

# AACMAC Perth 2011: Selected Conference Abstracts

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** The 2011 Australasian Acupuncture and Chinese Medicine Association Annual Conference (AACMAC) was held in Perth. 78 abstracts were submitted, and 50 were for peer-review. An assessment panel, consisting of three Editorial Board members and one International Advisory Committee member, was established to assess the quality of each abstract and selected those meeting the AJACM standards for publication in this journal. The panel was delighted to see abstracts with a great variety of content. Unfortunately some only presented a Background and Hypothesis without Methods or Results; and some only included the outline with no data. We finally selected 9 abstracts that presented original research with data. We enjoyed reading them and delighted in the research quality, and hope you feel the same.

## **Treatment of chronic hepatitis B with TCM in China**

By Jianjie Chen

**Background:** The paper aimed to explore the diagnostic criteria path and criteria of traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) for Chronic Hepatitis B (CHB). **Methods:** CHB patients with confirmed anti-virus markers were randomly assigned to three groups to receive Entecavir and TCM syndrome differentiation treatment; Entecavir and TCM formula treatment and Entecavir monotherapy. Patients without confirmed anti-virus markers, with interferons or nucleoside analogues drug allergy or refused to use interferons and nucleoside analogues were randomly assigned to two TCM groups to receive TCM syndrome differentiation treatment or TCM formula treatment. ALT, HBV DNA and HBeAg status were tested every three months for one year? **Results:** 1348 patients were enrolled, of which 435 patients finished one year of treatment. Five TCM syndrome patterns were identified by analysing the symptoms using cluster analysis, factor analysis and expert experience. They were damp-heat in the interior, liver-stagnation with spleen-deficiency, deficiency of the liver and kidney, yang deficiency of the spleen and kidney, and qi stagnation with blood stasis. In patients with confirmed anti-virus markers, Entecavir combined with TCM syndrome differentiation treatment was more effective than other treatments in inhibiting HBV-DNA replication, and increasing the rates of HBeAg negative conversion and HBeAg seroconversion. Furthermore, in patients without confirmed anti-virus markers, the TCM syndrome differentiation treatment was more effective than TCM formula treatment. **Conclusion:** TCM syndrome differentiation treatment may have antiviral effects that can benefit patients with or without anti-viral therapy.

## **The effectiveness of acupuncture and Chinese herbs as treatments for depression**

By Zhiwei Shen; Zaza Lyons; Gill Van der Watt

**Background and aims:** Acupuncture is one of the more commonly used alternative treatments for depression. Despite an increase in research over the last few decades, evidence of its effectiveness remains inconclusive. Furthermore, research into the use of Chinese herbs is limited. The aim of the study was to assess the effectiveness of acupuncture and Chinese herbs as treatments for mild and moderate depression. **Methods:** Eligibility to participate in the study was determined by a score of 20+ on the Kessler 10 (K10). Participants chose either acupuncture, or acupuncture combined with Chinese herbs (combined). All participants had 10 sessions of acupuncture over five weeks. Those in the combined group also took herbs for five weeks. The K10 and the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) were administered at baseline, at the end of active treatment and three months from baseline. **Results:** There were 19 participants in the study. 12 were in the combined group, 7 in the acupuncture group. Mean increase in K10 scores from baseline to post treatment was 35% (range 2-60%); mean BDI score was 39% (range 13-100%). At three months, the scores for all participants on both the K10 and the BDI remained lower than baseline, but had increased compared with post treatment follow-up. Participants in the combined group had the greatest improvement compared with acupuncture only: K10 39% vs 25%; BDI 62% vs 48%. **Commentary:** This small exploratory study shows that acupuncture is an effective treatment for depression. Combined with Chinese herbs the effectiveness is increased, but treatment benefits diminish over time.

### **Chinese medicine patterns and integrative diagnostic approaches of type II diabetes**

By Hong Xu

Chinese Medicine has differentiated type II diabetes into many patterns of disharmony. Individually tailored treatment strategies could be provided to address the patterns and improve the general health conditions for patients. Many biomedical diagnostic tools have been used in contemporary medical practise to evaluate the severity of the disease and the effectiveness of treatments. This review examined the relationships of different diagnostic approaches. Chinese medicine pattern differentiations of diabetes have demonstrated certain degrees of regularity when linked with biomedical test results, e.g. patients with kidney deficiency and blood stagnation have a higher cholesterol level compared with patients with yin deficiency; high blood viscosity is commonly found in patients with blood stagnation; yin deficiency patients could have a higher insulin level than yin and yang deficiency patients; yin and yang deficiency is related to reduced thyroid function; yin deficiency patients could have a higher plasma cortisol level than qi and yin deficiency or yin and yang deficiency patients; kidney deficiency and blood stagnation is related to lower levels of Zn, Cr, Mg and Mn. A simple pattern could develop into a complex pattern. Understanding and studying those relationships could result in development of an integrated traditional and contemporary diagnostic approach to type II diabetes and provide more appropriate instruments to evaluate the effectiveness of Chinese medicine.

### **The effect of acupuncture treatment compared to sham laser for lateral epicondylalgia: results from a randomised controlled pilot study**

By Christopher Zaslowski; Peter Meier; Sean Walsh; Deirdre Cobbin; Christine Berle; Seong Leang Cheah

Lateral elbow pain is a painful common musculoskeletal condition that affects approximately 1-3% of the population at any given time and is associated with the degeneration of the common extensors tendon where it inserts on the lateral epicondyle of the elbow. A randomised controlled pilot study was undertaken at the University of Technology, Sydney to determine whether acupuncture could relieve pain and improve function associated with this debilitating condition. Twenty participants were randomly allocated to receive either a standardised acupuncture protocol ( $n = 11$ ) or sham laser ( $n = 9$ ) over 10 sessions. Outcome measures were pressure pain threshold (PPT) measured at designated acupoint sites by algometry, the McGill pain questionnaire, the disability of hand and shoulder (DASH) questionnaire and a visual analogue scale relating to pain. While no significant changes were found at

the completion of the ten sessions or the one month follow up period for the PPT measures, significant improvements were reported by the acupuncture group for both the McGill pain questionnaire ( $p < 0.03$ ) and the DASH ( $p < 0.02$ ) at the one month follow up but not for those receiving the sham laser. In addition blinding efficacy and the experience of *deqi* reported by the acupuncture recipients were also evaluated. The results indicate that acupuncture may be helpful in alleviating pain and improving function but the small participant number involved preclude definitive conclusions. A larger sufficiently powered study is required. This presentation will discuss the results as well as some of the issues when conducting a clinical trial using acupuncture.

### **Traditional Chinese herbal medicine in the management of female Infertility: a systematic review**

By Karin Ried; Keren Stuart

Background: Infertility affects 15% or three million of couples in Australia. Assisted Reproductive Technologies, including In-Vitro-Fertilisation (IVF) result in about 23% clinical pregnancies and 17% live births. Aims: To assess the effect of traditional Chinese herbal medicine (CHM) in the management of female infertility and on pregnancy rates compared with western medical (WM) treatment. Methods: We searched the Medline and Cochrane databases and Google Scholar until February 2010 for abstracts in English of studies investigating infertility, menstrual health and TCM. We undertook meta-analyses of (non-)randomised controlled trials (RCTs) or cohort studies, and compared clinical pregnancy rates achieved with CHM versus WM drug treatment or IVF. Results: Eight RCTs, 13 cohort studies, three case series and six case studies involving 1851 women with infertility were included in the systematic review. Meta-analysis of RCTs suggested a 3.5 greater likelihood of achieving a pregnancy with CHM therapy over a four-month period compared with WM drug therapy alone (odds ratio=3.5, 95%CI: 2.3, 5.2,  $p < 0.0001$ ,  $n = 1005$ ). Mean (SD) pregnancy rates were  $60 \pm 12.5\%$  for CHM compared with  $32 \pm 10\%$  using WM drug therapy. Meta-analysis of selected cohort studies ( $n = 616$  women) suggested an mean clinical pregnancy rate of 50% using CHM compared with IVF (30%) ( $p < 0.0001$ ). Discussion: Our review suggests that management of female infertility with Chinese Herbal Medicine can improve pregnancy rates two-fold within a four-month period compared with standard fertility therapy, including IVF. Assessment of the quality of the menstrual cycle, integral to TCM diagnosis, appears to be fundamental to successful treatment of female infertility.

**Non-effect of manual needle acupuncture on experimental pain parameters in healthy young men**

By Sokcheon Pak; Peter Micalos

**Objective:** The purpose of this study is to assess the effect of manual acupuncture on experimental pain parameters in healthy participants. **Design:** The experimental design was a repeated measures three group Pre and Post procedure. All subjects participated in a Control, Sham and Acupuncture procedure, separated by one week, in a counter-balanced sequence to forestall an order effect. **Settings/Location:** Data were collected in a laboratory environment. **Subjects:** The participants included 12 healthy young males (mean age  $21.3 \pm 2.6$  years; height  $183.8 \pm 5$  cm; weight  $77.7 \pm 9.5$  kg). **Interventions:** The Control procedure was comprised of assessing the experimental pain parameters before and after a quiet rest for 20 minutes. The Sham procedure was performed with needle inserted bilaterally 1-1.5 cm outside each acupoint. The Manual acupuncture procedure was performed at two bilateral acupoints of LI 4 *Hegu* and ST 44 *Nei Ting*. **Outcome measures:** Pain parameters assessed included the Pain threshold, Nociceptive reflex threshold and Nociceptive reflex amplitude. **Results:** Repeated measures ANOVA between Pre and Post Control, Sham and Acupuncture procedures for Pain threshold, Nociceptive reflex threshold and Nociceptive reflex amplitude revealed no significant difference. **Conclusion:** Manual acupuncture at bilateral acupoints LI 4 and ST 44 did not show a change in Pain threshold, Nociceptive flexion reflex threshold or the Nociceptive reflex amplitude in healthy participants.

**Semi-self-administered ear-acupressure for persistent allergic rhinitis: a randomised sham-controlled trial**

By Claire Shuiqing Zhang; Charlie Changli Xue; Angela Weihong Yang; Anthony Lin Zhang; Yunying Li; Jiyan Xia; Cliff Da Costa; George Owe-Young; Francis Thien

**Background:** Seasonal allergic rhinitis (SAR) is a common condition that affects approximately 16% of Australian population. Acupuncture has been demonstrated effective for symptomatic treatment of allergic rhinitis (AR). Acupressure is used clinically as an alternative to acupuncture. However, the efficacy and safety of ear-acupressure (EAP) for SAR is unknown. **Objective:** To evaluate whether EAP is effective for AR in terms of symptom severity and quality of life. **Methods:** This semi-self-administered randomised, single-blind, sham-controlled trial was conducted in 2008 in Melbourne, Australia. Participants with SAR were randomised to receive either real or sham EAP treatment once a week for eight weeks. Participants were instructed to administer EAP pressure three times daily. Symptom severity and quality of life were evaluated before and after the treatment period. Intention-to-treat was applied

to data analysis. **Results:** Sixty-three participants (Female: 34, Male: 29) were allocated to real ( $n = 31$ ) and sham EAP ( $n = 32$ ) groups. Eight participants discontinued due to time constraints. After eight-week treatment, symptom severity was significantly reduced in the real group compared to sham treatment in terms of the total nasal symptoms ( $p = 0.02$ ) and the global nasal and non-nasal symptom ( $p = 0.04$ ). Regular activities at home and work were also significantly improved in real EAP group compared to control ( $p = 0.04$ ). Both real and sham EAP treatments were well tolerated by participants. No severe adverse events were reported. **Conclusion:** These findings suggested that semi-self-administered EAP was effective and safe for SAR patients. Further study with a larger sample size is needed.

**Clinical approaches to treatment with acupuncture for refugees who have been victims of torture and trauma**

By Naomi Absehouse; Kate Levett

**Background:** The NSW Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors (STARTTS) was established to assist refugees to Australia. Acupuncture and Chinese herbal medicine have been useful for the treatment of PTSD and was considered an effective intervention for this population. **Methods:** An acupuncture clinic was established at STARTTS Auburn in 2005. Clients were referred on a needs basis for various pain syndromes and PTSD symptoms. They were often accompanied by interpreters. Treatment aimed to optimise physical and psychological function. **Outcomes:** Trust, rapport and safety were paramount in treatment delivery. Cultural and social norms influenced delivery, as did the type of trauma and torture experienced. Symptoms such as flashbacks, nightmares, irritability, insomnia, pain syndromes and the impacts of sexual assault were common. Qualitative outcomes via interview, was ascertained for nearly 100 clients over a five-year period. **Results:** Patients reported highly favourable responses to the clinician. Reports derived from interviews evidenced symptom alleviation and restoration of function. Treatment gains were greatest in the initial period, with a subsequent plateau. Psycho-emotional effects for the practitioner and the impact of interpreters on treatment outcomes were important. **Conclusions:** The greatest benefit for the treatment of symptoms of torture and trauma for refugees was gained in the initial stages of treatment. A medium term course of treatment, and using interpreters mindfully, is recommended. Practitioner awareness of increasing general resilience, practicing self-care, accessing cultural consultation and awareness of the effects of trauma, all assist with coping in this work environment.

**A TCM-derived QOL to assess PROs linked with biomarkers as evidence-based measures in TCM practice**

By Kelvin Chan; Li Zhao; Shiuhon Chui; Kwokfai Leung

**Background and aims:** The development of a health-related quality of life (QOL) instrument, ChQOL, based on diagnosis and treatment principles of traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) has allowed us to record patient-reported outcomes (PROs) after intervention of TCM treatment or receiving TCM prescriptions containing mixtures of Chinese materia medica (CMMs) or proprietary Chinese medicines (PCMs).<sup>1</sup> **Methods:** Recording objective and subjective outcome indicators such as biomarkers, ChQOL, PROs and TCM practitioners' treatment records, respectively can also provide evidence-based approaches for assessing TCM treatment efficacy on individual patients.<sup>2</sup> **Results:** The ChQOL instrument has been utilised to study patients with congestive heart failure<sup>3</sup> and RCT panel studies of PCMs containing multiple CMMs in healthy subjects<sup>4</sup>, in patient suffering from hepatitis<sup>5</sup>, in metabolic syndrome<sup>6</sup> and

rhinitis.<sup>7</sup> Such integrative approaches for assessing treatment outcomes by utilising pathological biomarker data used in orthodox medicine and TCM recording methodology provide improved evidence level of efficacy in individualised TCM treatments. **Commentary:** The data collected will be improved and ascertained by applying innovative analysis with modern informatics processing technologies and provide reliable data for future data-mining. These new approaches will be more suitable for case study and may pave the way for ascertaining TCM holistic approaches to diagnosis and treatment of diseases and individualised treatment for patients. The lecture will illustrate the principles behind the use of ChQOL for PROs linking with biomarkers using available pathological tests.

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