

USING EAR ACUPUNCTURE TO TREAT POST-POLIO PAIN

by Diane Baxter, Excerpted from The Polio Society Newsletter "Options", Fall 1995

Dr. Francis H'Doubler, M.D., a Missouri thoracic surgeon, discovered the usefulness of ear acupuncture to treat his own pain and discomfort from Korean War injuries. In the last five years he has been using ear acupuncture to treat people who have chronic pain, including post-polio people.

In 1990 a friend came to him for advice about his post-polio pain. Dr. H'Doubler tried ear acupuncture, and happily his friend got relief of many of his symptoms. Then, Dr. H'Doubler spoke with the local post-polio support group and did a pilot study of 12 post-polio patients to formally test ear acupuncture.

The treatments generally consisted of four to fourteen one hour sessions of stimulation to various points on both ears every three to seven days. The instrument used is called the Electro-Acuscope. Patients were told to continue seeing their regular doctors and maintain their current management of symptoms.

Dr. H'Doubler notes that some patients improved even after one or two sessions, reporting less fatigue and weakness and increased energy and general well-being. After the treatments, 8 out of 12 patients reported 100% symptom relief, 2 had 75% improvement and 2 had 20-40% improvement. On a two year follow-up, most reported no return of symptoms. When symptoms did recur, they were again relieved with additional treatments.

Since the pilot study, Dr. H'Doubler has treated many more post-polio patients with similar success. He plans to continue the use of ear acupuncture and encourages other medical professionals to study this procedure as a way of reducing or eliminating the symptoms of PPS.

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