

Acupuncture

Hormones Gone Haywire? Hot Flashes are not just for Her!

Relief For Menopausal and Gender Specific Cancer Hormone Therapy -induced Imbalances.

By S. Wheeler, Lic.Ac.

Most of us know a woman who, red and perspiring, fans herself in the throes of her ‘**Power Surges**’; but few realise that men who have Hormone Blockade Treatment for **prostate cancer** suffer the same symptoms and more, and their side-effects frequently go untreated due to ignorance and their unnecessary embarrassment. Other diseases can affect hormonal levels and the vasomotor system resulting in *excessive sweating, disturbed sleep, nausea, mental and physical fatigue and distress*.

ACUPUNCTURE can give significant relief for these symptoms, whether they’re due to medical intervention or simply life’s changes. Its benefits to sufferers of nausea, stress, anxiety, fatigue, insomnia and depression are well documented – as is its success for reducing Chemotherapy-induced Nausea. Hormone blockers are a form of treatment for prostate cancer, keeping those cells from getting the male hormones (androgens) they need to grow. Different categories of hormone blocker are used for suppressing androgens produced in the testes and the adrenals, but they can all cause side-effects such as hot flashes, impotence and loss of sexual desire, with some also causing nausea, diarrhea, breast growth or tenderness. In a study of women with breast cancer taking Tamoxifen (an oestrogen suppressant) who had had unsuccessful conventional treatment for hot flashes, and then were assessed after a course of acupuncture; 8 of 10 reported effective relief and *all* reported some reduction in symptoms. In another study, evaluating acupuncture in men with prostate cancer, 7 of 10 demonstrated a significant decrease in hot flashes. During the traumatic time of cancer treatment, the reduction of such unwanted side-effects can greatly improve quality of life, and of course, acupuncture can help both patient and family cope by relieving excessive stress.

About 3 in 4 women will have hot flashes at some time, and about 1 in 5 suffer major symptoms for over five years - no joking matter - and apart from the personal suffering, many relationships suffer too! It’s not always desirable to take Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT) and while many women use phyto-oestrogen supplements like Soy, Linseed, Black Cohosh, Agnus Castus, Dong Quai or Sage to help counteract their falling oestrogen levels, these can be dangerous in conjunction with other medications and shouldn’t be taken unless you’ve discussed it with a qualified herbalist and your GP or consultant. Supplements need to be regularly ingested for at least 3 months before their effect can even be ascertained, whereas most acupuncture patients report a definite reduction in sweating, flushing etc. and also a decrease in feelings of stress, depression and fatigue after just a couple of weeks. The knowledge that symptoms can be minimised or banished is also a powerful boost to self-confidence. As a complimentary medicine, Acupuncture can work alongside supplements, homeopathy, herbalism, HRT, prescribed anti-oestrogen or anti-androgen cancer protocols, so don’t put up with the problem, give Acupuncture a try... and if you’re fed up of injections, remember, acupuncture needles are a tiny fraction of the width of hypodermic syringes, and Acupuncture points can also be stimulated with AcuLaser or ElectroAcupuncture for non-invasive, painless therapy.

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