

18. Symptoms and Signs

Reference

Choi DY, Lim SB, Cha NH, et al. Effects on pain behavior in non-medicinal treatment applied to chronic headache patients. *Gyeonglak-Gyeonghyeol-Hakhoeji (The Korean Journal of Meridian & Acupoint)* 2005; 22(1): 55–66 (in Korean with English abstract).

1. Objectives

To evaluate the effect of non-medicinal treatment on pain behavior in chronic headache patients.

2. Design

Randomized controlled trial (RCT).

3. Setting

One Oriental hospital, one Western hospital (Kyunghee University Medical Center), Republic of Korea.

4. Participants

Patients with chronic headache at least 4 hours a day for more than 15 days (n=86, age=20–65 years).

5. Intervention

Arm 1: Acupuncture applied to the Baihui (GV20, 百會), Sishencong (EX-HN23, 四神聰), Touwei (ST8, 頭維), Taiyang (EX-HN46, 太陽), Yingxiang (LI20, 迎香), Yifeng (TE17, 翳風), Fengchi (GB20, 風池), Quchi (LI11, 曲池), Zusanli (ST36, 足三里), Hegu (LI4, 合谷), and Taichong (LR3, 太衝) acupoints for 20 minutes using disposable needles, twice a week for 4 weeks (n=43).

Arm 2: Nerve block therapy (stellate ganglion block at the transverse process of the 6th cervical vertebra using 7–8 ml of 1% mepivacaine) (n=43)

Of 86 subjects, 35 subjects (15 in Arm 1; 20 in Arm2) dropped out.

6. Main Outcome Measures

Headache severity evaluated on a visual analogue scale (VAS), Brief Pain Inventory (BPI).

7. Main Results

Headache score was significantly decreased in both Arm 1 ($Z=-4.386$, $P=0.000$) and Arm 2 ($Z=-4.036$, $P=0.000$), suggesting that the non-medicinal treatment also relieves headaches. Treatment also significantly increased quality of life (QOL) measures including general activity, mood, enjoyment of life, personal relationships, and sleeping, suggesting that the non-medicinal treatment is effective. The degree of satisfaction also decreased in both groups, but not significantly.

8. Conclusions

Both 4-week treatments reduce headache and improve QOL. However, the superiority of one treatment over the other cannot be concluded. Acupuncture could be the effective treatment for chronic headache. Evaluation of cotreatments in further studies is suggested.

9. Safety assessment in the article

Not mentioned.

10. Abstractor's comments

This study compares the effectiveness of acupuncture and with that of stellate ganglion block treatment for chronic headache. Both treatments relieved chronic headache to a similar degree. A limitation of the study is that no randomization method was mentioned specifically. Nevertheless, this is a randomized, controlled trial on relief of headache pain. In the future, it is suggested that studies approach the problem from various points of view.

11. Abstractor and date

Jang KT, 31 August, 2010.