

Acupuncture Treatment for Low Back Pain in Korea

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Low back pain (LBP) affects as much as 80% of the adult population. A variety of factors can lead to LBP. Various treatment options have been proposed to provide relief of symptoms.

Acupuncture is a simple, effective, and conservative pain control modality. It is so effective and simple to use in LBP. The application of acupuncture consists of the insertion of needles into certain points and the stimulation of those points either by manipulation or by applying electric pulses or other appliances. In Korea, acupuncture practitioners use disposable stainless steel needles, commonly 40 mm in length and 0.25 mm in diameter. The acupuncture points may be selected on the local points and also a distal point on the meridian that crosses the painful area. Especially, they may be selected on the base of Saam acupuncture according to the meridian flow and pain characteristics in Korea.

The manipulation of needles includes manual twisting, moving the needle up and down, and similar techniques are essential. Other modalities used are moxibustion, electroacupuncture, laser acupuncture, acupressure, cupping therapy and so on.

The needle would be left for 15-20 minutes. It requires approximately 10 sessions of treatments and 2 to 5 sessions of treatments per week. It usually requires 3-4 sessions whether a patient is likely to respond to acupuncture and often more than this before any long-term relief is obtained, with this varying according to the condition being treated and a person's individual response to acupuncture.

Key words: LBP, acupuncture, meridian, electroacupuncture