13. Diseases of the Musculo Skeletal System and Connective Tissue

Reference

1. Objectives
To compare the efficacy and safety of sweet-bee venom and bee venom acupuncture.

2. Design
Double-blinded randomized controlled trial (DB-RCT).

3. Setting
One Oriental hospital (Oriental Medical Hospital of Dongeui Universtiy), Republic of Korea.

4. Participants
Patients with stiff neck (n=41).

5. Intervention
Arm 1: Cupping therapy (附缸療法) + bee venom (BV) acupuncture + conventional acupuncture. (n=21)
Arm 2: Cupping therapy (附缸療法) + sweet bee venom (SBV) acupuncture + conventional acupuncture. (n=20)

6. Main outcome measures
Stiff neck severity self-assessed on a visual analogue scale (VAS), Neck Disability Index (NDI) score, Clinical Evaluation Grade (CEG), allergic reaction assessed on a VAS.

7. Main results
Stiff neck severity VAS score, NDI score, and CEG decreased significantly regardless of treatment, and there were no significant between-group difference in these decreases. The severity of treatment-site edema and itching were significantly less in Arm 2 than Arm 1.

8. Conclusions
Sweet bee venom acupuncture and bee venom acupuncture both have similar efficacy for stiff neck, and both are relatively safe (i.e., trigger only weak allergic reactions).

9. Safety assessment in the article
Not mentioned.

10. Abstractor’s comments
This study evaluated the efficacy and safety of bee venom acupuncture for stiff neck. As the enrollment procedure was clear and blinding was satisfactory, the results of this study result could be used to guide the choice between BV and SBV for acupuncture. However, the method used to evaluate allergic reaction severity was too subjective and it remains questionable whether the effect of general acupuncture and cupping therapy was greater than the effect of SBV and BVA.

11. Abstractor and date
Kim HJ, 17 August 2010.