



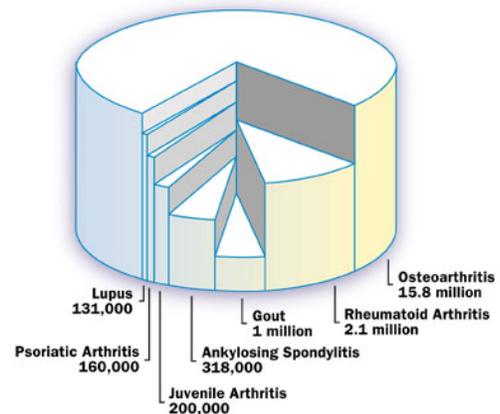
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Dr. TAI-NAN WANG, L.Ac., O.M.D., Q.M.E.
4295 GESNER STREET, SUITE 1 A
SAN DIEGO, CA 92117
619-684-1848
619-276-7937 FAX
wang.acu@gmail.com

ACUPUNCTURE AND ARTHRITIS

According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), arthritis is the leading cause of disability in the United States. The CDC reports that each year arthritis is implicated in 9,500 deaths, 750,000 hospitalizations, 8 million people with limitations, 36 million ambulatory care visits, 49 million people with self-reported, doctor-diagnosed arthritis, \$51 billion in medical costs and \$86 billion in total costs. According to the National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases, more than 20 million people in the U.S. have the disease. Furthermore the problem is due to increase as our population ages: by 2030 20% of Americans, about 70 million people, will have passed their 65th birthdays. More than half the population 65 and older would show x-ray evidence of osteoarthritis in at least one joint.

Arthritis is common and can strike all age groups. While we tend to think of Osteoarthritis (most common) and Rheumatoid Arthritis (2nd most common), there are several other types. In descending order of prevalence, they are Gout, Ankylosing Spondylitis, Juvenile Rheumatoid Arthritis, Psoriatic Arthritis and Lupus.

- Osteoarthritis (OA) is caused by the breakdown and eventual loss of cartilage between joints. It is also known as degenerative arthritis and is usually due to everyday wear-and-tear on the body's joints.
- Rheumatoid arthritis (RA) is an autoimmune disease that causes chronic joint inflammation. It can also cause inflammation of tissues surrounding the joints as well as other organs. Autoimmune diseases occur when the immune system mistakenly attacks its own body tissues.
- Gout causes sudden, severe attacks of pain and tenderness, redness, warmth, and swelling in some joints. Usually affects one joint at a time -- often the big toe. The first episode usually begins at night and is caused by a build-up of uric acid that forms crystals that deposit in joints, causing inflammation. The main causes of gout are drinking excessively and eating too many rich foods, though surgery, crash diets, sudden injury and chemotherapy can also bring on a bout of gout.



- Ankylosing Spondylitis (AS) is a rheumatic disease that causes arthritis of the spine and sacroiliac joints, and can cause inflammation of the eyes, lungs and heart valves. AS typically strikes adolescent and young adult males and is most common in Native Americans. Scientists are unsure what causes AS.
- Juvenile Rheumatoid Arthritis (JRA) is the most common form of arthritis in children. The most common features of JRA are joint inflammation, joint contracture (stiff, bent joint), joint damage and/or alteration or change in growth. Other symptoms include joint stiffness following rest or decreased activity level (also referred to morning stiffness or gelling), and weakness in muscles and other soft tissues around involved joints.
- Psoriatic Arthritis (PA) affects people with psoriasis. It affects about 1/6 of psoriasis sufferers. Most are adults in their 30s – 50s, but children can also develop a form of PA. In addition to the inflamed, scaly skin of psoriasis, PA causes swollen, painful joints, especially in the fingers and toes. PA can also cause pitted, discolored nails and inflammatory eye conditions such as conjunctivitis.
- Lupus is a chronic inflammatory disease that affects mostly women. It can target joints, skin, kidneys, blood cells, heart and lungs. Lupus develops when the immune system attacks its own body's tissues and organs. Lupus frequently causes swollen, painful joints, skin rash, extreme fatigue and kidney damage.

Acupuncture can be used with great success against arthritis. Many rheumatologists (doctors who specialize in the study and treatment of rheumatic diseases such as those listed above) recommend acupuncture for their patients, and some have studied acupuncture themselves. Some people's arthritis responds spectacularly to acupuncture. As with any chronic condition, acupuncture can ease and even eliminate the symptoms, but it cannot guarantee that the disease won't come back.

Among the many recent studies are several that show acupuncture relieves osteoarthritis symptoms – so well in one Scandinavian study that 25 percent of patients previously scheduled for knee surgery canceled their plans. That same study showed booster treatments once a month sustained the pain relief. Other studies have shown that acupuncture helps relieve pain from fibromyalgia and osteoarthritis; helps ease conditions that can accompany arthritis such as depression and irritable bowel syndrome; and enhances conventional treatments for gout, when used in a combined therapy.

Acupuncture considers arthritis a “wind and damp” disorder. Part of the reason the pain so often occurs in joints is these are high-traffic areas for qi (pronounced “chee”), the body's energy. These areas can get congested and block the flow of qi and blood, causing pain and inflammation. If the qi is weak at a spot Dr. Wang might use moxibustion, or the burning of an herb called “mugwort” on top of the needles. If the qi is building up in one spot, Dr. Wang may use electro-stimulation, or a weak electric pulse on certain needles. According to Dr. Wang, acupuncture is most helpful in treating arthritis.

Dr. Wang uses many herbs to treat different [arthritic conditions](#). The most common formulation is Du Huo Ji Sheng Wan. Other herbs that may be indicated are Cong Rong Bu Shen Wan, Feng Shi Xiao Tong Wan, Zuo Gu Shen Jing Tong Wan, and Xi Guan Jie Xiao Tong Wan. For osteoarthritis, glucosamine chondroitin is a good over-the-counter remedy.

If the arthritis has just started acting up and is in a highly inflammatory state, it is okay to use ice therapy initially, but heat is better. If the arthritis is chronic, heat therapy is indicated and it is best to avoid humidity, as well as avoiding ice-cold drinks. It is best to drink hot or room-temperature beverages. Many people with arthritis move to hot, dry areas like Arizona (or San Diego) to avoid the cold and damp that can aggravate their conditions. Moxibustion is another way to deliver heat in the treatment of chronic arthritis – and it explains the smoke and smell of burning when you come into our clinic.

RUNNING FOR CHARITY



This is Laura Bretton, Dr. Wang’s office manager. I’ve had the privilege of working for Dr. Wang for three years now. During this time I’ve met many patients and shared many experiences. I know that our patients are the best folks around, which is why I’m bringing my plea to your attention. I have signed up with Team In Training (TNT) to run in the Nashville Country Music Half Marathon on April 28, 2007. TNT is an arm of the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society, a non-profit group working toward finding cures for leukemia, lymphoma, Hodgkin’s disease and myeloma. TNT takes couch potatoes like me and trains us for endurance events. In return, I must raise at least \$3,100 for the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society. This is why I’m turning to you. These cancers of the blood strike the young and the old, men and women, and people of all socio-economic backgrounds. Our “honored teammates,” people who have one of the diseases, cheer our progress at our training runs. Two of the honored teammates I’ve met so far are under age 7, a boy and a girl. Perhaps you or someone you know has been affected by leukemia or another blood cancer. Donations are 100% tax deductible and go toward the search for cures to these often-deadly diseases. Please consider a donation – every dollar helps. Checks should be written to the Leukemia & Lymphoma society and mailed to me at Dr. Wang’s office, 4295 Gesner St Ste 1A, San Diego CA 92117. If you want to donate by credit card, please email me at lbretton@gmail.com and I will send you a link and instructions on how to donate online. Any company wishing to donate \$1,000 or more by March 1st, 2007 will have the privilege of having their logo on our marathon jerseys for a full season, which will be 3 or 4 events – just let me know and I will send a copy of the necessary form. Please feel free to call the office with any questions Monday through Friday, (858) 483-7795. I thank you wholeheartedly for your generosity.

