



PAIN RELIEF / PREVENTION

Acupuncture: Better Than TENS for Joint Pain?

Editorial Staff

Expensive drug infusions, physiotherapy and transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation (TENS) are among the most common treatment strategies for hemophilia-related joint pain. [Hemophilia](#) sufferers experience uncontrolled internal bleeding that often occurs in the spaces surrounding joints, causing significant pain and disability.

Is there a better way to manage the pain? Yes, suggests new research: *acupuncture*. Published in *Haemophilia*, the official journal of the World Association of Hemophilia, this single-blinded clinical trial involved 28 hemophilia patients assigned to receive either acupuncture or TENS. All patients had chronic joint pain due to their condition. The acupuncture group received traditional unilateral acupuncture on the side of greatest referred pain, while the TENS (control) group received TENS with electrodes placed on the joint experiencing the most intense pain.



Both groups received treatment once per week (20-minute session) for five consecutive weeks, after which researchers evaluated the same variables they had assessed prior to initiating treatment: pain intensity (visual analogue scale), physical assessment, quality of life and treatment expectation.

Acupuncture reduced pain intensity compared to TENS, to a statistically significant degree. Satisfaction with treatment also was higher in the acupuncture group vs. the control (TENS) group. Physical assessment and quality of life were similar among the two groups.

Source: Oliveira KCP, et al. Acupuncture as a therapeutic resource for treatment of chronic pain in people with haemophilia. *Haemophilia*, Sept. 30, 2020 (epub ahead of print).

JANUARY 2021