

11. Diseases of the Digestive System

Reference

Park JW, Yoon SW, Kim JS, et al. A clinical pilot study of Carthami-Semen herbal acupuncture treatment for chronic constipation. *Daehan-Chimgu-Hakhojei (Journal of Korean Acupuncture & Moxibustion Society)* 2008; 25(5): 127–37 (in Korean with English abstract).

1. Objectives

To evaluate the effect of Carthami-Semen herbal acupuncture treatment for chronic constipation.

2. Design

Randomized controlled trial (RCT).

3. Setting

One Oriental hospital (Kyunghee University Hospital at Gangdong), Republic of Korea.

4. Participants

Patients with functional constipation or irritable bowel syndrome with constipation (n=20; male/female=4/16).

5. Intervention

Arm 1: Carthami-Semen herbal acupuncture treatment (0.1 cc injection and 1/2-1 inch needle insertion) at 7 acupuncture points including Tianshu (ST25, 天樞), Daju (ST27, 大巨), Zhishi (UB52, 志室), and Qihai (CV6, 氣海). A total of 8 rounds treatment were provided over 4 weeks, twice a week.

Arm 2: Saline injection at the same acupuncture points using the same treatment method.

6. Main outcome measures

Scoring system for stool consistency and ease of evacuation.

7. Main results

At 1 week after the 4-week treatment, scores for stool frequency, hardness, and ease of evacuation were significantly improved in Arm 1 ($P<0.005$). But there were no significant improvements in these scores in Arm 2.

8. Conclusions

The Carthami-Semen herbal acupuncture has efficacy for chronic constipation.

9. Safety assessment in the article

Injection site bruising, moderate pain, and skin flare during injection occurred in several cases, but no severe adverse events were attributable to herbal acupuncture treatment.

10. Abstractor's comments

This study is the first randomized, controlled clinical trial to evaluate the efficacy of Carthami-Semen herbal acupuncture for chronic constipation. Patients classified as functional constipation and constipation with irritable bowel syndrome were treated with Carthami-Semen herbal acupuncture treatment on 7 acupuncture points including Tianshu, Daju, Zhishi, Qihai. Patients classified as Arm 1 and Arm 2, and evaluated for stool frequency, hardness, and ease of evacuation. Compared to the control treatment, Carthami-Semen herbal acupuncture significantly improved symptoms. The study has sufficient quality inasmuch as the procedures for randomization and blinding were properly executed, but the small number of subjects and single blinding are limitations.

11. Abstractor and date

Kim JS, 13 July 2010.