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Systematic review on randomized controlled clinical trials of acupuncture therapy for neurovascular headache.

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Abstract

OBJECTIVE:
To evaluate the effectiveness of acupuncture as a treatment for neurovascular headache and to analyze the current situation related to acupuncture treatment.

METHODS:
PubMed database (1966-2010), EMBASE database (1986-2010), Cochrane Library (Issue 1, 2010), Chinese Biomedical Literature Database (1979-2010), China HowNet Knowledge Database (1979-2010), VIP Journals Database (1989-2010), and Wanfang database (1998-2010) were retrieved. Randomized or quasi-randomized controlled studies were included. The priority was given to high-quality randomized, controlled trials. Statistical outcome indicators were measured using RevMan 5.0.20 software.

RESULTS:
A total of 16 articles and 1 535 cases were included. Meta-analysis showed a significant difference between the acupuncture therapy and Western medicine therapy [combined RR (random efficacy model)=1.46, 95% CI (1.21, 1.75), Z=3.96, P<0.0001], indicating an obvious superior effect of the acupuncture therapy; significant difference also existed between the comprehensive acupuncture therapy and acupuncture therapy alone [combined RR (fixed efficacy model)=3.35, 95% CI (1.92, 5.82), Z=4.28, P<0.0001], indicating that acupuncture combined with other therapies, such as points injection, scalp acupuncture, auricular acupuncture, etc., were superior to the conventional body acupuncture therapy alone.

CONCLUSIONS:
The inclusion of limited clinical studies had verified the efficacy of acupuncture in the treatment of neurovascular headache. Although acupuncture or its combined therapies provides certain advantages, most clinical studies are of small sample sizes. Large sample size, randomized, controlled trials are needed in the future for more definitive results.

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