

### 13. Diseases of the Musculoskeletal and Connective Tissue

#### Reference

Ozawa N, Ogawa T, Nakagawa J, et al. The effects of acupuncture and moxibustion on interior genicular osteoarthritis. *Shinkyu Osaka (Osaka Journal of Clinical Acupuncture & Moxibustion)* 2002; 18(4): 393–6 (in Japanese). Ichushi Web ID: 2003202117

#### 1. Objectives

To evaluate the clinical effectiveness of acupuncture for knee osteoarthritis.

#### 2. Design

Randomized controlled trial using sealed envelopes for allocation (RCT-envelope).

#### 3. Setting

Koto Orthopedic & Internal Clinic, Osaka, Japan.

#### 4. Participants

Sixty medial knee osteoarthritis patients who presented between September 2000 and November 2001 (mean age 64.9 years, range 45–89). Twenty-seven patients had experienced acupuncture previously and 33 had not.

#### 5. Intervention

Arm 1: Real acupuncture (experienced) group. Needle retained for 10 minutes after *de qi* (得氣) sensation was achieved with sparrow pecking (n=15).

Arm 2: Sham acupuncture (experienced) group. Ten minutes rest after tapping with guide tubes (n=12).

Arm 3: Real acupuncture (not experienced) group. Needle retained for 10 minutes after *de qi* sensation was achieved with sparrow pecking (n=15).

Arm 4: Sham acupuncture (not experienced) group. Ten minutes rest after tapping with guide tubes (n=18). The same acupuncture points were treated in all groups: SP9 (陰陵泉), EX-LE 4 (内膝眼), SP10 (血海), and the point of maximum medial joint space tenderness. Stainless steel disposable needles (0.2×50 mm) were used.

#### 6. Main outcome measures

Evaluation on a visual analogue scale (VAS) of pain when ascending/descending stairs.

#### 7. Main results

The decrease in VAS score after treatment was significant in Arm 1 ( $P<0.05$ ), insignificant in Arm 2, and significant in both Arms 3 and 4 ( $P<0.05$ ).

#### 8. Conclusions

Real acupuncture is more effective than sham acupuncture immediately after treatment and the effectiveness depends on whether acupuncture has been previously experienced.

#### 9. From acupuncture and moxibustion medicine perspective

The paper mentions differences in the effects of acupuncture between patients who receive prior acupuncture treatment and those who do not receive prior acupuncture treatment.

#### 10. Safety assessment in the article

None.

#### 11. Abstractor's comments

This very interesting clinical trial stratifies knee osteoarthritis patients based on their history of acupuncture treatment and compares the effectiveness of acupuncture in those with and without prior acupuncture treatment in an RCT. However, the study should be improved in the following manner: the authors should describe the statistical methods, provide specific details of the randomization method (which is only described as the envelope method), and mention or compare ongoing effects (not simply the effects immediately after treatment). It is of great interest that the effectiveness of acupuncture depends on whether the patient has had prior experience with acupuncture. It will be very important to clarify whether masking with guide tube tapping accounts for this distinction. It is hoped that a larger scale clinical trial that includes more appropriate protocols will be carried out.

#### 12. Abstractor and date

Kawakita K, 30 January 2012.