American Adult Acupuncture Use: Preliminary Findings from NHIS 2012 Data

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Background
- Acupuncture, one of the practitioner-based CAM modalities, has attracted public attention as well as researchers' interest since it was introduced to US in 1970's.
- The National Health Interview Survey (NHIS) showed that the ever acupuncture users increased from 4.2% of to 6.3% of US adult population, representing 8.19 million and 14.01 million in 2002 and 2007 respectively.
- This study examined the NHIS 2012 data and described preliminary findings of American adult acupuncture use.

Methods
- Respondents:
  - All individual completed 2012 NHIS adults core interviews (n=34,525) were included.
  - 2,278 adults reported having used acupuncture before (i.e. ever use).
  - 604 adults reported having used/saw a practitioner for acupuncture in the past 12 months (recent use).
- Variables:
  - Prevalence of acupuncture use.
  - General acupuncture clinical visit information: # of visit, cost and communication.
  - Conditions, reasons and outcomes of acupuncture use.
- Analysis:
  - STATA and SPSS.
  - Unweight and weighted distributions and frequencies.

Results
- 6.2% (14.48 million) of adults ever used acupuncture and 1.6% (3.66 million) used it in the past 12 month.
- Only 33.7% of the recent users told their personal health care provider about acupuncture use.
- Average number of recent acupuncture visits is 6.81±0.52 (95%CI: 5.79-7.84) in 12 months.
- Average cost per visit is $92.69±39.27 (95%CI: $12.38-173.00).
- Of the CAM modalities surveyed in NHIS 2012, 2.2% of the respondents considered acupuncture as the first of top three most important CAM therapies.
- Of the 88 conditions inquired, pain related conditions were reported the most for which acupuncture was used as the first therapy.

Discussion
- Acupuncture has been mainly used for pain-related conditions, but it also has shown positive outcomes on mind-body well-beings.
- Although the proportion of recent acupuncture user appeared increased at a steady pace (1.6% in 2012 vs. 1.4% in 2007), the proportion of ever acupuncture users in 2012 decreased 0.1% from 2007. This findings may indicate potential acupuncture user saturation with more return users.