



The PANDA Project: Is Acupuncture Bear-able in the ED?

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RESEARCH WEEK
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INSPIRED RESEARCHERS
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Background

- Pain is one of the most common ED presentations worldwide.
- Over-reliance on opioids remain an underlying issue contributing to the opioid crisis.
- Non-pharmacological options like acupuncture show promise for acute pain relief.

Aims

- Collect baseline data on pain presentations and management practices within Northern ED.
- Explore feasibility and perceptions of acupuncture as an adjunctive pain management strategy in Northern ED.

Baseline Pain Data (n = 300, Dec 2024 – Mar 2025)

- Median age = 41 years; 63% male
- Most common complaint = abdominal pain (53%), back pain (30%), headache (17%).
- Mean Length of Stay = 815 minutes, 65% admitted to SSU/EOU.
- Pain score documentation often incomplete (59% recorded a highest score, 20% a lowest score).
- Mean highest pain = 7.3/10, mean lowest pain = 2.9/10.

Pain Management Patterns in ED

- 79% received >1 analgesic drug.
- Most frequent oxycodone (55%), paracetamol next most common.
- Patients with headache most likely to receive no analgesia (49%).

CLINICIAN SURVEY FINDINGS (n=100)

- Participant Profile – 49.5% nurses, 38.6% doctors, 5.9% allied health professionals, 3.9% nurse practitioners.
- 65% female, most aged 25 – 44 years.

Current Pain Management

- 49.5% agree pain is well managed in ED, 14% disagree.
- 91.8% support non-drug therapies as adjuncts.

Acupuncture Familiarity & Attitudes

- 42% have personally used acupuncture, 68% have found it beneficial.
- 81% if those who haven't used it would consider it in the future.
- 89% report little or no education on acupuncture, 79% want further education.

Acceptability

- 57% agree or strongly agree acupuncture reduces pain.
- 55% would offer if available (21% strongly agree).
- 72% believe clinicians should be able to advise patients about receiving acupuncture.

Qualitative Insights

- Strong interest in learning more about acupuncture.
- Mainly positive feedback tempered by concerns about resources, space and priorities.

CONSUMER SURVEY FINDINGS (n=100) AND CONCLUSIONS

- Participant profile – 58% females, most aged 25 – 44
- 60% born in Australia, 17 countries represented.

Pain Experiences

- 91% surveyed presented for pain; >50% rated pain >7/10
- Common complaints: abdominal and back pain.

Awareness and Openness to Acupuncture

- **76% would try acupuncture to treat pain** if available.
- **91% would try acupuncture if it could reduce or eliminate the need for medications.**
- Among those who had used acupuncture, 84% found it beneficial and 91% would recommend it to others.

Qualitative Themes

- Majority expressed support for an ED acupuncture service.
- Positive themes included reduced fear, relaxation, holistic care.
- Minor barriers: needle aversion, limited knowledge.

Limitations

- Selection bias possible due to active recruitment.

CONCLUSION

- Stage 1 findings show strong acceptability and interest in acupuncture from both clinicians and consumers.
- Implementation barriers include time, resources and space.
- Education for staff and further research on logistics and cost-effectiveness of implementation are next steps.