Acupuncture for shoulder pain after stroke: a systematic review.

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Abstract

OBJECTIVES:

Shoulder pain, for which acupuncture has been used, is a common complication after a stroke that interferes with the function of the upper extremities. The aim of this systematic review is to summarize and evaluate the effects of acupuncture for shoulder pain after stroke.

METHODS:

Randomized controlled trials (RCTs) involving the effects of acupuncture for shoulder pain, published between January 1990 and August 2009, were obtained from the National Libraries of Medicine, MEDLINE(®), CINAHL, AMED, Embase, Cochrane Controlled Trials Register 2009, Korean Medical Database (Korea Institute of Science Technology Information, DBPIA, KoreaMed, and Research Information Service System), and the Chinese Database (China Academic Journal).

RESULTS:

Among the 453 studies that were obtained (300 written in English, 137 in Chinese, and 16 in Korean), 7 studies met the inclusion criteria for this review. All of them were RCTs published in China and reported positive effects of the treatment. The quality of the studies was assessed by the Modified Jadad Scores (MJS) and the Cochrane Back Review Group Criteria List for Methodologic Quality Assessment of RCTs (CBRG); the studies scored between 2 and 3 points on MJS, and between 4 and 7 points on CBRG.

CONCLUSIONS:

It is concluded from this systematic review that acupuncture combined with exercise is effective for shoulder pain after stroke. It is recommended that future trials be carefully conducted on this topic.

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