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Research Article

Effects of Trigger Point Acupuncture Treatment on Temporomandibular Disorders: A Preliminary Randomized Clinical Trial

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Abstract

We compared the effects of trigger point acupuncture with that of sham acupuncture treatments on pain and oral function in patients with temporomandibular disorders (TMDs). This 10-week study included 16 volunteers from an acupuncture school with complaints of chronic temporomandibular joint myofascial pain for at least 6 months. The participants were randomized to one of two groups, each receiving five acupuncture treatment sessions. The trigger point acupuncture group received treatment at trigger points for the same muscle, while the other acupuncture group received sham treatment

points for the same muscle, while the other acupuncture group received sham treatment on the trigger points. Outcome measures were pain intensity (visual analogue scale) and oral function (maximal mouth opening). After treatment, pain intensity was less in the trigger point acupuncture group than in the sham treatment group, but oral function remained unchanged in both groups. Pain intensity decreased significantly between pretreatment and 5 weeks after trigger point ($p \hat{=} \hat{=} 0.001$) and sham acu-punctures ($p \hat{=} \hat{=} 0.050$). Group comparison using the area under the curve demonstrated a significant difference between groups ($p \hat{=} \hat{=} 0.0152$). Compared with sham acupuncture therapy, trigger point acupuncture therapy may be more effective for chronic temporomandibular joint myofascial pain.



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Keywords

acupuncture; chronic pain; myofascial pain; temporomandibular disorder; TMD; trigger point

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