

HEADACHE and LASER THERAPY

The effects of laser acupuncture on chronic tension headache--a randomised controlled trial.

Acupunct Med. 2005 Mar;23(1):13-8

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OBJECTIVE: Headache affects the quality of life for many people throughout the world. Tension headache is among the commonest forms. Acupuncture is the most widely practised non-medicinal treatment for headaches. The purpose of this study was to explore the effects of laser acupuncture in this type of headache. **METHODS:** Fifty patients with chronic tension-type headache were randomly allocated to treatment or placebo groups. Patients in the treatment group received low energy laser acupuncture to LU7, LI4, GB14, and GB20 bilaterally. Points were irradiated for 43 seconds, and the intensity was 1.3J (approximately 13J/cm²). Ten sessions were given, three per week. The placebo group was treated in a similar way except that the output power of the equipment was set to zero. The outcome variables were headache intensity (VAS), duration of attacks, and number of days with a headache per month, by daily diary, assessed monthly to three months after treatment. **RESULTS:** There were significant differences between groups ($P < 0.001$) in changes from baseline in months one, two and three, in median score for headache intensity (treatment group -5, -3 and -2, placebo group -1, 0 and 0), median duration of attacks (treatment group -6, -4 and -4, placebo group -1, 0 and 0 hours), and median number of days with headache per month (treatment group -15, -10 and -8, placebo group -2, 0 and 0). **CONCLUSION:** This study suggests that laser acupuncture may be an effective treatment for chronic tension-type headache, but the results should be confirmed in larger and more rigorous trials.

PMID: 15844435 [PubMed - indexed for MEDLINE]