

Randomised clinical trial of five ear acupuncture points for the treatment of overweight people.

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Abstract

OBJECTIVE:

To evaluate the efficacy of the five ear acupuncture points (Shen-men, Spleen, Stomach, Hunger, Endocrine), generally used in Korean clinics for treating obesity, and compare them with the Hunger acupuncture point.

METHODS:

A randomised controlled clinical trial was conducted in 91 Koreans (16 male and 75 female, body mass index (BMI) ≥ 23), who had not received any other weight control treatment within the past 6 months. Subjects were divided randomly into treatment I, treatment II or sham control groups and received unilateral auricular acupuncture with indwelling needles replaced weekly for 8 weeks. Treatment I group received acupuncture at the five ear acupuncture points, treatment II group at the Hunger acupuncture point only and the sham control group received acupuncture at the five ear acupuncture points used in treatment I, but the needles were removed immediately after insertion. BMI, waist circumference, weight, body fat mass (BFM), percentage body fat and blood pressure were measured at baseline and at 4 and 8 weeks after treatment.

RESULTS:

For the 58 participants who provided data at 8 weeks, significant differences in BMI, weight and BFM were found between the treatment and control groups. Treatment groups I and II showed 6.1% and 5.7% reduction in BMI, respectively ($p < 0.004$). There were no significant differences between the two treatment groups.

CONCLUSIONS:

This finding suggests that the five ear acupuncture points, generally used in Korean clinics, and the Hunger point alone treatment are both effective for treating overweight people.

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