

Abstract

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Title of Diploma Thesis: Patients' experience with acupuncture treatment

Background: Acupuncture, as well as other methods used in complementary and alternative medicine (CAM), are on the rise. So far, there has not been a study conducted in the Czech Republic which describes patients' awareness and experience with acupuncture and other CAM methods and their attitudes to future use of these methods after having been treated with them.

Aim: The aim of the thesis was to evaluate the experience of patients suffering from migraines with acupuncture. The areas covered were the patients' awareness of acupuncture, their motivation to try acupuncture as an alternative treatment method, their experience with other CAM methods as well as the likelihood of them undergoing another acupuncture treatment in the future.

Methods: Semi-structured interviews with selected patients were conducted between September 19th 2015 and May 18th 2016. The interviews were coded in MAXQDA 12 programme and then evaluated using the content analysis method.

Results: The thesis identifies topics connected to patients' awareness of CAM including acupuncture. It also defines the reasons for seeking this form of therapy and describes patients' attitudes to undergoing another acupuncture treatment in the future.

Conclusion: As other research in patients' experience with acupuncture shows, acupuncture as a CAM method can lead to alleviating migraine symptoms, reducing pharmacotherapy as well as increasing patients' quality of life. Thus, it is essential to increase the awareness of CAM among medical professionals so that they could inform their patients about alternative treatment methods other than those offered by western medicine. General public should be motivated to be more involved in their own therapy and to actively search for a wider range of treatment methods. It is necessary to provide patients with true and high-quality information on all treatment methods and inform them about the importance of prevention.

Keywords: acupuncture, complementary and alternative medicine, migraine, awareness, information source, experience, attitudes, future treatment.