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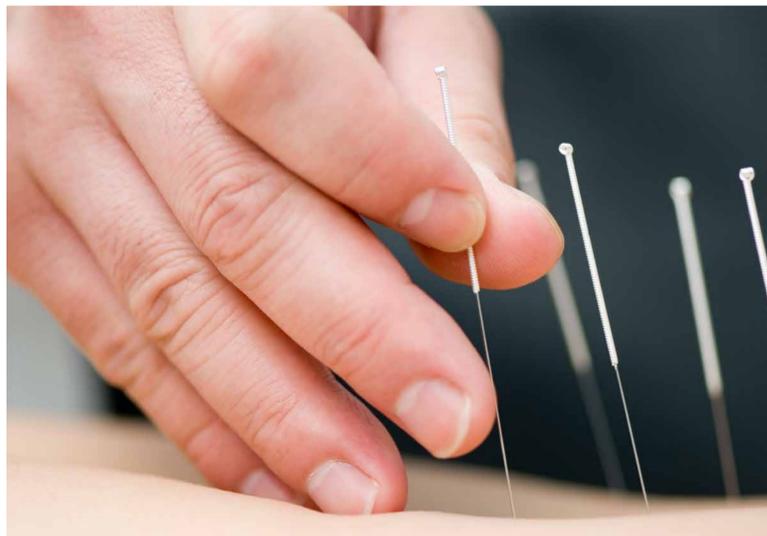
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# A pilot randomized controlled trial to assess feasibility, symptoms, and biobehavioral outcomes of acupuncture in patients undergoing radiation therapy for squamous cell carcinoma of the head and neck

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## PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

An interprofessional team (nurses, occupational therapists, acupuncturist, and psychologists) collaboratively designed the research protocol. The purpose of this feasibility study is to examine if acupuncture impacts adverse patient symptoms association with radiation therapy.



## RESEARCH DESIGN

A randomized, controlled trial will enroll 24 patients to usual care during radiation therapy versus 24 patients receiving acupuncture treatments twice per week for the 7-week regimen in addition to usual care.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## RESULTS

The primary aim is to determine the feasibility of delivering acupuncture to patients undergoing radiation therapy. Secondary aims will examine the change in the level of anxiety, depression, pain, sleep, fatigue, and physical health, satisfaction with social role, xerostomia, and patient perception of quality of life over time. These will be assessed through two questionnaires at baseline and weeks 3 and 6 (during the radiation treatment): PROMIS-57 and FACT-head and neck during the 7-week regimen.

## DISCUSSION

The results of the study will be utilized to determine feasibility of offering acupuncture to patients with head and neck cancer who are undergoing radiation treatment regimen.

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## BACKGROUND

Head and neck cancer is described as one of the most emotionally traumatic of all cancers. There is limited research on interventions to address psychological distress and xerostomia in this patient population. However, in patients with other cancers, acupuncture has been demonstrated to decrease anxiety,<sup>1</sup> depression,<sup>1-3</sup> pain,<sup>1,2,4</sup> fatigue,<sup>5,6</sup> improve sleep,<sup>3,6-7</sup> and increase quality of life<sup>1,3</sup>. This research project will expand research and evidence, to care more effectively for this patient population.