

Evidence for the use of acupuncture and Chinese herbal medicine for spinal cord damage

1. **Journal of Veterinary Science 2003; 4 (1):97-101.** Randomized controlled trials: 20 paraplegic dogs receiving a combination of corticosteroids and electro-acupuncture recovered significantly faster than dogs receiving corticosteroids alone.
2. **Journal of American Veterinary Medical Association 2007; 231 (6):913-918.** Randomized controlled trials: the time to recover ambulation in 7 dogs with Grade 3 (paresis) and grade 4 (paralysis with deep pain intact) deficits treated with electro-acupuncture (EA) was significantly less than 9 similarly affected dogs not receiving EA. Deep pain perception was regained in 50% (3/6) of dogs with Grade 5 (no deep pain) dysfunction, treated with EA and 12.5% (1/8) of dogs in the control group.
3. **Journal of American Veterinary Medical Association 2010; 36 (11): 1225-9.** Randomized controlled trials: 40 dogs with Grade 4 and 5 neurological deficits from intervertebral disc disease were all treated with tapering doses of prednisone, but also received EA, surgery or EA plus surgery. **Results: Recovery rate was significantly higher in the electro-acupuncture group.**
EA alone— 78.9%
EA plus surgery –72%
Surgery alone—40%
4. **Neuroscience Research 2010; 67:307-316.** Electro-acupuncture is known to be beneficial to neuronal survival and axonal regeneration.
5. **BioMed Central Neuroscience 2009; 10:35.** Electro-acupuncture promotes survival, differentiation of the bone marrow mesenchymal stem cells as well as functional recovery in spinal cord-transected rats.
6. **Journal of Ethnopharmacology 124(2), 219-23.** The Chinese herbal formula Bu Yang Huan Wu has been shown to enhance spinal cord regeneration and reduce damage from ischemia and reperfusion in rat spinal cord trauma models.

Considering the evidence, a veterinarian is prudent to recommend electro-acupuncture for dogs with spinal cord damage. In my experience, dogs that receive surgery take longer to recover than dogs receiving electro-acupuncture alone. The best option for clients is to seek the use electro-acupuncture immediately after being prescribed prednisone for their dogs.