

# INPLASY PROTOCOL

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**Support:** None.

**Review Stage at time of this submission:** Piloting of the study selection process.

**Conflicts of interest:**  
None.

## Acupuncture therapy for postherpetic neuralgia: a protocol for an overview of systematic reviews

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**Review question / Objective:** To summarize and evaluate the evidence from current systematic reviews of acupuncture therapy for postherpetic neuralgia.

**Condition being studied:** Postherpetic neuralgia (PHN) is the most common chronic complication of herpes zoster, which brings great burden to individuals and society. The treatment of postherpetic neuralgia in modern medicine is mainly to alleviate pain. Because the pain symptom can last for years or even a lifetime, patients have to take medication for a long time, which may cause some adverse reactions. Acupuncture therapy, as a traditional treatment, has been widely used in the clinical treatment of postherpetic neuralgia in China.

**INPLASY registration number:** This protocol was registered with the International Platform of Registered Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis Protocols (INPLASY) on 24 April 2020 and was last updated on 24 April 2020 (registration number INPLASY202040165).

### INTRODUCTION

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chronic complication of herpes zoster, which brings great burden to individuals and society. The treatment of postherpetic neuralgia in modern medicine is mainly to alleviate pain. Because the pain symptom can last for years or even a lifetime, patients have to take medication for a long time, which may cause some adverse reactions. Acupuncture therapy, as a

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## METHODS

**Participant or population:** Patients with postherpetic neuralgia.

**Intervention:** Acupuncture therapy is the main intervention to treat postherpetic neuralgia.

**Comparator:** Placebo, medicine, sham-acupuncture, no treatment, other therapies except acupuncture.

**Study designs to be included:** Systematic reviews and/or meta-analyses.

**Eligibility criteria:** We will include systematic reviews of acupuncture therapy for postherpetic neuralgia. **Participants:** Patients with postherpetic neuralgia. **Interventions:** The eligible interventions include acupuncture, or acupuncture combined with other therapies. **Comparators:** The control interventions include placebo, medicine, sham-acupuncture, no treatment, and other therapies except acupuncture. **Main outcomes:** effective rate; pain intensity.

**Information sources:** The searched electronic databases include: PubMed, EMBASE, Cochrane Library, China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI), WanFang Database and VIP Database.

**Main outcome(s):** Effective rate; pain intensity (VAS, NRS, MPQ, etc.).

**Additional outcome(s):** Adverse events.

**Data management:** Two reviewers will independently extract data from the included systematic reviews. The following data will be collected: author, year of publication, the number of included studies, type of included studies, interventions and comparators, outcomes, and main conclusions, etc.

**Quality assessment / Risk of bias analysis:** The methodological quality of each included systematic review will be evaluated using the AMSTAR2 tool, and the final results will be divided into four grades: high, medium, low and very low. The quality of evidence for each outcome will be evaluated using GRADE in five areas: limitations, inconsistency, indirectness, imprecision, and publication bias. This process will be carried out by two reviewers independently. Disagreement will be decided by discussion with a third reviewer.

**Strategy of data synthesis:** We will provide a narrative synthesis of included systematic reviews which have assessed the safety and efficacy of acupuncture therapy for patients with postherpetic neuralgia. In addition, the assessment of AMSTAR2 and GRADE will be presented in the form of tables.

**Subgroup analysis:** None.

**Sensibility analysis:** None.

**Language:** English and Chinese.

**Country(ies) involved:** China.

**Keywords:** Postherpetic neuralgia; Acupuncture therapy; Overview of systematic reviews; AMSTAR2; GRADE.

**Dissemination plans:** XXXX results of this systematic review will be disseminated through peer reviewed XXXXX.

**Contributions of each author:**

Author 1 - Heng-Ni Yan

Author 2 - Yu-Xuan Chao

Author 3 - Dong-Dong Yang