



Insufficient evidence for effectiveness of acupuncture for smoking cessation

Clinical question

How effective are acupuncture and the related interventions of acupressure, laser therapy and electrostimulation in smoking cessation?

Bottom line

There was no bias-free, consistent evidence that acupuncture, acupressure, laser therapy or electrostimulation were effective interventions for smoking cessation. There was no evidence that acupuncture was superior to waiting list or psychological interventions in the short term (6 weeks) or long term (6 months to 1 year). The evidence on acupressure and laser stimulation was insufficient and could not be combined. The evidence suggested that electrostimulation was not superior to sham electrostimulation.

Caveat

Lack of evidence and methodological problems meant no firm conclusions could be drawn. There was not enough evidence to dismiss the possibility that acupuncture might have an effect greater than placebo.

Context

Acupuncture is used with the aim of reducing the withdrawal symptoms people experience when they try to quit smoking. Related therapies include acupressure, laser therapy and electrical stimulation.

Cochrane Systematic Review

White AR et al. Acupuncture and related interventions for smoking cessation. Cochrane Reviews, 2011, Issue 1. Article No. CD000009. DOI: 10.1002/14651858.CD000009.pub3. This review contains 33 studies involving 6558 participants.

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