

Acupuncture in the military for rapid pain relief on the battlefield

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Integrative medicine (IM) is coming of age in the U.S. military, with the first example of widespread implementation of an IM technique being the popular use of acupuncture to treat pain in combat settings. The successful integration of this IM technique, its use by military medical acupuncturists, and implications for introducing other IM programs in the future are examined in an Editorial published in *The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*.

Richard Niemtzw, MD, PhD, MPH, United States Air Force Acupuncture and Integrative Medicine Center, Joint Base Andrews, Maryland, and Editor-in-Chief of the journal *Medical Acupuncture*, led a team of coauthors from Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (Bethesda, MD), Samueli Institute (Alexandria, VA), William Beaumont Army Medical Center (El Paso, TX), Shoreland, Inc. (Arlington, VA), Hunter Holmes McGuire VAMC (Richmond, VA), Navy Wounded Warrior-Safe Harbor (Washington Navy Yard, DC), Pentagon Flight Medicine Clinic (Washington, DC), and Corporal Michael J. Crescent VA Medical Center (Philadelphia, PA) in developing the Editorial entitled "Integrative Medicine in the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs: Cautious Steps Forward."

The authors describe the U.S. military's implementation of the auricular Battlefield Acupuncture (BFA) technique in its Warrior Transition Unit clinics, which treat large numbers of soldiers injured in combat. They highlight the methods that contributed to the successful integration of BFA including strategies to introduce and encourage the use of [acupuncture](#), administrative needs of the program, and data collection to assess outcomes. The model developed here and the lessons learned will be useful as the military explores additional IM techniques.

The views expressed are those of the authors and do not reflect the official policy or position of the United States Air Force, the United

States Army, the United States Navy, the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Department of Defense, or the United States Government.

More information: Richard C. Niemtzow et al. Integrative Medicine in the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs: Cautious Steps Forward, *The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine* (2016). [DOI: 10.1089/acm.2016.29002.rcn](https://doi.org/10.1089/acm.2016.29002.rcn)

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