

- vitamins such as vitamin D3,
- topical creams such as amitriptyline cream,
- analgesics such as gabapentin and amitriptyline,
- physiotherapy for balance, stability, muscle strength and endurance.

Treatment response is quite often seen within a few weeks, probably due to the analgesic effects of the electrical stimulation via the needles in combination with the topical analgesic creams. Using this treatment schedule, in an individualized way, helped us to decrease pain intensity scores in the majority of patients with 50% or more, mostly within 8 weeks. One of the upside for many patients is to experience a significant decrease in pain and increase in quality of life without the troublesome side effects of the normal high dose psychotropic analgesics.

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An integrative medicine approach for the treatment of neuropathic pain

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At our institute for neuropathic pain we have explored how to integrate various CAM modalities into mainstream treatment of neuropathic pain, by selecting certain evidence based approaches from CAM and integrating these into the regular pharmacotherapy for neuropathic pain. Neuropathic pain is a very difficult type of pain to treat, and its impact on quality of life is significant. Single isolated forms of treatments very often are not sufficient, and only one out of 10 patients suffering from neuropathic pain is well treated. In order to treat patients adequately, usually more treatment modalities are required. Furthermore, a significant number of patients defer treatment with regular analgesics such as pregabalin, due to side-effects, mostly related to sedation. For all these patients our approach offers a relevant alternative.

At our institute we combine the following treatment modalities in the treatment of painful neuropathy due to diabetes mellitus, chronic idiopathic axonal polyneuropathy (CIAP) and cisplatin induced painful neuropathy:

- acupuncture administered as PENS (percutaneous electrical nerve stimulation),
- supplements such as alpha lipoic acid, acetyl-L-carnitine,