

Acupuncture works, new trial shows

By Mark Prigg, Evening Standard Science Correspondent
22 September 2004

Acupuncture - long dismissed as having no basis in science - really works, according to results of the first clinical trial conducted.

It could even be more effective than drugs in dealing with postoperative nausea and pain.

Seventy-five women having major breast surgery, including cancer patients undergoing mastectomy, were studied by an American university research team. All the patients were anaesthetised for surgery, but some were then given electro-acupuncture - delivery of a small electrical pulse through the skin into a traditional Chinese acupuncture point on the wrist.

After surgery, pain levels and the vomiting often associated with having had a general anaesthetic were lower among the acupuncture group. The researchers said it "appears to be more effective than the most commonly used medication, with few to no side-effects".