

Commenter:

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Organization: Acupuncture Now Foundation, New Zealand

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Comment:

Acupuncture Now Foundation New Zealand

Acupuncture Now Foundation New Zealand (ANFNZ) is affiliated with Acupuncture Now Foundation (US) and Acupuncture Now Foundation Australia. ANFNZ aims to collect and disseminate unbiased and authoritative information about all aspects of the practice of acupuncture. We actively promote acupuncture research and seek to improve the level of information available to the general public, healthcare providers, and public health decision-makers about the use of acupuncture as an integral part of the broader health system.

Acupuncture has been well established in New Zealand for many decades and likely arrived in this country with the first Chinese immigrants. The first professional body representing practitioners of acupuncture, the New Zealand Register of Acupuncturists (NZRA), was incorporated in 1977. NZRA changed its name to Acupuncture NZ in 2015.

Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC)

ACC is New Zealand's no-fault compensation scheme for all those who require treatment for an injury which has resulted from an accident. ACC focusses on prevention of injuries as well as care and recovery.

Members of NZRA have been recognised by ACC as service providers since 1990 and have been specifically written into ACC legislation. The Accident Compensation Act 2001 states:

6 Interpretation

(1) In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires, —

acupuncturist means —

(a) a member of the New Zealand Register of Acupuncturists Incorporated;

Other treatment providers recognised by ACC include medical doctors, physiotherapists, osteopaths and chiropractors.

In 2006 the New Zealand Register of Acupuncturists (now Acupuncture NZ) co-operated with ACC to produce a comprehensive list of specific conditions that could be treated using acupuncture. This document is the ACC Acupuncture Treatment Profiles and is attached with this submission as a separate pdf document. The Treatment Profiles fully describe each condition in terms of both Western and Chinese medicine and provide guidance on the expected number of treatments that will be covered by ACC for the treatment of the particular condition.

When the document was first written, different numbers of treatment were permitted for different conditions. In February 2018 this was amended and ACC will now pay recognised practitioners for the provision of 16 treatments, regardless of the condition. ACC made the decision to raise and standardise treatment limits with the intention of allowing more freedom to deliver an outcome for the client. Treatment must begin within 52 weeks of the date of injury and be completed within 52 weeks of the commencement of treatment. Should further treatment be deemed by the practitioner to be necessary and appropriate then this may be approved on application to ACC.

Various types of back pain are fully outlined in the Treatment Profiles. The following are screenshots from the Profiles:

Index of conditions

http://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Coverage/DeterminationProcess/downloads/McBride_Comment_02142019.pdf

Every practitioner registered with ACC receives an annual report of the number of separate claimants treated, the number of treatments provided and a breakdown of the demographics of those who attended for treatment. These data driven insights allow the individual practitioners to review their own results in comparison with national averages and use this information to support business planning, encourage personal reflection of practice and to promote clinical discussion with colleagues.

The continuing relationship between ACC and the acupuncture professional bodies in New Zealand has ensured that the general population has been more frequently exposed to the use and acceptance of acupuncture as a valid treatment option than perhaps has been the case in other western countries. Medical doctors frequently refer their patients on to ACC registered acupuncturists for ongoing treatment and acupuncture is very close to being considered mainstream medicine by the majority of New Zealanders.

New Zealand has not yet produced significant amounts of research into the use of acupuncture. There is, however, substantial clinical information about the use of acupuncture which has been gathered by ACC and used to streamline and improve the outcomes for New Zealanders seeking treatment for many injuries, including lower back pain.

Compiled by Paddy McBride for Acupuncture Now Foundation New Zealand

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References:

<https://www.acupuncture.org.nz/>

<https://www.acc.co.nz/>

http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2001/0049/latest/DLM99494.html?search=ts_act_injury+prevention+rehabilitation+compensation

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