

## Effects of acupuncture for chronic headache in university hospital

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According to the practice guideline for chronic headache in Japan, acupuncture is considered effective as an optional choice for patients who desire treatment other than drug therapy, and for those in whom drug therapy is contraindicated. However, it is necessary to accumulate further evidence.

Using acupuncture, we are treating patients who do not respond to Western medical treatment, and, therefore, were asked to consult an acupuncture clinic by the Department of Neurology in a university hospital. In this paper, we present a case series of patients with chronic headache treated with acupuncture in our department, and show the role of acupuncture at medical university hospitals.

Subjects were 96 patients with tension-type headache and 70 with migraine who met the criteria of the International Classification of Headache Disorders (ICHD- II).

Acupoints (BL10, GB20, GB12, GB21, BL43, SI14 etc.) were selected to reduce excessive muscle tone for tension-type headache, since excessive muscle tone in posterior cervical, interscapular, and suprascapular regions plays an important role in the pathogenesis of tension-type headache. The efficacy rate of acupuncture was 82%, and the therapeutic effects were associated with improvement of shoulder stiffness.

Considering the involvement of the trigeminal nerve in the pathogenesis of migraine, facial and temporal acupoints (GB4, GB5, GB6, ST7, ST6 etc.) were selected to prevent migraine attack. Additionally, tender and tonic points in the neck and shoulders were selected because shoulder stiffness might be a trigger of migraine. As a result, days with migraine reduced, and tenderness and tonus of the neck and shoulder regions also improved.

In conclusion, acupuncture is effective for chronic headache, and useful medical treatment for headache in medical university hospitals.