

6. Nervous System Diseases

Reference

Kwak BM, Kim MJ, Kim YM, et al. Persistent effects of acupuncture on chronic tension-type headache: A randomized controlled trial. *Daehan-Chimgu-Hakhoeji (Journal of Korean Acupuncture & Moxibustion Society)* 2008; 25(2): 165–77 (in Korean with English abstract).

1. Objectives

To determine the persistent effects of acupuncture treatment on chronic tension-type headache.

2. Design

Randomized controlled trial (RCT).

3. Setting

One Oriental hospital (Dunsan Oriental Hospital), Republic of Korea.

4. Participants

Thirty-two patients with chronic tension-type headache diagnosed according to International Headache Society (IHS) second edition criteria.

5. Intervention

Arm 1: Acupuncture treatment group (n=17).

Arm 2: Control group (acupuncture points not located on the meridian; n=15).

6. Main outcome measures

Primary end point: pain score measured on a visual analogue scale (VAS).

Secondary end point: headache disability inventory (HDI) score, six-point Likert scale (SLS), and algometer score.

7. Main results

1) VAS score decreased significantly at 4, 8, and 12 weeks (15.2 ± 14.1 , 16.1 ± 14.7 , and 14.4 ± 18.5 , respectively) after acupuncture treatment, and at 4 weeks (14.6 ± 18.5) after control treatment. Although acupuncture treatment tended to reduce headache pain (i.e., decrease VAS score, HDI score, and SLS) compared with the control treatment, there was no statistically significant difference between the treatments.

2) Algometer score decreased in the treatment group and indicated a tendency to relieve pain on the right side compared to the control group, and to provide statistically significant relief of pain on the left side. Algometer score changes over time became statistically significant for both the left and right sides in both groups.

8. Conclusions

Acupuncture treatment relieves chronic tension-type headaches and temporal muscle strain.

9. Safety assessment in the article

No adverse events were identified at follow-up, immediately before the end of the clinical trial.

10. Abstractor's comments

This randomized, controlled study evaluated the persistent effects of acupuncture treatment on chronic tension-type headache. This study showed that the effects of acupuncture treatment were persistent, and that acupuncture was safe (i.e., had no side effects). However, there was no statistically significant between-group difference in the primary end point (VAS score), so I think it is difficult to conclude that acupuncture treatment reduces chronic tension-type headache. Also, the follow up period was too short, so additional research is needed.

11. Abstractor

Lee EJ, 26 May 2010.