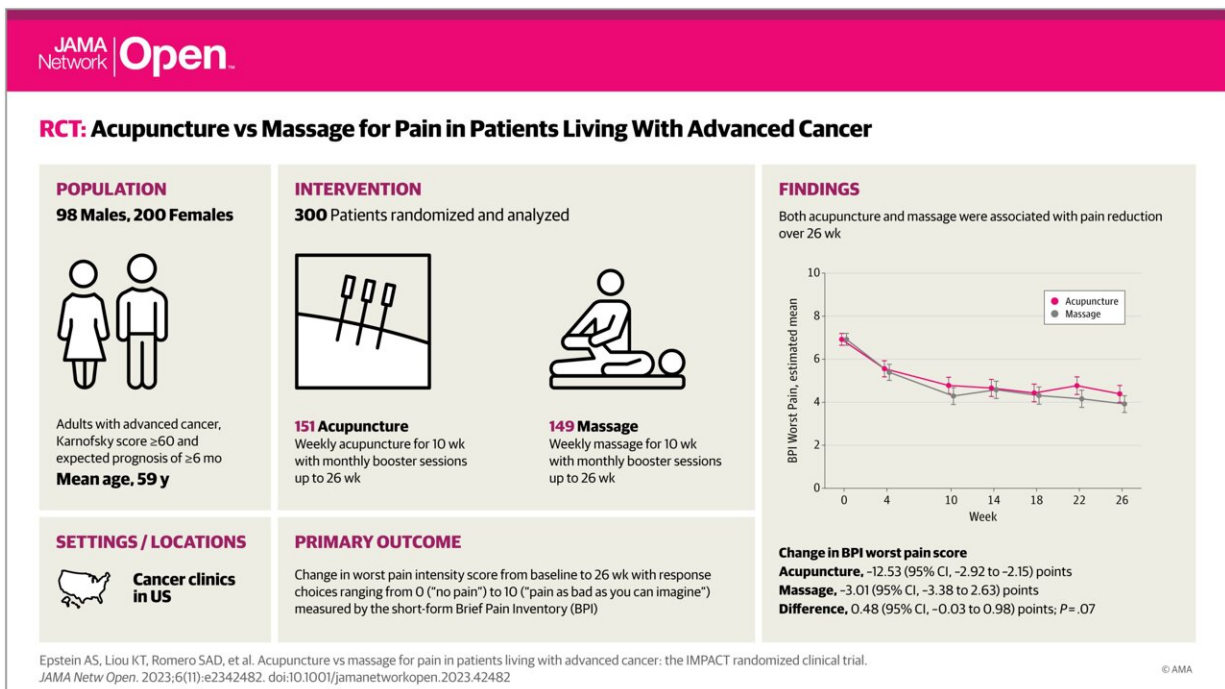


Both acupuncture and massage can benefit those with cancer-related pain: Study

November 27 2023



Credit: *JAMA Network Open* (2023). DOI: 10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2023.42482

Research has suggested that acupuncture and massage can help relieve some of the pain felt by people with advanced cancer, but studies have not compared the two modalities to each other. Now a multicenter, randomized clinical trial led by investigators from Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center has found that both treatments not only reduce

musculoskeletal pain but also lead to improvements in feelings of fatigue, insomnia, and patients' quality of life.

The study led by gastrointestinal oncologist Andrew Epstein, MD, and integrative medicine specialist Jun Mao, MD, MSCE, compared the effects of weekly acupuncture and weekly massage for 10 weeks with monthly "booster" sessions for up to 26 weeks. It enrolled nearly 300 patients with advanced cancer whose average worst pain score was 7 on a 10-point scale.

The results were published in [*JAMA Network Open*](#).

Over the study period, acupuncture reduced the worst pain score by an average of 2.5 points; massage reduced the worst pain score an average of 3 points, a difference that was not significant. Many patients also felt better with regard to their fatigue, sleep, and overall quality of life. They also used less pain medication over time. The researchers say efforts should focus on raising awareness about the effectiveness of these approaches, as well as expanding coverage for these treatments.

More information: Andrew S. Epstein et al, Acupuncture vs Massage for Pain in Patients Living With Advanced Cancer, *JAMA Network Open* (2023). [DOI: 10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2023.42482](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2023.42482)

Provided by Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

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