



Assessing Alternative Treatments for Chronic Pain

The Bureau of Medicine and Surgery (BUMED), Pain Program Manager asked us to assess whether a difference existed in the number of pain encounters and average pain scores before and after active duty individuals received acupuncture from 2016–2018. The hope was to gain insight into the effectiveness of acupuncture as an alternative to opioids for treating chronic pain.

After identifying those who received acupuncture and suffered from chronic pain, we looked back one year from individuals' acupuncture start dates and forward one year from their acupuncture end dates to examine the time surrounding their acupuncture visits. We counted the number of pain encounters and determined the pain scores associated with each encounter, when available.

The analysis demonstrated a difference in the pain scores before and after acupuncture; whether acupuncture was the reason for this difference or the degree to which acupuncture affected the difference is less clear. This report will inform and refine future research on alternative treatments for chronic pain in Military Medicine.

For more information on this project or to submit a project request, contact: usn.hampton-roads.navmcpubhlthcenpors.list.nmcphc-haprojreg@mail.mil

