



MEDIA RELEASE

AACMA RESPONSE TO ARTICLE IN 'THE AUSTRALIAN'

Nerves wrecked by needle pain cure (6 October 2009, page 3)

An article in 'the Australian' reported that research showed that acupuncture 'wrecks' and 'destroys' nerves and that is why it works for pain.

This is irresponsible and sensationalised journalism at its worst.

(1) Misquoting

The author hypothesises that acupuncture interrupts the signals of the nerves rather than stimulates the nerves, as previous studies suggested, to reduce pain. In this sense, acupuncture might work like local anaesthetics that disrupt the nerve conduction temporarily. There is a clear distinction between "destroying" and "disrupting". In fact, many previous studies have shown that acupuncture relies on an intact nervous system to take effect.

(2) Misleading readers

This hypothesis is yet to be tested. The report misleads the readers to believe that the hypothesis has been proved. Furthermore, this new theory might explain acupuncture analgesia, but does not account for the wide range of positive effects that acupuncture has in clinical practice. Your paper misleads readers to believe that this theory is the only explanation for acupuncture actions.

(3) A biased view

It would have been better if your paper has sourced comments from qualified acupuncturists or other researchers in the field and to provide a balanced view.

AACMA reassures the many people who are receiving effective acupuncture that acupuncture is safe and effective when provided by a qualified practitioner.

Members of the public can locate a qualified AACMA accredited acupuncturist by contacting the AACMA National Practitioner Referral Service (1300 725 334) or via the Find a Practitioner service at www.acupuncture.org.au.

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