



## DETERMINATION OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF NEEDLE TREATMENT IN CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASES

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### Abstract

Acupuncture, for the western countries, is an innovative and low-cost therapy for treatment and prevention of cardiovascular diseases (CVDs). However, most of its effects and mechanisms are poorly understood. Thus, the objective of this work was to systematically review the literature regarding the clinical effects of acupuncture for the treatment and prevention of CVDs. Depression is a serious risk for cardiovascular disease (CVD). Improving depression can alleviate cardiac symptoms and improve quality of life. Studies have shown that acupuncture has a positive effect on depression and CVD. This systematic review and meta-analysis will evaluate the efficacy and safety of acupuncture in the treatment of depression complicated with CVD.

### Keywords

acupuncture,cardiovascular disease,depression,systematic review,meta-analysis.

### INTRODUCTION

Scientific advances in acupuncture research, coupled with the side effects of treating certain medical conditions by using conventional drugs, have promoted public interest in and demands for acupuncture dramatically in recent times . Over 90% of physicians are estimated to have used acupuncture in German pain clinics and, in the USA, over 11,000 physicians have an interest in acupuncture . Moreover, in the UK, veterinarians, nurses, chiropractors, physiotherapists, and naturopaths use acupuncture even more than physicians . Acupuncture and shiatsu massage accounted for 61% of all treatments provided in a clinic in a study conducted among patients treated in the Clait Health Services in Israel. However, data on public interest, patterns of use, and effects and side effects of acupuncture treatment among Nigerians and sub-Saharan Africans are limited.

Acupuncture is a traditional therapeutic method from East Asia, dating back more than 2000 years . It is based on peripheral neural stimulation by the introduction of needles into specific regions of the body surface, called acupuncture points or acupoints, with the intention of promoting organic and functional changes for therapeutic purposes or simple neuromodulation The occidental scientific community has been studying acupuncture effectiveness and its physiological mechanisms of action on the relief of pain, revealing it to be a powerful mode of sensorial stimulation. Recently, the number of studies publishing about

infection, inflammation, dysfunction of the autonomic, peripheral, and central nervous system , metabolic disorders, and CVDs has increased .

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

We searched PubMed, Embase, Cochrane Library, Web of Science, CNKI, Wanfang, VIP, and China Biomedical Literature databases. Randomized controlled trials of acupuncture vs. standard care or sham acupuncture or antidepressants were included. The retrieval time is from database construction to 07 April 2022. We used the “risk of bias” tool of Cochrane Collaboration, and the Review Manager (RevMan.) Version 5.4.1 for statistics analysis. Primary outcomes included Hamilton scale for depression (HAMD),

self-rating depression scale (SDS), and the effective rate of depression. Secondary outcomes included frequency of angina pectoris and visual analogue scale (VAS) scores for angina pain.

## RESULTS

A total of 2,366 studies were screened based on the search strategy. Twelve eligible studies with a total of 1,203 participants have been identified. The result showed that acupuncture reduced the HAMD score [weighted mean difference (WMD):  $-3.23$ ; 95% confidence interval (CI):  $-5.38$  to  $-1.09$ ;  $P = 0.003$ ] and the SDS score (WMD:  $-1.85$ ; 95% CI:  $-2.14$  to  $-1.56$ ;  $P < 0.00001$ ) in patients with depression complicated with CVD. Acupuncture also improved the effective rate of depression (risk ratio: 1.15; 95% CI: 1.03 to 1.29;  $P = 0.01$ ). The result also showed that acupuncture reduced the attack frequency of angina pectoris (WMD:  $-4.54$ ; 95% CI:  $-5.96$  to  $-3.11$ ;  $P < 0.00001$ ) and the VAS score for angina pain (WMD:  $-0.72$ ; 95% CI:  $-1.06$  to  $-0.38$ ;  $P < 0.0001$ ). This article reviewed the significant advantages of acupuncture for depression and the superiority of acupuncture over no-intervention therapy, antidepressant therapy, and psychotherapy in reducing angina frequency and pain intensity in patients with CVD.

## DISCUSSION

The objective of this study was to investigate the experience of apparently healthy adult Nigerians with acupuncture needle stimulation and the responses of SBP, DBP, HR, and RPP to real acupuncture and sham acupuncture needle stimulation and to compare the changes in the SBP, DBP, HR, and RPP of the participants after 30 minutes of real acupuncture and sham acupuncture intervention. All the participants who were enrolled in the study completed assessments at all stages of data collection (Fig. 1). The majority of the participants in this study reported heaviness, numbness, and increasing pain during the acupuncture stimulation. However, no cases of dizziness and/or fainting were reported. None of the effects reported by the participants was life-threatening, and all typically were fleeting. Nevertheless, the therapist should inform patients of these possible side effects prior to acupuncture intervention so that if they experience any of them, they will know that such side effects are normal and nothing to be too concerned about as they will typically disappear within 24 hours. Advice on eating before intervention and taking time in getting up and moving slowly after intervention might also be of benefit.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this review demonstrates that acupuncture may be a viable alternative as a complementary therapy for CVD, particularly for hypertension and CAD. However, the heterogeneity of the studies does not allow a standardization of its application for each specific disease, making further studies necessary for its use to become a reality.

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