Successful Use of **ACUPUNCTURE** for Symptom Control in Specialist Palliative Care.

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**Background:**

**Acupuncture** is a complementary medical practice that entails stimulating certain points on the body with a needle penetrating the skin to help treat various health conditions. It causes little or no side effects. Developed millennia ago in China, it is recognised in various European countries as a medical sub-speciality. In traditional Chinese medicine, acupuncture is linked to the belief that disease is caused by disruptions to the flow of energy, or qi, through meridians (Fig. 1) in the body. **Acupuncture aims to release these disruptions.**

**Aims and Objectives:**
The aim of this study was to assess the use of **acupuncture** (Fig. 2+3) in specialist palliative care for **symptom control.**

**Methods:**

20 Patients referred to a Specialist Palliative Care Service were analysed. Noted were:
- Demographic data,
- Diagnoses,
- Symptoms,
- Medications,
- Indications for acupuncture,
- Results, - Outcome.

**Findings/Results:** (Tab. 1)
The patients diagnoses were: malignancies (n=9), non-malignant health conditions (n=11), mean age 68 years, equal gender proportion. Excellent benefit was stated when the patient in addition to symptom relief experienced ‘transformation’.

![Fig. 1 Meridians](image1)

**Fig. 2 Acupuncture**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>n</th>
<th>14</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>anxiety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>pain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>anger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>constipation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>grief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>respiratory distress</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10 patients experienced **excellent benefit** from acupuncture, 8 **good benefit**, 2 no benefit. No side effects were observed.

**Conclusions:**

**Acupuncture** is a very valuable complementary method to alleviate symptoms. This study can conclude that acupuncture **improved quality of life** while reducing side effects due to reduction of medication. It enables the patient to uncover and **optimize their own resources.**

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