

Trial to test laser acupuncture treatment for osteoarthritis

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Picture supplied by Meikin Rees

(PhysOrg.com) -- The potential for laser acupuncture to provide painless and effective treatment for osteoarthritis knee pain is being put to the test in a clinical trial beginning in Sydney.

Traditional Chinese medicine practitioner Meikin Li Rees is recruiting 60 participants for the trial, being undertaken as part of her PhD research at UTS.

"Osteoarthritis (OA) is the most common form of arthritis and the major cause of musculoskeletal pain and immobility in elderly people worldwide," Ms. Rees said.

"In Australia, arthritis affects some 3.4 million people – nearly 17 per

cent of the population.

"Of the proportion of Australians affected, 60 per cent are women and 60 per cent of all people living with arthritis are of working age.

"If the current trend continues, one in five people, or around 4.6 million Australians, are forecast to be living with [arthritis](#) by 2020."

Ms. Rees said the [Osteoarthritis](#) Research Society International already recommends needle [acupuncture](#) among treatments for the management of OA of the knee or hip.

"The UTS study will involve the use of the comparatively new derivative of needle acupuncture that involves the irradiation of acupuncture points with a low-intensity [laser](#)," she said.

"Laser acupuncture is painless and ideal for people who have a fear of needles, particularly the elderly.

"We want to find out whether the physiological effects of laser offer some advantages over needle-based acupuncture and medication."

The randomised, double-blind, placebo-controlled trial has been approved by the UTS Human Ethics Research Committee.

Subject to meeting certain criteria for selection for the trial, all treatments provided will be free and participants will receive a small payment to cover the cost of getting to and from the place of treatment in the Sydney CBD or Western Sydney.

Provided by University of Technology, Sydney

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