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The effect of acupuncture on postmenopausal symptoms and reproductive hormones: a sham controlled clinical trial.

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Abstract

BACKGROUND:

Acupuncture is commonly used to treat menopausal symptoms and other gynaecological conditions. In this study, the authors aimed to investigate whether acupuncture has an effect on menopausal symptoms and to explore whether this effect is related to changes in hormone levels. Materials and methods A total of 53 postmenopausal women were alternately assigned into two treatment groups: acupuncture (n=27) and sham acupuncture (n=26). Menopausal symptoms were assessed using the Menopause Rating Scale (MRS). The serum oestradiol, follicular stimulating hormone (FSH) and luteinising hormone (LH) levels were measured at baseline and again after the first and last sessions. The Student t test was used for normally distributed data and the Wilcoxon signed rank test for not normally distributed data. The group differences in MRS scores were assessed using non-parametric Mann-Whitney U test.

RESULTS:

After treatment, total MRS, and the somatic and psychological subscale scores were significantly lower in the acupuncture group than the sham group (all p=0.001). The severity of hot flushes was found to be significantly decreased after treatment in acupuncture group (p=0.001). In the acupuncture group LH levels were lower and oestradiol levels were significantly higher than sham group (p=0.046 and p=0.045, respectively) after treatment, but there was no difference in FSH levels.

CONCLUSION:

Acupuncture was effective in reducing menopausal complaints when compared to sham acupuncture and can be considered as an alternative therapy in the treatment of menopausal symptoms.

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