Letters to the Editor

Acupuncture During Stroke Rehabilitation

To the Editor:

The systematic review and meta-analysis by Wu et al is 1 of 17 (not 5, as Wu et al state) similar reviews already available on the subject of acupuncture for stroke. Most of the reliable reviews drew negative conclusions. The discrepancy between the findings of Wu et al and our results may be attributable to several factors. For instance, Wu et al rely heavily on the Chinese studies. These have repeatedly been shown to virtually never produce negative results, which casts doubt on their reliability. Wu et al pool all of the available data regardless of types of control intervention; cautious interpretation is thus advisable. Wu et al use odd ratios, which, compared to risk ratios, inflate the overall effect size. Several of the primary studies included by Wu et al adopted a study design that is incapable of generating negative results. Wu et al also confirm that in “all the studies in which sham acupuncture was used, no differential effectiveness from true acupuncture was found.”

Given all of these caveats, we find it difficult to agree with their overall conclusion that “acupuncture may be effective in the treatment of poststroke rehabilitation” and arrive at a dramatically different verdict: acupuncture is not an evidence-based treatment during stroke rehabilitation.

Disclosure

None.

Edzard Ernst, MD, PhD, FMedSci, FSB, FRCP, FRCPEd
Complementary Medicine
Peninsula Medical School
Exeter, UK

Myeong Soo Lee, BSc, MSc, PhD
Division of Standard Research
Korea Institute of Oriental Medicine
Daejeon, South Korea

Acupuncture During Stroke Rehabilitation
Edzard Ernst and Myeong Soo Lee

*Stroke*. 2010;41:e549; originally published online July 8, 2010;
doi: 10.1161/STROKEAHA.110.582718
*Stroke* is published by the American Heart Association, 7272 Greenville Avenue, Dallas, TX 75231
Copyright © 2010 American Heart Association, Inc. All rights reserved.
Print ISSN: 0039-2499. Online ISSN: 1524-4628

The online version of this article, along with updated information and services, is located on the
World Wide Web at:
http://stroke.ahajournals.org/content/41/8/e549

Permissions: Requests for permissions to reproduce figures, tables, or portions of articles originally published in
*Stroke* can be obtained via RightsLink, a service of the Copyright Clearance Center, not the Editorial Office.
Once the online version of the published article for which permission is being requested is located, click
Request Permissions in the middle column of the Web page under Services. Further information about this
process is available in the Permissions and Rights Question and Answer document.

Reprints: Information about reprints can be found online at:
http://www.lww.com/reprints

Subscriptions: Information about subscribing to *Stroke* is online at:
http://stroke.ahajournals.org/subscriptions/