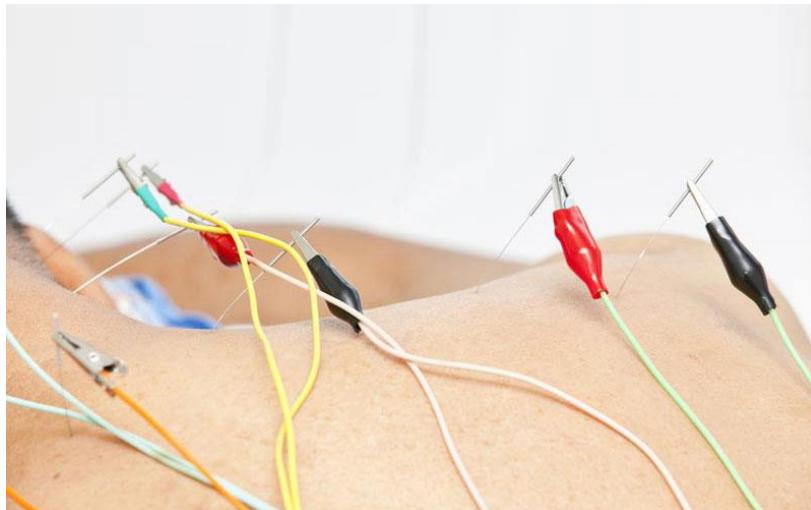


Electroacupuncture can benefit women with stress urinary incontinence

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Women with stress urinary incontinence who received treatment with electroacupuncture involving the lumbosacral region treatment had less urine leakage after 6 weeks when compared with sham electroacupuncture, according to findings published in *JAMA*.

“Acupuncture may be an effective treatment option for [stress urinary incontinence]. Electroacupuncture has been

found to decrease urine leakage,” Zhishun Liu, MD, PhD, from Guang’an Men Hospital and China Academy of Chinese Medical Sciences in Beijing, and colleagues wrote. “However, effects of acupuncture on [stress urinary incontinence] remain uncertain because of the small sample size, poor study design and high risks of bias in previous clinical trials.”

Acupuncture has previously been shown to help patients with coronary heart disease and migraines. In this randomized clinical trial, the researchers compared the effect electroacupuncture vs. sham electroacupuncture to reduce urine leakage in 482 women with stress urinary incontinence at 12 hospitals in China between October 2013 and May 2015. They randomly assigned participants to receive 18 sessions of electroacupuncture involving the lumbosacral region over 6 weeks or sham electroacupuncture with no skin penetration on sham acupoints. Liu and colleagues examined change from baseline to week 6 in the amount of urine leakage using the 1-hour pad test and mean 72-hour urinary incontinence episodes using a 72-hour bladder diary.

At baseline, mean urine leakage was 18.4 g for the electroacupuncture group and 19.1 g for the sham electroacupuncture group, and mean 72-hour incontinence episodes were 7.9 for the electroacupuncture group and 7.7 for the sham electroacupuncture group. At week 6, patients in the electroacupuncture group experienced less urine leakage (9.9 g) compared with those in the sham electroacupuncture group (2.6 g), a mean difference of 7.4 g (95% CI, 4.8-10; $P < .001$). At some time points, the change in mean 72-hour incontinence episodes from baseline was higher with electroacupuncture, with between-group differences of one episode in weeks 1 to 6 (95% CI, 0.2-1.7; $P = .01$), two episodes in weeks 15 to 18 (95% CI, 1.3-2.7; $P < .001$), and 2.1 episodes in weeks 27 to 30 (95% CI, 1.3-2.8; $P < .001$). The rate of treatment-related adverse

events was lower in the electroacupuncture group (1.6%) than in the sham electroacupuncture group (2%).

“Among women with stress urinary incontinence, treatment with electroacupuncture involving the lumbosacral region compared with sham electroacupuncture resulted in less urine leakage after 6 weeks,” Liu and colleagues wrote. “Further research is needed to understand long-term efficacy and the mechanism of action of this intervention.” – by Savannah Demko