



Effectiveness of electroacupuncture *versus* manual acupuncture in patients with chronic non-specific low back pain: a randomized controlled trial



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Objective

To compare the effectiveness of electroacupuncture and acupuncture at mid-term (three months post intervention) in patients with chronic nonspecific low back pain.

Methods

This study examined 66 patients with low back pain: electroacupuncture group n= 33 and manual acupuncture group n=33. The interventions were individualized, one hour per session, for six weeks and often twice a week. Each patient underwent manual acupuncture with stainless steel disposable acupuncture needles (0.20 mm × 15 mm, brand: Dong Bang, Korea).

Acupuncture points were selected through of diagnosis of low back pain. The electroacupuncture group completed 30 min of acupuncture and 10 min of electroacupuncture with the equipment *Accurate Pulse 585*.

Stimulation used at 10Hz in symptomatic points “Zhenjin” B23, “Baihuanshu” B30, and bilateral “Mingmen” VG4.

Clinicaltrials.gov: NCT02039037

Results

The majority of participants were women in both groups, with 47 age (years) and duration of low back pain 42 months. There were no statistically significant differences between groups for any of the baseline measures. After six weeks, acupuncture and electro-acupuncture groups showed significant improvements in pain, disability (Table 1).

Conclusion

The results of this trial suggest that acupuncture and electroacupuncture have similar effects in terms of reducing pain and disability.

Table 1 – Intra-group analyze of outcomes for acupuncture and electroacupuncture groups.

	Unadjusted Mean (SD)		Between groups difference In chance score	p
	Acupuncture	Electro-acupuncture		
Intensity of Pain (0-10)#				
Baseline	7.9 (1.7)	7.8 (1.9)		
Posttreatment	3.8 (2.7)	4.2 (2.4)	-0.4 (-1.7 to 0.8)	.51
3 mo	3.7 (2.7)	4.1 (2.6)	-0.4 (-1.7 to 0.9)	.54
Disability (0-24)#				
Baseline	13.0 (5.1)	16.3 (4.8)		
Posttreatment	6.1 (5.0)	8.7 (7.4)	-2.6 (-5.6 to 0.5)	.11
3 mo	8.4 (7.3)	7.5 (7.1)	-0.9 (-2.6 to 4.5)	.59

Data are expressed as mean (SD), #Normal range. CI = 95% confidence interval
*p<0.05 value for Repeat Measure ANOVA