



CLINICAL PEARLS

Chronic Migraines: Acupuncture or Electroacupuncture?

Editorial Staff

A single migraine is debilitating, but as you know, chronic migraines can dramatically change a patient's life long term. Acupuncture - particularly electroacupuncture - to the rescue!

A research team at Qingpu Hospital of Traditional Chinese Medicine (China) recruited 55 patients with chronic migraines (average duration: 40-plus months) and liver yang hyperactivity to compare the effect of manual acupuncture and electroacupuncture on migraine variables including pain VAS scores), pain duration and frequency of attacks.

Patients were randomized for 28 days (four seven-day sessions of five consecutive days of treatment, followed by two-day breaks). Patients received manual acupuncture or electroacupuncture at the same points: GB 20 (*Fengchi*); GV 20 (*Baihui*); EX-HN5 (*Taiyang*); LI 4 (*Hegu*); LV 3 (*Taichong*); and KD 3 (*Taixi*).

All patients improved with respect to the three outcome measures: VAS scores, pain duration and frequency of attacks; with electroacupuncture achieving significantly greater improvement than manual acupuncture.



The researchers also used a four-tier symptom scoring system (recovered, significantly effective, effective or ineffective) to evaluate overall efficacy: 83.3 percent for electroacupuncture with two cases recovered, 14 significantly effective, nine effective, and only three ineffective; vs. 63.0 percent for manual acupuncture with no cases recovered, six significantly effective, 11 effective and 10 ineffective.

Source

- Hu T, Shen L, Zhang H, et al. [Clinical curative effect of electro-acupuncture combined with cerebral circulation in treatment of liver-yang hyperactivity migraine.] *J Navy Med*;42(5).

Editor's Note: An English-language summary by continuing-education provider HealthCMi served as the basis for our article.

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