

Trigger-point Acupuncture Treatment of Chronic Low Back Pain in Elderly Patients

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Background and Aims: Our objective was to evaluate the effects of two different modes of trigger-point acupuncture on pain and quality of life in chronic low back pain patients compared to standard acupuncture.

Materials and Method: Thirty five consecutive out-patients (age range: 65-81 years), with non-radiating low back pain for at least six months, were randomised to one of three groups over 12 weeks. Each group received two phases of acupuncture with an interval between them. The standard acupuncture group received treatment at traditional acupuncture points, while the other acupuncture groups received superficial or deep treatments on trigger-points. Outcome measures were VAS pain intensity and Roland Morris Questionnaire.

Results: After treatment, the deep needling to trigger-points reported less pain intensity and improved quality of life compared to the standard acupuncture or the superficial needling to trigger-points, but the differences were not statistically significant. There was a significant reduction in pain intensity between the treatment and interval in the deep needling to trigger-points, but not in the standard acupuncture or the superficial needling to trigger-points.

Conclusion: These results suggest that deep needling to trigger-points may be more effective in the treatment of low back pain in elderly patients.