

Research Progress on Acupuncture and Moxibustion Treatment of Lumbar Spondylopathy currently in China

Liu Baoyan

Vice President

China Academy of Chinese Medical Sciences, Beijing, China



Lumbar spondylopathy falls into category of low back pain and arthromyodynia in Traditional Chinese Medicine, which is currently a common disease in Department of Acupuncture, including many diseases caused by pathological changes in lumbar intervertebral disc, ligament, vertebral canal, physiological curvature, and vertebral body structure. Primary clinical symptoms of lumbar spondylopathy are low back pain, pain and numbness of lower limb, limited activities of lower back, or even loss of self-care ability.

2489 Chinese papers published between 1994-2008 on acupuncture treatment of lumbar spondylopathy were obtained from literature search, including 54 papers of randomized controlled trials. These studies preliminarily demonstrate that acupuncture can significantly improve signs and symptoms of lumbar spondylopathy such as low back pain, pain and numbness of lower limb, walking disability, loss of sensibility, positive straight-leg raising test, and enhance muscle strength and self-care ability. These clinically therapeutic effects showed that acupuncture treatment is obviously superior to any other single method or drug. Meanwhile, no considerable side effects were found in these studies. However, control group selection, random hiddenness and management of clinical data need further improvement.

Specificity acupoint of acupuncture, effective of acupuncture manipulation by applying technique and mechanism of acupuncture improving lumbar spondylopathy should be paid attention to study, improving therapeutic effect of acupuncture and obtaining high quality report related to clinical study in future.

The therapeutic mechanism research of acupuncture lumbar spondylopathy is mainly in the following aspects: Acupuncture has obvious effect of relieve pain, the results showed that it can obviously influence of nerve pathway and neurotransmitter, and promote the central release some of harmful substances, reduced the peripheral monoamine transmitters by acupuncture points. The therapeutic of acupuncture lumbar spondylopathy can improve the micro-environment surrounding nerve root, remove inflammation media, inhibit conducting harmful information, relieve muscle spasm of conduction, reduce or eliminate the inflammation and edema of nerve roots to ease pain. The therapeutic of acupuncture lumbar spondylopathy can regulate immune by promoting opioid peptides of peripheral inflammatory tissue to be released. Currently, animal model of lumbar spondylopathy has been established, neural electrophysiology, neurotransmitters and analgesic material and histopathological aspects and ultrastructure should be deeply studied.