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ACUPUNCTURE AND TRIGGER POINT GET THUMBS UP FROM MAYO CLINIC STUDY

Acupuncture and Trigger Point Myofascial therapy recently both received a positive boost from a study conducted at the Mayo Clinic in Jacksonville, Florida. The results showed that while each of these techniques has different application procedures, both are effective therapy for pain reduction.

The study took a look at the effectiveness of Classic Chinese Acupuncture and the more modern Trigger Point method in comparing the qualities and differences of each. Classic Chinese Acupuncture, a centuries old practice, treats pain and other disorders via fine needles that are inserted into one or several of 391 acupoints. Myofascial Trigger Point therapy is a much more recent arrival on the pain reduction scene with its origins dating to the mid-1800s. In this method, 255 regions described in a Trigger Point Manual are used to identify sensitive and painful areas around muscles, bones and other body structures. These points are then treated via a variety of methods including deep pressure, mechanical vibration, electrical stimulation, stretching, and, in some cases, the use of needles.

Dr. Peter Dorsher is a chronic pain specialist in the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at the Mayo Clinic. His findings show that both of these methods are effective and beneficial for people seeking relief from chronic musculoskeletal pain.

“This may come as a surprise to those who perform the two different techniques because the notion has been that these are exclusive therapies separated by thousands of years,” he said. “But this study shows that in the treatment of pain disorders, Acupuncture and myofascial techniques are fundamentally similar and this is good news for anyone looking for relief.”

What is most interesting from this study is the credence given to both alternative methods of pain treatment via a treatment and research organization that is so firmly entrenched in traditional Western medicine. The results of the study were published in the *Journal of Complementary and Alternative Medicine*.

One other interesting point from Dr. Dorsher’s work comes from an earlier study he conducted. Here he discovered that at least 92 percent of trigger points correspond anatomically with acupoints. “That means that the classical acupoint was in the same body region as the trigger point, was used for the same type of pain problem, and the trigger point referred pain pattern followed the meridian pathways of that acupoint described by the Chinese more than 2,000 years before.”

“I think it is fair to say that the myofascial pain tradition represents an independent rediscovery of the healing principles of traditional Chinese medicine,” said Dr. Dorsher. “What likely unites these two disciplines is the nervous system which transmits pain.” More research will likely determine if this is what actually occurs. At the very least it is quite pleasing to learn that healthcare professionals at the Mayo Clinic are open to considering alternative means of helping to handle pain.