

Endometriosis and Acupuncture

Do you have endometriosis and want to try acupuncture?

PhD candidate Nora Giese, supervised by A/Prof Mike Armour, Dr Millie Mardon, and Emeritus Professor Caroline Smith are running a clinical trial to see if three months of traditional Chinese acupuncture can help reduce the pain and other symptoms of endometriosis. The project is comparing two different types of acupuncture in addition to usual care, this means you will be able to keep taking all your current medications.

If you are aged between 18 and 45, live in Sydney, and have a diagnosis of endometriosis, you may be eligible to participate.

We are providing the acupuncture treatments at NICM Health Research Institute, 158 Hawkesbury Rd, Westmead NSW 2145, so you would need to be able to come to our location every week. Free parking will be provided.

You would need to fill in a range of questionnaires on your endometriosis-related symptoms and well-being. You would also need to be able to attend a local pathology centre for two blood tests before and after you received the acupuncture treatments to test changes in some special markers in your blood that are related to inflammation.

Who can join?

- People aged between 18 and 45 years, who:
 - Are currently living in Sydney
 - Have a confirmed diagnosis of endometriosis via laparoscopy, laparotomy with or without histological confirmation, specialized transvaginal ultrasound scans (TVUSS), or ovarian endometrioma detected by imaging (MRI, ultrasound) in the past five years
 - Have pelvic pain significant enough to seek medical attention
 - Did not have an endometriosis-related surgery in the last three months
 - Did not have acupuncture treatments within the last three months
 - Did not change any daily endometriosis-specific medication, such as hormonal treatment within the last three months (pain medication for pain flare ups are exempted from this)
 - Do not have a phobia against needles
 - Do not intent to become pregnant within the next seven months

What's involved?

- After an initial assessment whether you can participate and after you consent to participate, you will enter a one-month screening period and during this time we will ask you to:

- Complete a series of questionnaires on a mobile phone, tablet or computer on your endometriosis symptoms and their impact on your life and well-being prior to starting the acupuncture treatments.
- Visit a local pathology centre to have a blood test.
- In the 12 weeks intervention period, you will
 - Receive 12 acupuncture treatments once a week for 12 weeks.
 - Complete a weekly questionnaire on your endometriosis symptoms on a mobile phone, tablet or computer.
- Once the acupuncture treatments are completed, we will ask you to
 - Have another blood test.
 - Complete questionnaires similar to those before you started as well as asking you some questions about satisfaction with the treatment.
- After your treatment is finished, we will follow you up for another three months. This is so we can see if any changes in your symptoms continue after you've finished your treatment. We will ask you to:
 - Continue completing a weekly questionnaire on your endometriosis symptoms on a mobile phone, tablet or computer.
 - Complete a final set of questionnaires on your endometriosis-symptoms and well-being once at the end of the follow-up period.
- You may be invited to participate in an interview of 30-60 minutes on your experience of receiving acupuncture in this clinical trial. This interview is completely voluntary, and we will provide further information at the time.
- In total we expect that it will take about
 - **9-10 hours in total** for the acupuncture treatments which require your presence at NICM Health Research Institute.
 - **~4 hours of your time in total** spread across 7 months to fill in questionnaires.
 - Plus the time for the two blood tests (about 30 minutes)
 - And potentially another 30-60 minutes for the interview.

What are the benefits for participating?

Current endometriosis treatments do not always provide symptom relief for everyone. Previous research has shown promising results on the effect of acupuncture for reducing pain in endometriosis. However, most previous studies didn't follow people up after treatment and also didn't always use acupuncture treatment in the same way its normally delivered in the community.

This trial is designed to address these previous shortcomings and generate high quality evidence so we can better understand the potential benefits of acupuncture.

We cannot guarantee or promise that you will receive any benefits from this research; however, possible benefits may include an improvement in your overall health through the study intervention.

Interested in participating?

For more details about this study please read the following information before deciding on whether to participate.

- [Participation information sheet](#)

In order to confirm your eligibility and register your interest, please complete the online form below.

- [Online screening form](#)

If you have further questions, please contact the research team on N.Giese@westernsydney.edu.au.

Human Research Ethics Committee Approval: This clinical trial has been approved by Western Sydney University Human Ethics committee (H16706).

This study is supported by the NECST network via a PhD scholarship for Nora Giese.

NICM Health Research Institute Chief Investigator: Associate Professor Mike Armour.