

## Study: Ear Acupuncture Noted For Weight Loss

Editorial Staff

By placing five acupuncture needles in the outer ear, people can begin to lose some unwanted pounds, according to the latest research report out of South Korea.

Ear acupuncture therapy is based on the theory that the outer ear represents all parts of the body. One type uses one needle inserted into the area that is linked to hunger and appetite, while the other involves inserting five needles at different key points in the ear.

The report was published online Dec. 16 in the journal *Acupuncture in Medicine*.

The study, compared acupuncture of five points on the outer ear with one-point acupuncture. They randomly assigned 91 overweight people to five-point acupuncture, one-point acupuncture (hunger) or sham (placebo) treatment.

During the eight weeks of the study, participants were told to follow a restrictive diet, but not a weight-loss diet. They were not supposed to increase their exercise.

Those who received five-point acupuncture had needles placed 2 millimeters deep in one outer ear taped in place and kept there for a week. Then the same treatment was applied to the other ear. The process was repeated over eight weeks.

Other patients received similar treatment with one needle or with sham acupuncture where the needles were removed immediately after insertion.

Over the course of the study, 24 patients dropped out, 15 of whom were receiving sham treatment, the researchers noted.

Among those who completed the study, there were significant differences in weight loss among the groups. At four weeks, those receiving five-point treatment had an average reduction in weight of 6.1 percent, compared with a 5.7 percent reduction among those treated with one needle and no weight loss among those receiving sham therapy, the researchers found.

The largest drop was seen in waist size with the five-point treatment, compared with sham therapy; however, this difference disappeared after taking age into account, the investigators noted.

Percentage of body fat also dropped, but only in those receiving the five-point treatment, the study authors added.

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