

Getting Evidence into Clinical Practice:

Musculoskeletal Research Facilitation Group (CAT Group)

Date: June 2019

Specific Question:

For adults with musculoskeletal neck pain, is shoulder/ neck acupuncture plus exercises the same as exercises alone for reducing pain in the short term?

Clinical Bottom Line

There is no evidence to be able to answer the question if acupuncture plus exercise is better than exercise alone for neck pain.

Why is this important?

Exercise forms an integral part of treatment for musculoskeletal neck pain. Physiotherapy training, both pre and post-graduation also teach other therapeutic modalities to give physiotherapists a wider tool kit to utilise for patients. With increasing time pressures on clinicians and with training budgets under scrutiny it is important to offer evidence based treatments for patients to be as effective and efficient as possible.

One of these modalities is acupuncture. It was noted that different musculoskeletal teams within the same NHS trust were varying widely with their use of acupuncture. It is important to establish the evidence base for the use of acupuncture to help guide best clinical practice for this cohort of patients.

Inclusion Criteria

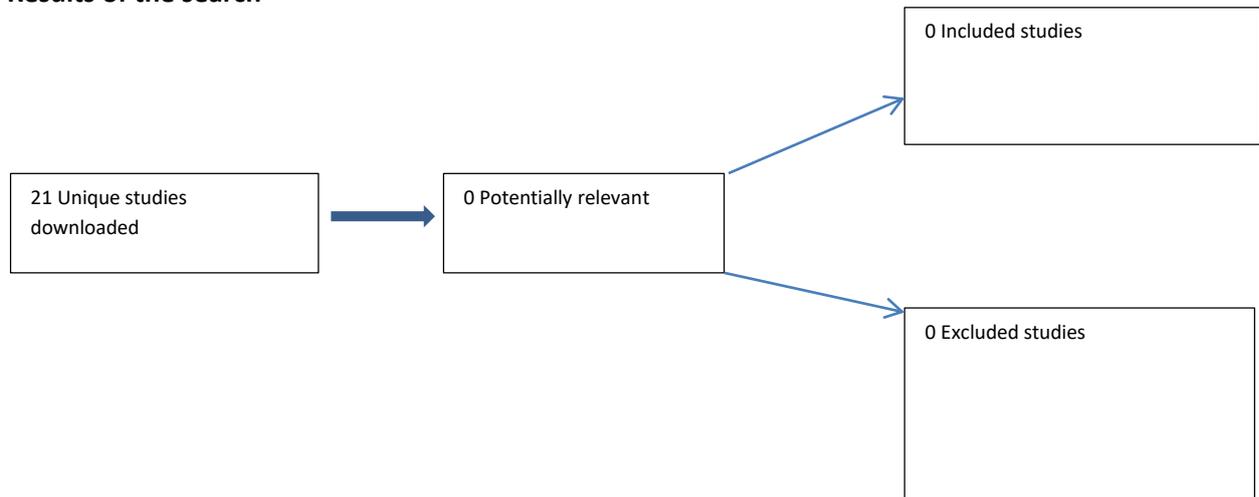
	Description	Search terms
Population and Setting	Adults with mechanical/ musculoskeletal neck pain	Mechanical neck pain
Intervention or Exposure	Acupuncture and range of motion or movement exercises Acupuncture- main interest trigger point acupuncture but could include other forms ROM exercises could include mobility, flexibility, passive, gravity assisted in water. Exercises should be self-directed or unsupervised.	Acupuncture range of motion exercises movement exercises
Comparison, if any	Range of motion or movement exercises, as intervention	Range of motion exercises movement exercises
Outcome of interest	Pain reduction	Pain
Types of study	Randomised controlled trials, Systematic reviews	

Routine Database Searched

CINAHL, Medline, Embase, AMED, NHS Evidence, Cochrane, TRIP database, Google Scholar.

Date of search- 21.8.18

Results of the search



There is no evidence to support or refute the use of acupuncture as an adjunct to self-directed exercises for adults with musculoskeletal neck/shoulder pain.

Implications for Practice/ research

Due to lack of evidence no change to current clinical practice is recommended. An audit of current clinical practice could be undertaken.

Further research specifically investigating acupuncture and exercises against exercises alone for neck or shoulder pain is recommended, preferably a randomised control trial.

Tweet: No evidence to support or oppose the inclusion of acupuncture alongside exercise in the treatment of adults with neck pain.

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