

## **CHAPTER X: ACUPUNCTURE AND THE STUDY OF ACUPUNCTURE**

Now acupuncture, and particularly the study of acupuncture with neuroimaging, has begun to capture a lot of imagination, a lot of people's energy. Here's a recent Newsweek article highlighting Dr. Cho's work, who is one of the early pioneers of using acupuncture, uses functional imaging to study acupuncture.

And indeed, it was Margaret Chesney, the associate director here, who highlighted for me a recent Consumer Reports article which had as its hot topic, you know, "Click here to find out how you can safely control pain without taking drugs," and number one on their list of potential alternative treatments was acupuncture. So it's beginning to get very wide ranging acceptance, even from a relatively conservative organization like Consumer Reports.

On the other hand, you don't have to search very far into their Web site to find other perspectives. Indeed, just a few months previously, they had this headline, you know, "Want to try to quit smoking? Acupuncture doesn't work."

So what are we left with? Well, we're left with studies like these, large, well-controlled clinical trials, which are frankly giving us somewhat equivocal impressions in terms of the efficacy of acupuncture. Some in particular, the osteoarthritis studies, seem to show quite large populations with good sham controls that indeed, acupuncture does seem to have effects.

Others in other settings, in particular with headaches, seem to show effects. In fact in almost all cases, real and sham acupuncture seemed to do as well, in some cases even better than conventional care groups. But in these settings, the difference between acupuncture and sham is less clear.