

4. Psychiatric/Behavioral Disorders

Reference

Jeong MS, Choi WJ, Lee KW, et al, The effects of acupuncture stimulation on skin conductance response of anxiety patients and normal subjects. *Dongui-Singyeongjeongsingwa-Hakhoeji (Journal of Oriental Neuropsychiatry)* 2009; 20(2): 101–10 (in Korean with English abstract).

1. Objectives

To evaluate the effect of acupuncture stimulation on the skin conductance response of patients with anxiety and normal subjects.

2. Design

Randomized controlled trial (RCT).

3. Setting

One Oriental hospital (details not mentioned), Republic of Korea.

4. Participants

All participants signed informed consent forms from January 2007 to September 2007. There were 30 patients with anxiety who received scores of 41 (in males) or 42 (in females) on the state anxiety inventory, and 42 (in males) or 44 (in females) on the trait anxiety inventory of the Korean version of Spielberger's State-Trait Anxiety Inventory-Y form (STAI-Y form) and 15 normal subjects.

5. Intervention

Arm 1: Treatment group (n=15 anxiety patients). Acupuncture treatment at the Shenmen (H7, 神門) and Neiguan (P6, 內關) acupuncture points.

Arm 2: Control group (n=15 anxiety patients). Sham needle treatment at the Shenmen (H7, 神門) and Neiguan (P6, 內關) acupuncture points.

Arm 3: Normal group (n=15 normal subjects). Acupuncture treatment at the Shenmen (H7, 神門) and Neiguan (P6, 內關) acupuncture points.

6. Main outcome measures

Skin conductance response (SCR) and STAI score.

7. Main results

1) There was a significant decrease in the SCR of all three groups during acupuncture stimulation at the Shenmen and Neiguan acupuncture points. The decrease in SCR differed significantly between the treatment and control groups in first 5 minutes of the second round of treatment.

2) STAI score decreased significantly in both the treatment and control groups.

8. Conclusions

Stimulation of the Shenmen and Neiguan acupuncture points can reduce the activity of the sympathetic nervous system.

9. Safety assessment in the article

Not mentioned.

10. Abstractor's comments

This study evaluated the effect of acupuncture stimulation on the sympathetic nervous system of patients with anxiety. Activity of sympathetic nervous system of patient with anxiety was more activated than normal subjects. SCR was significantly decreased in all three groups. This is due to the failure to establish an optimal control group for the effects of patient expectation, the relationship with acupuncturist, and placebo. Hence, the limitations of acupuncture control research should be studied.

11. Abstractor

Cho SH, 13 July 2010.