

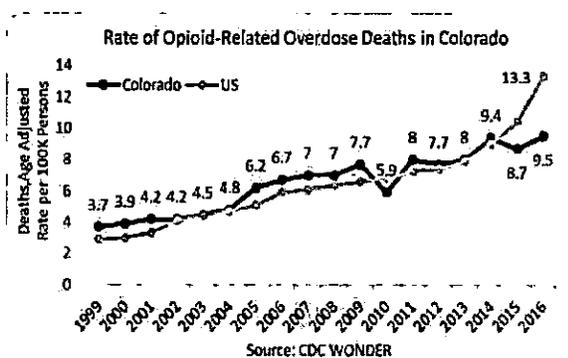
Acupuncture and the Opioid Crisis in Colorado



ACUPUNCTURE ASSOCIATION
of COLORADO

Problem

Colorado has a growing opioid crisis on its hands...



- **Drug overdose death rates in Colorado continue to increase, fueled by opioid addiction... opioid overdoses “nearly quadrupled from 2.5 deaths per 100,000 population in 1999, to 9.8 in 2017.”¹**
- **Opioid overdoses take more lives in Colorado than any other type of drug, including alcohol, methamphetamines, heroin and cocaine.¹**
- **The number of people in treatment for opioid use disorders at state licensed facilities has increased 189% from 2,748 in 2011 to 7,949 admissions in 2016.²**
- **Heroin-related deaths have nearly tripled in six years: 2011 - 79 deaths, to 2016 - 228 deaths.²**

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Solution

Acupuncture is effective for pain management...

- **Acupuncture has a clinically relevant effect on chronic pain that persists over time... Referral for acupuncture treatment is a reasonable option for chronic pain patients.³**
- **The American College of Physicians Clinical Practice Guidelines strongly recommends acupuncture as a non-pharmacological treatment for acute, subacute, and chronic low back pain.⁴**
- **Acupuncture resulted in pain relief and better function in low back pain compared with nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, and was associated with a greater likelihood of overall improvement at the end of treatment.⁵**
- Evidence supports the use of acupuncture in osteoarthritis by **reducing pain, improving mobility and quality of life.^{6, 7, 8}**

Acupuncture's role in recovery management...

- Studies show acupuncture and electroacupuncture **significantly reduce patients' postoperative analgesic requirement, reducing the consumption of**

opioid-like medications by more than 60% following surgery.^{9, 10, 11}

- Utilizing electroacupuncture is shown to reduce opioid use across a wide range of major and minor surgical procedures.^{12, 13, 14}
- When acupuncture was incorporated into treatments for pain at a United States Air Force medical center, **opioid prescriptions decreased by 45%**, muscle relaxants by 34%, NSAIDs by 42%, and benzodiazepines by 14%.¹⁵
- “Patients treated with acupuncture had **significantly less pain and used less opioid analgesics on Day 1 after surgery** compared with usual treatment,” according to meta-analysis from 2016 of 13 studies including 682 patients.¹⁶

**Acupuncture also provides opioids-
the natural ones...**

- Acupuncture works to block pain by activating a variety of bioactive chemicals, including several classes of opioid neuropeptides through peripheral, spinal, and supraspinal mechanisms. Endogenous opioids desensitize peripheral pain receptors

and reduce proinflammatory cytokines peripherally and in the spinal cord.^{17, 18}

**...and thus, can treat opioid addiction
itself:**

- The World Health Organization and the National Institutes of Health have accepted **acupuncture as a therapy for drug treatment for over 20 years.**
- The World Health Association has approved **acupuncture for the treatment of these significant withdrawal symptoms:** vomiting, insomnia, emotional upheaval, muscle spasms, sweats.
- The US federal government’s **Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (2007), the United Nations (2006), and the US Department of Defense/Veterans Affairs (2010)** have each published best practice guidelines that address the value of **acupuncture for chemical dependency.**¹⁹

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