

Jin Shin Jyutsu Acupressure: Effects on Pain and Stress

By Susie Plettner ND, CAT, LMT, CCH & Paul J. Mills PhD

Each year, millions of individuals suffer from acute and chronic pain, as pain is associated with a wide range of injury and disease. Unrelieved pain not only burdens the physical body, but is also associated with mental, emotional, and financial stress that dramatically decreases a person's quality of life. Pain is a significant public health problem that costs between \$560-\$635 billion annually due to loss of work productivity, rehabilitation, and increased health care costs.¹ There is a need for integrative therapies to help address the challenges of pain in our society.

Jin Shin Jyutsu (JSJ) is a traditional form of acupressure therapy from Japan that harmonizes the body's energetic system through light touch. The body contains energy pathways called organ meridians. When these pathways become restricted, the resulting stagnation can lead to pain, discomfort and stress. JSJ promotes the natural self-healing process by stimulating 52 specific anatomic sites referred to as "Safety Energy Locks". The practitioner uses oriental pulse diagnosis and oral reporting to determine an individualized treatment plan, which consisted of a combination of the Safety Energy Locks in a particular sequence pattern called "flows." JSJ promotes proper circulation throughout the body thereby decreasing physical and mental symptoms, including reducing levels of pain and stress. Repeated treatments typically result in an accumulative decrease of symptoms.

Methods

Patients were self-referred or referred by UCSD staff. Study participants included 108 patients, of whom 78% were female. Patients ranged in age from 21 to 95, with a mean age of 56 years. A survey collecting pain and stress levels on a scale of 0 to 10 were given immediately before and after a JSJ treatment. Treatments were 50-60 minutes in length.

Results

Patients reported acute and chronic pain from a variety of conditions including, but not limited to backache, joint discomforts, cancer, fibromyalgia, headaches, chronic fatigue, muscle soreness, sciatica, post-operative pain, neuropathy, and shoulder/neck pain. JSJ treatment led to significant drops in pain, with mean ratings from 5.41 (2.08) pre-treatment to 2.66 (2.15) post-treatment ($p < 0.001$). Similarly, stress also dropped significantly, with mean ratings going from 4.96 (2.53) to 2.11 (1.98) ($p < 0.001$). An analysis was also conducted for patients who received two treatments; pain and stress levels were lower at the start of the second visit, suggesting a carryover effect from their first treatment ($p < 0.05$). There were no significant differences in treatment effects between men and women.

¹ Institute of Medicine Report: *Relieving Pain in America: A Blueprint for Transforming Prevention, Care, Education, and Research*, June 2011

Conclusion

JSJ relieved pain and stress associated with a variety of diagnoses. JSJ is gentle, non-invasive, and not dependent on pharmaceuticals. Patients could thus avoid many of the adverse side effects common in drug therapy treatment for pain. Also, an added benefit of JSJ therapy is teaching self-care. Patients can learn how to place their hands on their own bodies in particular JSJ flow combinations to help alleviate their symptoms. JSJ can be a highly valued adjunct therapy for helping patients to manage pain and stress.