**Acupuncture & Tibial Stress Syndrome (shin splints)**

**Abstract**

Forty athletes, ages 18-45 with tibial stress syndrome (shin splints), were analyzed using subjective questioning based on a ten point Likert-type pain scale that was used to assess pain level. The scale ranged from None (1) to Distressing (5) to Unbearable (10). The athletes were divided into three treatment groups: Sports Medicine (N=17), Acupuncture (N=12) and a combination group of Sports Medicine and Acupuncture (N=11). The treating practitioners were certified and student athletic trainers at University of California, San Diego RIMAC Athletic Training Center along with acupuncture interns supervised by the author from Pacific College of Oriental Medicine, San Diego. The study took place over a 3-week period, with each participant filling out an initial questionnaire (Intake) prior to the first week of treatment. Follow-up questionnaires were utilized at the beginning of each week of treatment for the remaining 2 weeks (Follow-up 1 and Follow-up 2). Participants answered questions concerning intensity and duration of pain during and between activities, in addition to dosages taken of anti-inflammatory medications (NSAID). Participants in all groups received a minimum of 2 treatments per week. The three treatment groups were compared to each other: Sports Medicine (S), Acupuncture (A) and Acupuncture and Sports Medicine combination (AS). All athletes reported an increase in effectiveness of treatment from Intake to Follow-up 2, regardless of the treatment group they were in. Athletes in the A and AS Groups received the most pain relief, were least hindered by pain during sporting and non-sporting activities, and felt overall that the treatments were more effective than those reporting in the S Group. The perception of pain, pain relief, and effectiveness was not significantly improved for athletes in the S Group. Athletes taking anti-inflammatory medications in the AS and A Treatment Groups took significantly fewer doses during the course of the study than athletes in the S Group.