

# Acupuncture relieves menopausal discomfort in breast cancer patients: a prospective, double blinded, randomized study.

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## Abstract

### BACKGROUND:

This study evaluates the effect of acupuncture on hot flashes and disturbed night sleep in patients treated for breast cancer. The effect of acupuncture was tested against a sham-acupuncture group and a no-treatment control group. Plasma estradiol was measured to rule out this as cause of effect. Side effects of the treatment were registered.

### METHODS:

We randomized 94 women into the study: 31 had acupuncture, 29 had sham acupuncture and 34 had no treatment.

### FINDINGS:

In the acupuncture group, 16 patients (52%) experienced a significant effect on hot flashes compared with seven patients (24%) in the sham group ( $p < 0.05$ ). The effect came after the second acupuncture session and lasted for at least 12 weeks after last treatment. A statistically significant positive effect was seen on sleep in the acupuncture group compared with the sham-acupuncture and no-treatment groups. The effect was not correlated with increased levels of plasma estradiol. No side effects of acupuncture were registered.

### INTERPRETATION:

We find that acupuncture significantly relieves hot flashes and sleep disturbances and is a good and safe treatment in women treated for breast cancer.

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