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The Use of Needling and Self-needling for Treatment of Vasomotor Symptoms in Patients with Breast Cancer and Fatigue after Chemotherapy

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Abstract
Numerous studies show that acupuncture relieves vasomotor problems following natural menopause and that symptoms can be extreme in patients with breast cancer, as well as prostate cancer, on treatment. Newly found benefits After 10 years of Tamoxifen therapy for breast cancer, newly-found benefits are the therapy reduces both the recurrence rates and mortality, but an increasing number of studies also show that greater than 50% of patients do not adhere to even 5 years of endocrine treatment, with an associated increase in mortality. More effective treatment of side effects might significantly improve treatment compliance. Thus, we describe a protocol for treatment and self-treatment maintenance for vasomotor symptoms [Filshie et al. 2005]. We include an algorithm for self-needling with ‘one-off’ needles and semi-permanent acupuncture studs, which we use clinically for maintenance treatment for up to 10 years. Acupuncture has also recently been shown to significantly reduce fatigue following chemotherapy in patients with breast cancer in an RCT. These benefits were similarly maintained by four practitioners who delivered treatments and by 4 self-administered treatments at home [Molassiotis et al. 2012, 2013]. This is the first formal comparison between practitioner-administered acupuncture and self-administered ‘top-up’ treatments, and the comparison shows that the two produce equivalent results. Guidelines for safe practice have been published with clear instructions for patients [Filshie & Hester 2006].

Keywords: acupuncture; vasomotor symptoms; breast cancer; chemotherapy-related fatigue; self-needling; guidelines for safe practice.

Brain Stem Autonomic Mechanisms Underlying Acupuncture’s Hypertensive Actions

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Keywords: brain stem; autonomic mechanisms; acupuncture; hypertension; reflexology; acupuncture points.
Abstract
The World Health Organization has suggested that acupuncture might be able to raise depressed blood pressure. We have developed two models of reflex-induced hypotension and have applied electroacupuncture (EA) to evaluate the response and underlying central neural mechanisms of action. The first model involved gastric distension in rats under the conditions of hypercapnia and respiratory acidosis. Superimposition of EA reduces the distension-induced hypotension and bradycardia through the actions of γ-amino butyric acid (GABA) in the rostral and caudal ventrolateral medulla (rVLM and cVLM), two regions that regulate sympathetic outflow, and in the nucleus ambiguus (N Amb), which regulates preganglionic parasympathetic outflow to the heart. The second model utilized phenylbiguanide (PBG) to stimulate cardiopulmonary afferents in the heart and elicit the von Bezold Jarisch reflex. This reflex involves the nucleus tractus solitarii (NTS) and the N Amb. GABA in the NTS underlies EA modulation of the PBG cardioinhibitory (bradycardia) response through its interaction with the N Amb. Furthermore, EA modulates the PBG-induced bradycardia through both opioid and GABA mechanisms in the N Amb. The source of opioids in the N Amb most likely is the nearby nucleus raphé pallidus. Thus, EA can raise blood pressure during reflex-induced hypotension. The N Amb that regulates parasympathetic outflow, as well as the rVLM and the cVLM, are central to EA’s hypertensive actions. In these nuclei, either or both GABA and opioids underlie acupuncture’s blood pressure raising actions.

Keywords: electroacupuncture; hypotension; bradycardia; rVLM; cVLM; N Amb; NTS; GABA; opioids

Introduction to the History and the Background of Pharmacopuncture in Korea

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Abstract
Nowadays, most traditional Korean medicine doctors are using pharmacopuncture in their clinics. Pharmacopuncture has many advantages over usual traditional treatments. In pharmacopuncture, small amounts of fluids can rapidly produce effects in the body and can be used to treat many health problems, including hard-to-treat diseases such as cancer, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, Parkinson disease, etc. In addition, patients can be treated with other types of traditional treatments and pharmacopuncture at the same time, and patients who experience difficulties when taking herbal medicine can be treated. The origin of pharmacopuncture is known to date back to 168 BC thanks to excavation of the tomb of Mawangdui, and “Yakchim,” the Korean name of pharmacopuncture, appeared in the newspaper in 1914. Pharmacopuncture can be classified into two parts: extraction and clinical administration. Extraction methods include alcohol immersion, pressing, low-temperature extraction, distillation extraction, dilution, etc. It can also be classified as meridian field pharmacopuncture, eight-principles pharmacopuncture, distilled pharmacopuncture, intravenous injection pharmacopuncture, animal-based pharmacopuncture, Blood- and Qi-nourishing pharmacopuncture, etc. As to administration, after pattern identification, the pharmacopuncture, the acupoints and the amounts of fluids need to be selected. Then, the acupoints can be palpitated and the pharmacopuncture can be administered. Three kinds of pharmacopuncturology textbooks have been published and two journals on pharmacopuncture are being published. Also, the iSAMS (international Scientific Acupuncture and Meridian Symposium) is being held every year on a different continent each year.

Keywords: Pharmacopuncture, Traditional Korean Medicine, Extraction, Meridian

Infantile Colic — The Effect of Acupuncture

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Abstract
Infantile colic is common, but no safe and effective conventional treatment exists. Even if the prognosis is good, the baby and the family suffer for the duration. Infants with colic also have an increased risk of exposure to physical abuse. For these reasons, it is essential to find a safe and effective treatment that shortens the colic period. The use of acupuncture to treat colic has been increasing despite weak evidence to support its effectiveness. Acupuncturists in at least nine countries, representing many styles of acupuncture, claim good results when treating infants with colic. As acupuncture is effective in treating other gastrointestinal disorders and gives pain reduction, it is plausible that acupuncture can help infants with colic. A combination of qualitative and quantitative research shows limited, but promising, results for acupuncture. An ongoing study is evaluating the effects of acupuncture at individually-chosen points compared to the effects of standardized acupuncture. The evidence for its effectiveness and its safety, as well as suggestions for further research, will be discussed. That evidence will show that the use of acupuncture to treat infantile colic may be an interesting option. However, further research on its effects and safety is needed to optimize those effects and to protect infants from unnecessary or less effective treatment.
The Influence of Somatic Afferent Stimulation on Autonomic Functions

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Abstract
Somatic afferent stimulation including acupuncture elicits various autonomic responses via reflex mechanisms or emotional changes. In addition, somatic afferent excitation itself can affect autonomic functions. These are considered to be the mechanisms underlying acupuncture effects. This presentation will show autonomic responses elicited by somatic afferent stimulation via these different mechanisms. All the experiments were performed on rats (anesthetized or conscious). As to reflex response, the afferent limb is the somatosensory nerves, and the efferent limb is the autonomic nerves (somato-autonomic reflexes). Many autonomic functions are found to be reflex-regulated by somatic afferent stimulation, and one such response will be discussed. As to the direct effect of somatic afferent excitation, innocuous tactile stimulation of the skin produces a segmentally-organized increase in the blood flow in the regional dorsal spinal cord. Such increases are also observed in spinalized animals and are not affected by pretreatment with autonomic blockades. As to emotional influences, the dopaminergic projection from the ventral tegmental area to the nucleus accumbens is thought to play a key role in motivational and reward processes. The dopamine release in the nucleus accumbens increases in response to innocuous tactile stimulation of the skin, but not to noxious pinching stimulation. The changes in dopamine release can influence autonomic functions.

Keywords: autonomic functions; somato-autonomic reflexes; emotions; spinal cord blood flow; dopamine release; nucleus accumbens