



IN THIS ISSUE

1. This months news
2. Does needling sensation (de qi) affect treatment outcome in pain? Analysis of data from a larger single-blind, randomised controlled trial.
3. Events Calendar for November 2010
4. Are sham Acupuncture interventions more effective than (other) placebos? A re-analysis of data from the Cochrane review on placebo effects.

This month in the news..

Welcome to the November Issue of the Acupuncture.com.au monthly newsletter.

If you wish to contribute a story or article about Acupuncture or Traditional Chinese Medicine please contact the Acupuncture.com.au team through the web.

20/10/2010—Does needling sensation (de qi) affect treatment outcome in pain? Analysis of data from a larger single-blind, randomised controlled trial.



BACKGROUND: Insertion of an acupuncture needle into an acupuncture point typically generates a range of sensations called 'de qi'. Most acupuncturists are taught that obtaining de qi is important when treating patients with pain but this can be quite uncomfortable for patients.

OBJECTIVE: This study assesses the importance of the strength of de qi, on the clinical outcome in osteoarthritic pain.

METHOD: This study was part of a larger randomised, single-blind, multifactorial trial involving three interventions: real acupuncture (RA), Streitberger needle (SN) and mock electrical stimulation for the treatment of patients with osteoarthritis (OA) of the hip and knee. Patients were treated twice a week for 4 weeks. The two outcomes relevant to this study were pain reduction assessed by visual analogue scale and the Park needling sensation questionnaire, both measured at completion of the study. Two arms of the trial were analysed (RA and SN). Reduction in pain was correlated against strength of de qi for both RA and SN. Those who felt de qi were compared with those who did not.

RESULTS: 147 patients were recruited to the study (140 completed) with a mean pain reduction of 15.2 mm and mean de qi score of 6.2. There was no significant correlation between the strength of de qi and improvement in pain ($p=0.49$). There was also no significant difference in pain relief ($p=0.52$) between those who felt de qi and those who did not using the de qi subscale of the Park questionnaire.

CONCLUSION: These data suggest that the presence and intensity of de qi has no effect on the pain relief obtained for patients with OA. This result may have implications for both acupuncture treatment and for future trial methodology.

20/10/2010—Does needling sensation (de qi) affect treatment outcome in pain? Analysis of data from a larger single-blind, randomised controlled trial.

Country: United Kingdom / **Institute:** School of Health Sciences, University of Southampton, Highfield, Southampton SO171BJ, UK. pjw1@soton.ac.uk / **Author (s):** White P, Prescott P, Lewith G. / **Journal:** Acupunct Med. 2010 Sep;28(3):120-5.

Events Calendar for November 2010

- 06** **Sydney - Gynaecology & Female Health in Clinical Practice Seminar**
When: 1:30pm - 8:30pm, Where: Menzies Hotel, 14 Carrington Street
Contact: Health World Limited on 1800 777 648 or orders@healthworld.com.au
- 07** **Richmond - Gynaecology & Female Health in Clinical Practice Seminar**
When: 1:30pm - 8:30pm, Where: Amora Riverwalk Hotel, 649 Bridge Road,
Contact: Health World Limited on 1800 777 648 or orders@healthworld.com.au
- 13** **Sydney - Shonishin: Japanese Paediatric Acupuncture**
When: 9.00am - 5.00pm, Where: Sydney Institute of Chinese Medicine Level 5, 25 Dixon St
Contact: Helio Supply Company on (02) 9698 5555 or tchianese@heliosupply.com.au This is a multi-day event ending on the 14/11
- 13** **Aspley QLD - Dr Igor Simonov Acupuncture Pulse diagnostic seminar**
When: 12.00pm - 05.00pm, Where: Shop C 589 Robinson Rd west
Contact: Igor Simonov on 07 3862 8818 or igorsimonov@yahoo.com
This is a multi-day event ending on the 20/11
- 20** **Brunswick - Jap Acupuncture for Cardiovascular**
When: 9.00am - 5.00pm, Where: 103 Evans Street
Contact: Australian Shiatsu College on (03) 9387 1161 or info@australianshiatsucollege.com.au

29/10/2010 - Are sham Acupuncture interventions more effective than (other) placebos? A re-analysis of data from the Cochrane review on placebo effects.



Background and Objective: A recent Cochrane review on placebo interventions for all kinds of conditions found that 'physical placebos' (which included sham acupuncture) were associated with larger effects over no-treatment control groups than 'pharmacological placebos'. We re-analyzed the data from this review to investigate whether effects associated with sham acupuncture differed from those of other 'physical placebos'.

Methods: All trials included in the Cochrane review as investigating 'physical placebos' were classified as investigating either (sham) acupuncture or other physical placebos. The latter group was further subclassified into groups of similar interventions. Data from the Cochrane review were re-entered into the RevMan 5 software for meta-analysis. The primary analysis was a random-effects analysis of trials reporting continuous outcomes of trials that used either sham acupuncture or other physical placebos.

Results: Out of a total of 61 trials which reported a continuous outcome measure, 19 compared sham acupuncture and 42 compared other physical placebos with a no-treatment control group. The trials re-analyzed were highly heterogeneous regarding patients, interventions and outcomes measured. The pooled standardized mean difference was -0.41 (95% confidence interval -0.56, -0.24) between sham acupuncture and no treatment and -0.26 (95% CI -0.37, -0.15) between other physical placebos and no treatment (p value for subgroup differences = 0.007). Significant differences were also observed between subgroups of other physical placebos.

Conclusion: Due to the heterogeneity of the trials included and the indirect comparison our results must be interpreted with caution. Still, they suggest that sham acupuncture interventions might, on average, be associated with larger effects than pharmacological and other physical placebos.

Country: Germany / **Institute:** Institute of General Practice, Technische Universität München, Munich, Germany. / **Author(s):** Linde K, Niemann K, Meissner K./ **Journal:** Forsch Komplementmed. 2010;17(5):259-64.