people may not think that acupuncture may be cheaper for them

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