

ACUPUNCTURE TREATMENT IMPROVES NERVE CONDUCTION IN PERIPHERAL NEUROPATHY

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ABSTRACT: The etiology of peripheral neuropathy (PN) often remains elusive resulting in a lack of objective therapeutic strategies. We conducted a pilot study to evaluate the therapeutic effect of acupuncture on PN as measured by changes in nerve conduction and assessment of subjective symptoms. One hundred and ninety-two consecutive patients with PN as diagnosed by nerve conduction studies (NCS) were evaluated over a period of 1 year. Of 47 patients who met the criteria for PN of undefined etiology, 21 patients received acupuncture therapy according to classical Chinese Medicine as defined by the Heidelberg Model, while 26 patients received the best medical care but no specific treatment for PN. Sixteen patients (76%) in the acupuncture group improved symptomatically and objectively as measured by NCS, while only four patients in the control group (15%) did so. Three patients in the acupuncture group (14%) showed no change and two patients an aggravation (10%), whereas in the control group seven showed no change (27%) and 15 an aggravation (58%). Importantly, subjective improvement was fully correlated with improvement in NCS in both groups. The data suggest that there is a positive effect of acupuncture on PN of undefined etiology as measured by objective parameters.