

Survey of Acupuncture Patients Treated at Parkbury House Surgery 1 September 2014 – 31 March 2015

A total of 126 questionnaires were sent to relevant patients. In response 71% (90) responses were received.

1. Context:

Dr Jonathan Freedman has been providing an acupuncture service at Parkbury House since joining the practice in 1993.

With Nurse Stephanie Martin-Smith, Dr Freedman offers a weekly acupuncture clinic on Friday afternoons for Parkbury House patients. At other times Steph and Dr Freedman provides ad hoc treatments. These treatments are funded through a voluntary donation scheme.

Information about acupuncture is currently available via a link on the Parkbury House website.

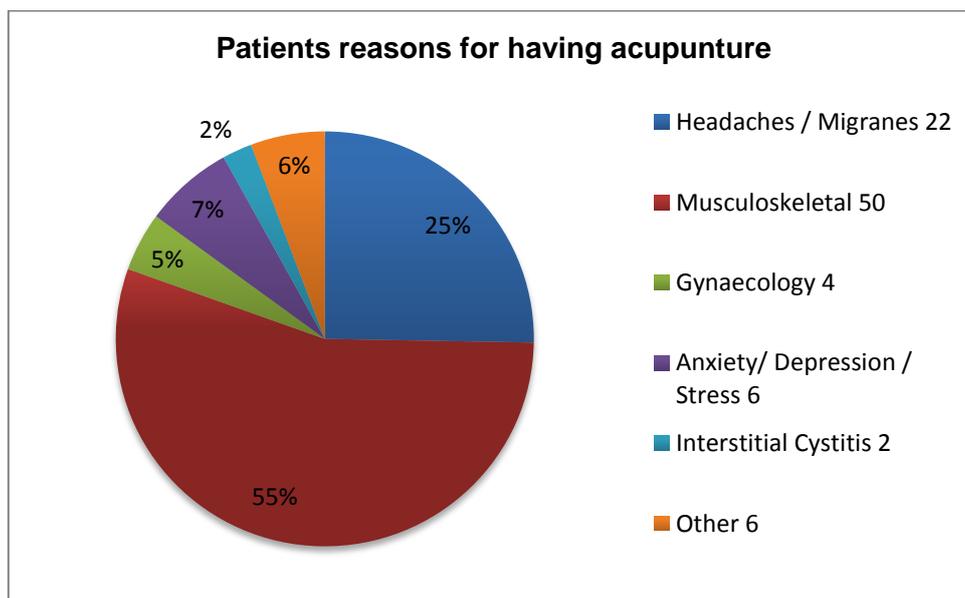
A separate commissioned clinic for severe knee arthritis runs on a Thursday afternoon and serves the St Albans and Harpenden area – this has not been reported on here but a separate audit/patient satisfaction survey is being carried out. This clinic has achieved national recognition and awards.

Parkbury House surgery also provides opportunities for newly trained medical acupuncturists to learn more and practice their skills under supervision.

Stephanie McKellar provides administrative support for all aspects of the acupuncture service.

2. Results:

Reasons for having acupuncture:



Do you feel you were given enough information ahead of having acupuncture for the first time?

Yes	No
83	3

Were you aware of the information about acupuncture through the surgery website?

Yes	No
61	27

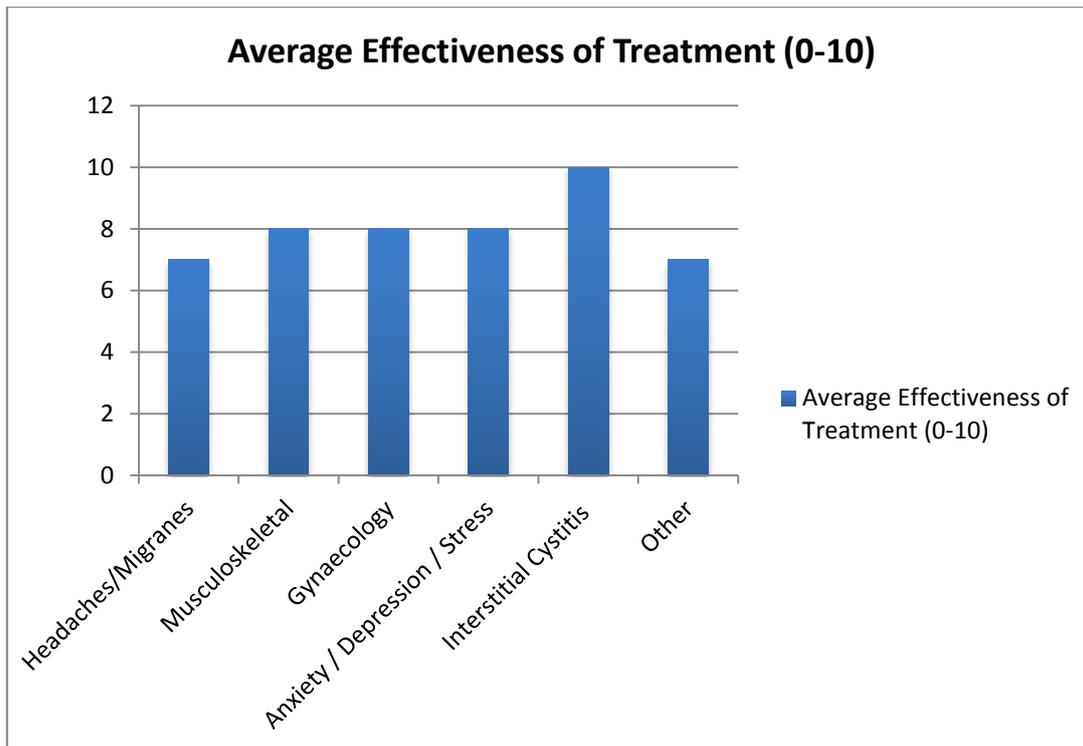
3. Patients' Comments on Website/Information Given:

- *I have to read it*
- *A leaflet would be helpful.*
- *It was excellent, very helpful.*
- *Very thorough, well written.*
- *I am now aware. I have read it and it is interesting and comprehensive.*
- *It is very comprehensive and clear.*
- *I didn't know the website existed when I started. I have now looked at it and the description of acupuncture is and explanations are very useful. The only thing that it leaves out is that it can be quite painful at times although this is short lived.*
- *Both Dr Freedman and the nurses very supportive and explained exactly what they were doing.*
- *Having checked the website I received more information which I found interesting*
- *Was informed of the website. Easy link to get to the page from the Parkbury House web page. Was shown needle before my treatment day so felt comfortable with what to expect.*
- *Very good information on site.*
- *No computer.*
- *Do not use Internet.*
- *Very informative.*
- *I found out about the acupuncture service through the surgery website.*
- *Very informative. Good explanation and links to further reading.*
- *I have read it today.*
- *Dr Freedman is an exceptional doctor who has helped me so much.*
- *Have read information and found it satisfactory.*
- *I do not have a computer.*
- *Keep meaning to read it! Will do so now.*
- *I think it is quite clear and explanatory. Its use in pain alleviation obviating pain relief tablets is excellent once experience therefore an additional*

sentence asking for a GP referral "if you think that this can help you" may be appropriate.

- Still not completely sure how it works.
- Haven't got computer.
- Clear and informative for what I needed to know.

4. Patient Assessment of Overall Effectiveness of Treatment (0-10 scale):



5. Side Effects Reported:

- Just occasional bruising.
- Headache on one or two occasions (migraine treatment).
- At times it was painful.
- Slightly unsettled tummy and feeling weak for a short amount of time.
- Increase tenderness for a few hours, tingling in fingers.
- Tiredness.
- None apart from relaxed muscles and mind.
- Some bruising and sometimes a slight headache the following day.
- Some localised minor bruising sensation for a couple of days. Nothing compared to the pain I'd previously been experiencing.
- Muscles became stiff and the neck pain increased day after. Mobility of the neck was affected.
- First time felt very tired afterwards.
- Aches and pains but nothing compared to what I had.

- *After the middle treatment which gave me the best results, I did notice a weak sensation in my thumb/numbness for about 20mins after.*
- *“Hurty finger”.*
- *Mild pains in scalp from needles.*
- *On the last occasion (although not previously) a brief flare up of the swollen knee joint which was the reason for the treatment - this has now resolved.*
- *Occasional small bruises.*
- *If needles left in too long in neck can result in migraines acute pain in neck/ shoulders aggravating the condition under treatment.*
- *Can be slightly painful but not exactly a side effect.*
- *Sleepiness, Bruising.*
- *On one occasion I went for a run after acupuncture and felt very unwell later that day with headache, nausea and aggressive and angry.*
- *A few shooting pains but not sure if that was the acupuncture or not.*
- *Feel relaxed immediately after.*
- *Sometimes bruising.*
- *One episode of migraine following treatment. No other side effects.*

6. General Comments about Treatment:

- *Very good service - useful addition to surgery.*
- *Have had this treatment since cervical operation in 2001, at RLHH until unable to travel there.*
- *Dr Freedman was extremely gentle and reassuring. I think it should be used more often as a treatment instead of drugs.*
- *It calms me down (patient with anxiety and panic attacks).*
- *This was a brilliant service and Dr Freedman was excellent with me and my son.*
- *I have had only two rounds of acupuncture and plan to continue as I believe in the benefits to come over time.*
- *Great for a while, and quick and efficient service.*
- *It's a wonderful service and has helped considerably.*
- *As soon as I unavoidably stop having it, e.g. after an operation, or away on holiday, the pain returns, especially at night.*
- *I really appreciate this alternative treatment to pain killers or other.*
- *I think it is very useful, it eased my pain and I would recommend it.*
- *I think it is a fantastic treatment to have available on the NHS. I think this must continue to be available to those who need it. I'm really grateful for having received it in the past over time for different symptoms.*
- *It works so well. Shows how powerful things without medicines or physical treatment can be. Thanks very much Dr Freedman for referring me for the treatment.*
- *Very grateful surgery offers this treatment. Apart from once treatment has been very helpful.*
- *An excellent service to offer via a GP surgery.*

- *It has worked very well for me over the years and if I have the occasional flare up I attend more often for a while and it soon sorts the problem.*
- *I feel the acupuncture has helped to settle my symptoms, especially in my left arm and thoracic area.*
- *I feel I have/am benefitting from it.*
- *Acupuncture has been very beneficial. My migraines have all but disappeared and it has generally helped my well-being. Also less drug taking (painkillers).*
- *I was a complete sceptic but it works and helps. It would be better to treat the cause of the pain but this helps me cope with the symptoms.*
- *I am very appreciative that the surgery offers the service and for Dr Freedman's care.*
- *It was effective until I hurt my neck while digging. Had Physio and still do off and on. Would like to return to acupuncture clinic shortly.*
- *I've had acupuncture prior to the latest treatment in the January, which was not as successful. However this time I've receive lasting relief, less noticeable swelling in the worst finger joint. Means I can hold a pen and write properly again.*
- *Both Dr Freedman and Stephanie were very open and receptive. I did not feel rushed or unable to ask questions. Safe, professional and supportive service.*
- *Was short term treatment, was sad it wasn't effective for me. However, the tops of the shoulders did feel more relaxed and it was a pleasant treatment to receive in a relaxed environment so would recommend it.*
- *Having relied on regular acupuncture for over 4yrs I have decided to try to manage without it. I started Pilates classes a year ago and last Summer found the pain in my knees greatly reduced and my hand had improved too. So I have only needed treatment once in the past little while. It has been excellent when needed however.*
- *Very good staff and very helpful.*
- *I am very appreciative of it as it has helped with acute pain and I never feel I am too much bother for Dr Freedman.*
- *Very good. Has made a big difference - thank you.*
- *I am so pleased that the surgery offers this treatment. It has mainly been very successful for me.*
- *It proved very effective thank you. I only needed 3 sessions.*
- *It felt very rushed, while it was being fitted in, almost a secret. Disappointed it didn't work.*
- *I feel very fortunate to be able to receive this treatment which has made a great improvement to my life and well-being. I am always treated with respect. Thank you*
- *I am a big fan and indeed have acquired my own pen version, but the needles are much more effective. I think that it is an excellent service and one that the surgery should definitely continue to offer.*
- *I'm very satisfied with the improvement I've experience following acupuncture. Delighted to find it available through the surgery and consider the suggested donation extremely reasonable.*
- *It's been very helpful re my knee and ankle pain.*

- *The normally 6 weekly treatment is great. It keeps my knees near normal. By 6 weeks usually having some difficulty with stairs and behind my knees. Basically this keeps my knees from worsening.*
- *I have found it incredibly helpful in managing my anxiety and hay-fever symptoms.*
- *Treatment reduced the amount of painkillers I would have to take. Well worth the treatment.*
- *I was sceptical about acupuncture initially. Now I am a believer. I am thankful to Dr Freedman and his team for taking up acupuncture. Please continue offering acupuncture. Thanks.*
- *I really appreciate this treatment being available to me. Dr Freedman has been good.*
- *The treatment has helped to regulate my periods, combined with taking metformin.*
- *Acupuncture has enabled me to take fewer days off work. Although it has not totally stopped them, the migraine have less severe and more short-lived and I have been able to avoid daily medication.*
- *I think it's an invaluable service.*
- *Very willing to help with pain and the condition. Better results with the GP than the hospital. "The best".*
- *Helped after the first treatment.*
- *More frequent treatment would I believe would provide more relieve for the sinus problem.*
- *I believe the electro acupuncture treatment I have received has been effective by helping the pain and effective at helping to alleviate the pain and discomfort associated with my peripheral neuropathy.*
- *I really wanted my treatment to work as Stephanie seemed so positive but unfortunately it wasn't positive for me.*
- *Trying acupuncture was the best move I ever made having tried many other alternatives including physiotherapy and osteopathy.*
- *I suffered for moth Belford a received acupuncture and I'm glad that I did. Thank you*
- *I am so privileged to be a patient of Dr Freedman. When I first started acupuncture I was really low after trying so many conventional treatments. Acupuncture has allowed me to lead a fully healthy life and I'm so grateful (patient with interstitial cystitis).*
- *I felt much relief without any belief of placebo effect. It genuinely releases restrictions and brings a return to fuller movement.*
- *Having suffered pain and discomfort for years acupuncture is the most effective treatment which lasts for 5-6 weeks and also the quickest and painless. Gratefully received.*
- *Treatment is certainly relieving pain of arthritis and enabled me to walk and play sports during the day. Sleep better at night. Very friendly service. Thank you.*
- *This is the most effective form of pain relief that I've found. I would hate to lose the service. Dr Freedman and all the staff have been very good indeed.*

- *Has reduced my PMT from approximately 7 days to 1 day before my period starts. This is a big improvement. I am very pleased to be an acupuncture patient.*
- *Very satisfied with the results. Thank you.*
- *I appreciate that this type of treatment is available at my surgery on the NHS rather than as a private course of treatment.*
- *It was very helpful indeed from about 2000 to 2007 in containing pain in my right knee, delaying knee replacement. More recently good I'm managing pain in left knee too which is less acute.*
- *Excellent and efficient. This is my second treatment in different parts of the body, with no recurrence to date in either area. The treatment should be widely available in appropriate cases.*
- *It helps to 'believe in' the treatment.*
- *Having the treatment puts me in a very relaxing state. Very grateful that is made available to me.*
- *Much better movement.*
- *I'm very positive about it and have experienced a marked reduction in pain.*
- *Brilliant because of the acupuncture I haven't worn my surgical collar since 26/11/14. Better posture, less pain. Now walk home into Sandridge at least twice/week. Less pain also from lower back which again needs surgery. Walk daily. Before taking 24 painkillers/day, now just 4! "Excellence with a smile".*
- *Thank you for your help and support.*
- *I am really happy that Parkbury House offers this service as I feel that is beneficial to my health.*
- *Always a pleasure to see Stephanie. Very friendly and helpful.*
- *I found this form of treatment extremely helpful alongside traditional medicine.*
- *Very successful. Went from about 5 migraines/week to less than 1/month. Time effective for doctor.*

7. Discussion and Reflection:

- *Poster with key results (conditions treated and effectiveness) presented at British Medical Acupuncture Society (BMAS) spring scientific meeting in April 2015 - including details of pragmatic acupuncture, knee clinic and training. Won second prize!*
- *Acupuncture service is clearly greatly appreciated by vast majority of patients and effective for a wide range of conditions.*
- *Nearly all patients felt they had enough information prior to starting treatment but two thirds were unaware of the website. I use this as the main source of information, bearing in mind that the majority of people are now on-line. The low number may partially reflect the fact that a number of these patients have been attending the acupuncture clinic for some considerable time so may not have recalled the website which would not*

be relevant to them on an ongoing basis. I always document in the notes that I have advised the patient to read the info on the surgery website. Those that have commented on this clearly find this helpful and informative. Despite the vast majority of patients agreeing that they had enough information prior to starting treatment I am not satisfied that the website is being used as I had intended i.e. to ensure adequate information sharing and full informed consent. I would therefore propose a 1-2 page information sheet that I can give new patients, based on the website - this could also be used by others in the practice recommending acupuncture. This will be in addition to the website which I will continue to promote as I can include more details/information here.

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- *Small numbers of side effects were reported and some of these were positively framed i.e. Feeling relaxed. Of the 90 patients who responded, 25 reported 'adverse effects'. The commonest by far was minor bruising. I will take action to ensure that this and other adverse effects (including pain!) are adequately described on the website and proposed new information sheet. These adverse effects seemed to have little bearing on patient satisfaction and I believe patients are well prepared and understand that these things can occur, and sometimes we adjust our treatment accordingly. Very rarely and with certain treatments only acupuncture can have more serious adverse effects (e.g. pneumothorax) and we need to ensure these are appropriately mentioned.*
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- *Overall comments were extremely positive and affirming. Both the response rate and fact that patients had gone to so much trouble to write positively about their experience of acupuncture goes a long way to demonstrate how valued this service is. I would like to put a link to the survey report on the surgery website and also bring it to the attention of the CCG and CQC as evidence of an innovative and highly valued service for a large group of patients.*

8. Outstanding Actions

- *Write info leaflet for clinicians to be available on practice system*
- *Ensure leaflet and website make suitable reference to potential adverse effects*
- *Put collated report on surgery website*

Dr J Freedman
20th April 2015

