

Acupuncture Tops Drug for Cognitive Impairment

Vascular cognitive impairment is characterized by symptoms ranging from forgetfulness to more serious problems with attention, memory, language and problem-solving. Heart disease and stroke are two of the major risk factors, as both involve compromised blood supply to the brain.

In a study published in the *Journal of Clinical Acupuncture and Moxibustion* (Xu GC, et al., 2019), researchers recruited 94 patients with VCI and randomized them into two groups for comparison. One group received donepezil hydrochloride, while the other group received acupuncture. Both groups also received general therapy according to *China 2014 Guidelines for Secondary Prevention and Treatment of Ischemic Stroke and Transient Ischemic Attack*, including aspirin tablets and atorvastatin calcium daily.



The primary acupoints that were used in treating the acupuncture group included GV26 (*Shuigou*), PC6 (*Neiguan*), SP6 (*Sanyinjiao*), EX-HN1 (*Sishencong*), GB39 (*Xuanzhong*) and KI3 (*Taixi*) and involved a specific protocol, *Xing Nao Kai Qiao* ("Waking the Brain and Opening the Orifices"). Prior to treatment, and four and eight weeks following treatment, researchers evaluated patient response using the Montreal Cognitive Assessment (MoCA) Scale; the Ability of Daily Living Scale; serum levels of insulin-like growth factor 1 (IGF-1) and visinin-like protein 1 (VILIP-1; and mRNA expression of IGF-1 and VILIP-1.

Following treatment, both patient groups showed improvements in scores at four and eight weeks, although significantly greater improvements were noted in the acupuncture group as compared to the medication group.

Resource

- English translation of study parameters / findings. [Click here](#) for complete summary.

JANUARY 2020