

13. Diseases of the Musculoskeletal and Connective Tissue

Reference

Katsumi Y, Itoi M, Kojima A, et al. *Ah shi* (tender) point acupuncture of chronic low back pain in aged patients*. *Rehabiritesyon Igaku (The Japanese Journal of Rehabilitation Medicine)* 2004; 41(12): 824–9 (in Japanese). Ichushi Web ID: 2005128701.

1. Objectives

Effectiveness of ah-shi (tender) point acupuncture therapy for chronic low back pain in elderly patients.

2. Design

Crossover randomized controlled trial (RCT cross-over).

3. Setting

Department of Orthopedic Surgery, the Meiji University of Oriental Medicine (current Meiji University of Integrative Medicine) Hospital, Kyoto, Japan.

4. Participants

Nine elderly people 65 years or over with low back and leg pain persisting for at least six months.

5. Intervention

Arm 1: T-S group (Tender point acupuncture, then sham acupuncture). Disposable stainless steel needles (0.18 × 50 mm) were inserted for 10 minutes at up to 18 tender points detected by palpation. Tender point acupuncture occurred once a week for 3 weeks, then after a three-week washout period, sham acupuncture commenced (3 weeks), followed by a three-week washout period. In sham acupuncture, the guide tube was placed at the tender point and after employing the same technique as real needle insertion, the participant was told that the needle had been inserted and then was allowed to rest for 10 minutes (n=4).

Arm 2: S-T group (Sham acupuncture, then tender point acupuncture). The period of treatment was the same as in Arm 1, but the order of the treatments was reversed (n=5).

6. Main outcome measures

Visual analogue scale (VAS) scores for intensity of low back and leg pain were recorded nine times: once before treatment commenced, one week after each treatment (six times), and at the end of each washout period (twice). The Roland Morris Disability Questionnaire (RMDQ) was given five times: once before treatment commenced, at the end of each treatment period (twice), and at the end of each washout period (twice).

7. Main results

Tender point acupuncture led to greater VAS and RMDQ improvement. The P value was not reported.

8. Conclusions

Tender point acupuncture therapy is effective for chronic low back and leg pain in the elderly.

9. From acupuncture and moxibustion medicine perspective

The importance of *ah shi* (tender) point acupuncture was mentioned.

10. Safety assessment in the article

Not mentioned.

11. Abstractor's comments

This study seeks to validate the efficacy of tender point acupuncture for low back and leg pain in the elderly using a crossover within-group experimental design, however, no *P* value is mentioned in the results, and there is no statistical examination. Yet, meaningful evaluation can be made because the effects were compared with those of sham acupuncture. Further development including elaboration of the sham acupuncture method is anticipated.

12. Abstractor and date

Hosaka M, 8 October 2011.