

THE ACUPUNCTURE TREATMENT OF NECK PAIN: A RANDOMIZED CONTROLLED STUDY.

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Thirty patients with cervical spine pain syndromes persisting a mean of 8 years were assigned randomly into equal treatment and control groups. After 12 weeks, 12 of 15 (80%) of the treated group felt improved, some dramatically, with a mean 40% reduction of pain score, 54% reduction of pain pills, 68% reduction of pain hours per day and 32% less limitation of activity. Two of 15 (13%) of the control group reported slight improvement after 12.8 weeks. The control group had a mean 2% worsening of the pain score, 10% reduction in pain pills, no lessening of pain hours and 12% less limitation of activity.

RANDOMISED TRIAL OF ACUPUNCTURE COMPARED WITH CONVENTIONAL MASSAGE AND "SHAM" LASER ACUPUNCTURE FOR TREATMENT OF CHRONIC NECK PAIN - RANGE OF MOTION ANALYSIS

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AIM: The aim of this study was to compare the effects of acupuncture on active motion of the cervical spine in patients with chronic neck pain with those of "sham" laser acupuncture and massage.

MATERIAL AND METHODS: 177 patients with chronic neck pain were included in this prospective, randomized, placebo-controlled study. The patients were allocated by external randomization to five treatments over three weeks with acupuncture, massage and "sham" laser acupuncture. The range of active motion was measured by means of a 3D ultrasound real time motion analyzer.

RESULTS: The analysis of cervical motion in three directions showed the largest increase in range of motion 14 days after acupuncture. Compared to massage, a significant improvement in total range of motion was seen in those patients treated by acupuncture immediately ($p = 0,03$) and one week ($p = 0,03$) weeks after therapy. There was no significant difference in those patients treated by sham laser acupuncture.

CONCLUSION: The results of the study indicate that acupuncture is superior to conventional massage for improving active range of motion in patients with chronic neck pain. Because of its positive effects, its acceptance among patients and the lack of severe side effects, acupuncture

can be recommended for the treatment of chronic neck pain, although there was no significant difference in results between "sham" laser acupuncture and acupuncture.

EFFECT OF ACUPUNCTURE TREATMENT ON CHRONIC NECK AND SHOULDER PAIN IN SEDENTARY FEMALE WORKERS: A 6-MONTH AND 3-YEAR FOLLOW-UP STUDY

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The study was carried out to examine whether acupuncture treatment can reduce chronic pain in the neck and shoulders and related headache, and also to examine whether possible effects are long-lasting. Therefore, 24 female office workers (47 \pm 9 years old, mean \pm -SD) who had had neck and shoulder pain for 12 \pm 9 years were randomly assigned to a test group (TG) or a control group (CG). Acupuncture was applied 10 times during 3-4 weeks either at presumed anti-pain acupoints (TG) or at placebo-points (CG). A physician measured the pain threshold (PPT) in the neck and shoulder regions with algometry before the first treatment, and after the last one and six months after the treatments. Questionnaires on muscle pain and headache were answered at the same occasions and again 3 years after the last treatment. The intensity and frequency of pain fell more for TG than for CG ($P_b < \text{or} = 0.04$) during the treatment period. Three years after the treatments TG still reported less pain than before the treatments ($P_w < 0.001$) contrary to what CG did ($P_b < 0.04$) The degree of headache fell during the treatment period for both groups, but more for TG than for CG ($P_b = 0.02$) Three years after the treatments the effect still lasted for TG ($P_w < 0.01$) while the degree of headache for CG was back to the pre-treatment level ($P_b < 0.001$) PPT of some muscles rose during the treatments for TG and remained higher 6 months after the treatments ($P_w < 0.05$) which contrasts the situation for CG. Adequate acupuncture treatment may reduce chronic pain in the neck and shoulders and related headache. The effect lasted for 3 years.