



CLINICAL CORNER

Acupuncture vs. Medication for Migraines

Editorial Staff | DIGITAL EXCLUSIVE

Anyone who's suffered a migraine appreciates *anything* that could reduce its intensity and/or duration. According to a new research review and meta-analysis, which included 23 RCTs comparing acupuncture to flunarizine hydrochloride (brand name: Sibelium, among others), acupuncture (total of 785 adult patients among the 23 studies reviewed) achieved a greater reduction in headache intensity and headache duration compared to flunarizine (763 total patients).

The acupuncture group also reduced the frequency with which they took painkillers for their migraine pain compared to the flunarizine group; and experienced "the alleviation of paroxysmal symptoms, such as nausea and vomiting" to a greater extent than the flunarizine group.

Writing about their findings in the Chinese peer-reviewed journal *Zhongguo Zhong Yao Za Zhi* (*China Journal of Chinese Materia Medica*), the study authors emphasize: "The GRADE system showed that the evidence level of the above indicators was extremely low, and the strength of recommendation was low." So then, what's the clinical takeaway?



Considering the acupuncture group experienced only mild adverse reactions (localized pain, drowsiness, dizziness, etc.), acupuncture still holds promise as a potential option to reduce migraine pain and reliance on medication (all of which come with their own side effects).

For migraine patients taking flunarizine, why not see if acupuncture reduces or eliminates their need for it and/or pain relievers? The validation for these findings may be in your own clinic.

Source: Min J, et al. [Systematic review and Meta-analysis on randomized controlled trial of efficacy and safety for acupuncture versus Flunarizine in treatment of migraine.] *Zhongguo Zhong Yao Za Zhi*, 2020 Nov;45(21):5083-5092.

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