

Acupuncture and Chinese herbs as treatments for depression: an Australian pilot study.

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Abstract

AIMS:

Aims were to determine the effectiveness of acupuncture and Chinese herbs as treatments for depression, and to assess beliefs, attitudes and treatment experience.

METHOD:

Participants received acupuncture or acupuncture and Chinese herbs combined for five weeks. Acupuncture was given for 30 min twice a week and herbs taken three times a day. A Beliefs and Attitudes questionnaire was administered at baseline and Treatment Experience questionnaire post treatment. Outcome measure was improvement in depressive symptoms at the end of treatment period.

RESULTS:

Nineteen participants completed 5 weeks of treatment, 12 in the acupuncture group and 7 in the combined group. Treatment significantly improved depressive symptoms, however, there were no differences between groups. At baseline, participants were positive about the perceived effectiveness of treatment, and treatment experiences were positive.

CONCLUSIONS:

Acupuncture was effective in reducing depressive symptoms. However, herbs did not have an additional treatment effect. Beliefs and attitudes were positive.

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