

Is Chinese massage an effective and cost-effective treatment for chronic neck pain?

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A new study evaluating a form of Chinese massage, tuina, in patients with chronic neck pain found it to be effective, safe, and cost-effective compared to no treatment. The study, which assessed intensity of neck pain, disability, health-related quality of life, medication use, and cost, is published in *The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine (JACM)*.

One of the top researchers in complementary and integrative [medicine](#) globally, Claudia Witt, Dr. med., MD, MBA, Charité - Universitätsmedizin Berlin (Germany), University of Zurich and University Hospital Zurich (Switzerland), and University of Maryland School of Medicine (Baltimore, MD) and colleagues from Charité - Universitätsmedizin Berlin and Tianjin University of Traditional Chinese Medicine (China) coauthored the article entitled "Effectiveness and Cost-Effectiveness of Tuina for Chronic Neck Pain: A Randomized Controlled Trial Comparing Tuina with a No-Intervention Waiting List."

Patients with [chronic neck pain](#) were randomly assigned to receive either no treatment or six sessions of tuina over 3 weeks, a therapeutic approach that involves manual manipulation of the soft tissue and backbone using mainly stroking, kneading, and drumming techniques. The researchers reported a clinically relevant decrease in mean neck [pain](#) intensity and improved function and physical quality of life among the group that received tuina. Based on the differences between the two groups, tuina treatment appeared to be relatively cost-effective.

Said Dr. Witt: "The results are promising and call for further research on tuina."

"The value found for tuina in this study has an additional implication," says JACM Editor-in-Chief John Weeks, johnweeks-integrator.com, Seattle, WA. He adds: "Inclusion in payment and delivery programs of Traditional Chinese Medicine practitioners who are trained in tuina may

offer a one-two punch - acupuncture needles and Chinese massage - in efforts to shift to cost-effective non-pharmacologic approaches for [chronic pain treatment](#)."

More information: Daniel Pach et al, Effectiveness and Cost-Effectiveness of Tuina for Chronic Neck Pain: A Randomized Controlled Trial Comparing Tuina with a No-Intervention Waiting List, *The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine* (2017). [DOI: 10.1089/acm.2017.0209](#)

Provided by Mary Ann Liebert, Inc

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