

Becker-Witt C, Jena S, Löbel,S, Selim D, Brinkhaus B, Liecker B, Willich SN. Effectiveness of acupuncture treatment for chronic low back pain – a randomised interventional study. *Biometrical Journal*. 2004 (Suppl.); 46: 112.

### **Effectiveness of acupuncture treatment for chronic low back pain – a randomised interventional study**

**Objective:** This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of treatment with vs. without acupuncture in patients with chronic low back pain in general medical practice. This study is part of a large acupuncture research initiative of health insurance companies in Germany (*Modellvorhaben der Techniker Krankenkasse*).

**Methods:** Patients ( $\geq 18$  years) with chronic low back pain were randomised either to an acupuncture group (ACU) or a control group (CON). Patients who disagreed with randomisation were monitored in a third group which got acupuncture (NR-ACU). Over a period of 3 months the ACU (and NR-ACU) received up to 15 acupuncture treatments, whereas the CON received no acupuncture. Patients received standardised questionnaires including socio-demographic data, back function (FFbHR) and health related quality of life (SF-36) at baseline and 3 months.

**Results:** Of a total of 11,378 patients included in the study 2,807 patients (57% female,  $52 \pm 14$  years, 43% male,  $54 \pm 13$  years) agreed to be randomised. After 3 months of treatment we found significant differences between ACU and CON in back function (FFbH-R: ACU  $61.9 \pm 21.1$  to  $74.0 \pm 20.5$ ; CON  $63.0 \pm 20.6$  to  $65.3 \pm 21.6$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Similarly, quality of life on the mental and the physical component scale differed significantly between the treatment groups ( $p < 0.001$ ), again in favour of ACU. There were no significant differences between ACU and NR-ACU for back function and quality of life. **Conclusion:** Treatment with additional acupuncture in patients with chronic low back pain showed a significant, relevant and persistent improvement of back function compared to treatment without acupuncture.