

Acupuncture for postmenopausal hot flashes.

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OBJECTIVE: To determine whether individually tailored acupuncture is an effective treatment option for reducing postmenopausal hot flashes and improving quality of life. **METHODS:** In a randomized, placebo-controlled pilot study, 29 postmenopausal participants averaging at least seven moderate to severe hot flashes per 24h, with a baseline estradiol concentration of less than 50 pg/mL and a normal TSH level, were randomized to receive 7 weeks (nine treatment sessions) of either active acupuncture or placebo acupuncture (placebo needles that did not penetrate the skin at sham acupuncture points). Participants recorded hot flashes in logs that were reported daily. Global indices of the severity and frequency of hot flashes were derived from the participants' daily logs. **RESULTS:**

Participants receiving the active treatment had a greater reduction in hot flash severity (24.5+/-30.7%) compared to those receiving placebo (4.4+/-17.1%, $P=0.042$). Within group repeated measures analyses of variance revealed a significant reduction in hot flash severity in the active ($P=0.042$), but not in the placebo treatment group ($P=0.15$). Although there was no significant group difference in the reduction of hot flash frequency between the active (42.4+/-32.2%) and placebo groups (32.0+/-26.5%; $P>0.352$), within group repeated measures analyses of variance revealed that the reduction was statistically significant in both groups ($P<0.001$). **CONCLUSIONS:** Standardized, individually tailored acupuncture treatment was associated with significantly greater decrease in the severity, but not the frequency, of hot flashes, in symptomatic postmenopausal women when compared to placebo acupuncture of equal duration. Future, larger scale, studies are needed.

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