

10. Respiratory Diseases (including Influenza and Rhinitis)

Reference

Isobe Y, Yu S, Inoue E. Common cold prevention and therapeutic effects of acupuncture in a randomized controlled trial*. *Toyo Ryoho Gakko Kyokai Zasshi (The Journal of Oriental Medicine College Association)* 2000; 24: 94-7 (in Japanese). Ichushi Web ID: 2003049904.

1. Objectives

To evaluate the preventative effects of acupuncture against common cold and its therapeutic effects after infection.

2. Design

Randomized controlled trial (RCT).

3. Setting

Morinomiya College of Medical Arts and Sciences, Osaka, Japan.

4. Participants

Twenty-four healthy adult students and teachers recruited for the cold-prone winter period of 20 January to 19 February 2000.

5. Intervention

Arm 1: Acupuncture treatment group. Acupuncture for 15 seconds at the *ah-shi* (tender) point(阿是穴) on both sides of the throat, above a point about 45 mm (1.5 cun) lateral to the laryngeal prominence, with 0.16 x 40 mm needles after obtained “acupuncture sensation (*hibiki*)” toward the back part of the throat as an indicator, twice a week for four weeks (1 month)(n=11).

Arm 2: Control group. No treatment (n=12).

One participant was dropped before allocation.

6. Main outcome measures

Daily cold diary written by each subject noting the following: fit and well, normal, feels like cold coming on, severe cold (staying home and resting), number of days before catching cold, number of days sick with cold.

7. Main results

The two groups were allocated almost evenly. The number of days until a cold was caught was greater in Arm 1 (second week). The number of occurrences of cold was the same in both groups. The median number of sick days was two days less in Arm 1.

8. Conclusions

Intervention by acupuncture treatment delays the onset of cold, and decreases the number of sick days.

9. From acupuncture and moxibustion medicine perspective

Treatment on “the *ah-shi* point located above a point about 45 mm lateral to the laryngeal prominence after obtained “acupuncture sensation (*hibiki*)” toward the back part of the throat as an indicator” is an empirical method. It is not the usual acupuncture point or an extra point.

10. Safety assessment in the article

None.

11. Abstractor's comments

This study is of great interest since it focused on the preventative effects of acupuncture therapy against the common cold. The study was a pilot trial, as the authors mentioned, and there was no statistical analysis because the number of subject cases was small. This is problematic. The control group received no treatment: receiving some kind of sham treatment would be preferable. Another particular feature of the study was the selection of an atypical acupuncture point. Obtaining “acupuncture sensation (*hibiki*)” by manual insertion of a fine acupuncture needle, and using the “acupuncture sensation (*hibiki*)” as a guide, holds much interest since it is unique and characteristic method in Japanese acupuncture. It is anticipated that a future larger clinical trial based on this one will be designed with a suitable sample size.

12. Abstractor and date

Shinohara S, 31 January 2011, Kawakita K, 3 December 2011.