



PRESS RELEASE

ACUPUNCTURE COST EFFECTIVE FOR LOWER BACK PAIN

13 September 2010

Acupuncture has been shown to be cost-effective in the treatment of chronic low back pain.

A report on the Cost Effectiveness of Complementary Medicines by Access Economics that was commissioned by the National Institute Complementary Medicine (NICM) was released earlier today.

According to the report, there is clear evidence that acupuncture treatment for chronic low back pain can result in direct health savings of \$3,066,302 per disability adjusted life year (DALY) when used as adjunct to standard care.

This study provides proof that acupuncture is a cost effective treatment. It is noted that, as the study included only savings from direct health costs, and did not include indirect costs (such as loss of productivity at work), the full cost savings are expected to be even higher.

Significantly higher per DALY costs were avoided where individualised acupuncture was provided (>\$3M) compared with a standardised treatment (\$1.7M).

Qualified acupuncturists are trained to provide effective individualised treatments that are tailored to the individual's actual condition, as opposed to a standardised treatment that does not take into account the individual presentation.

The Australian Acupuncture and Chinese Medicine Association Ltd (AACMA) would like to congratulate NICM and Access Economics on the high quality of this report.

AACMA represents over 80% of qualified acupuncture and Chinese medicine professionals in Australia. Our current entry requirement is the completion of an AACMA approved four to five year full-time bachelor degree program majoring in acupuncture and/or Chinese herbal medicine. AACMA believes that short training courses in acupuncture are unable to equip the practitioner to provide competent safe and effective individualised acupuncture treatments.

The Chinese medicine profession will become a nationally registered profession from 1 July 2012. This will require acupuncturists to be registered with the future Chinese Medicine Board of Australia if they are to continue to practise in the profession.

According to Judy James, CEO 'National registration cannot arrive too soon. Without national registration, AACMA is unable to prevent unqualified, unsafe or unethical practitioners of acupuncture from offering their services to the community. National registration can only be good for public health and safety and will provide a mechanism to remove unsafe, unethical and incompetent persons from the profession'.

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.

Media enquiries:

Ms Jazz Tyrril-Smart
Manager, AACMA Marketing, Events and Professional Development
Australian Acupuncture and Chinese Medicine Association Ltd

p: 07 3324 2599 ext 16

f: 07 3394 2399

e: events@acupuncture.org.au

t: www.twitter.com/AACMA

w: www.acupuncture.org.au

f: www.facebook.com/AACMA