13. Diseases of the Musculo Skeletal System and Connective Tissue

Reference

Kim JH, Jang SH, Yoon HM, et al. The comparison of effectiveness between bee venom and sweet bee venom therapy on chronic lower back pain. *Daehan-Yakchim-Hakhoeji* (*Journal of Pharmacopuncture*) 2008; 11(4): 15–24 (in Korean with English abstract).

1. Objectives

To compare the efficacies of sweet bee venom acupuncture and bee venom acupuncture for chronic lower back pain.

2. Design

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

3. Setting

One Oriental hospital (Oriental Medicine Hospital of Dongeui Universtiy), Republic of Korea.

4. Participants

Patients with lower back pain lasting more than 3 months (n=39).

5. Intervention

Arm 1: Sweet bee venom (SBV) acupuncture + dry needle acupuncture (n=20).
Arm 2: Bee venom (BV) acupuncture + dry needle acupuncture (n=19).

6. Main outcome measures

Pain rated on a visual analogue scale (VAS), Oswestry Disability Index (ODI), itching rated on a VAS.

7. Main results

Treatment decreased pain (pain VAS score) and improved physical functioning (decreased ODI score) in both groups, but the decrease and improvement were significantly greater in Arm 1 than in Arm 1. The severity of itching increased with number of treatments in Arm 2, but not in Arm 1. There was a significant between-group difference in itching severity.

8. Conclusions

SBV acupuncture causes less severe allergic skin reactions such as itching, but its efficacy is lower than that of BV acupuncture.

9. Safety assessment in the article

Itching was the only adverse event mentioned.

10. Abstractor's comments

The effectiveness of BV acupuncture is well known, but its adverse effects have not been well studied. In this study, both the effectiveness of BV acupuncture was demonstrated and the adverse events of BV acupuncture and SBV acupuncture were compared. Since SBV reduces pain and is associated with less severe adverse events, it should be considered the method of choice.

11. Abstractor and date

Kim HJ, 17 August 2010.