Effects of acupuncture on smoking cessation or reduction for motivated smokers.

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Abstract

BACKGROUND: This study was undertaken to examine the effects of acupuncture on smoking reduction and possibly also cessation and to examine whether some acupoints are more effective than others for smoking cessation.

METHODS: A total of 46 healthy men and women, 39 +/- 9 years of age (mean +/- SD), who smoked 20 +/- 6 cigarettes per day and had smoked for 23 +/- 8 years, and who wanted to quit smoking, volunteered to participate. The subjects were randomly assigned to two groups. One group was given acupuncture treatment at points previously used for anti-smoking (test group, TG). The other group was given acupuncture treatment at points assumed to have no effect for smoking cessation (control group, CG). Before each treatment and after the last treatment each subject answered questionnaires about his or her smoking habits and attitudes. In addition the concentrations of serum cotinine, serum thiocyanate, serum peroxides, and plasma fibrinogen were measured before the first and after the last acupuncture treatment.

RESULTS: The daily cigarette consumption fell during the treatment period in both groups, but the reduction was larger for TG than for CG (P < 0.002). Altogether 31% of subjects in TG had quit smoking completely at the end of the treatment, compared with none in CG. For TG the concentrations of cotinine and thiocyanate were reduced significantly after the treatment period (P < 0.001), but no significant reductions were observed for CG. For both groups the taste of tobacco worsened during the treatment period, but the effect was more pronounced for TG than for CG (P < 0.05). The desire to smoke fell significantly in both groups after treatment, and the reduction was larger for TG than for CG (P < 0.001). No significant changes in serum peroxides and plasma fibrinogen concentrations were observed during the treatment period for either group.

CONCLUSIONS: This study suggests that acupuncture may help motivated smokers to reduce their smoking or even quit smoking completely. Different acupoints appear to have different effects for smoking cessation and reduction.
Miscellaneous
Cotinine - Hazardous Substances Data Bank