INPLASY PROTOCOL

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Review Stage at time of this submission: Preliminary searches.

Conflicts of interest:
None declared.

Acupuncture for vascular dementia: an overview of a systematic review

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Review question / Objective: A systematic review of the current evidence for acupuncture in the treatment of vascular dementia.

Condition being studied: Over the past 5 years, a large number of systematic reviews (SRs)/meta-analyses (MAs) have been completed to assess the potential benefits of acupuncture for the health management of patients with vascular dementia. Based on evidence-based medicine theory, SRs/MAs are considered the gold standard for evaluating the benefits of clinical interventions. The overview is a new approach to integrating multiple SR/MAs by evaluating their quality and outcomes, which can provide comprehensive evidence for clinical decision-making and identify critical gaps in evidence use. Therefore, the aim of our study was to critically evaluate the quality of SR/MA related to the effect of acupuncture in patients with vascular dementia through a systematic overview.

INPLASY registration number: This protocol was registered with the International Platform of Registered Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis Protocols (INPLASY) on 30 August 2022 and was last updated on 30 August 2022 (registration number INPLASY202280106).

INTRODUCTION

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medicine theory, SRs/MAs are considered the gold standard for evaluating the benefits of clinical interventions. The overview is a new approach to integrating multiple SR/MAs by evaluating their quality and outcomes, which can provide comprehensive evidence for clinical decision-making and identify critical gaps in evidence use. Therefore, the aim of our study was to critically evaluate the quality of SR/MA related to the effect of acupuncture in patients with vascular dementia through a systematic overview.

METHODS

Participant or population: Patients identified as having VaD based on diagnostic criteria regardless of their age, nationality, or gender.

Intervention: The control group received the following treatments: Conventional medication (CM), rehabilitation training (RT), sham acupuncture (SA), and placebo. The intervention group received acupuncture treatment, including plum blossom acupuncture, fire acupuncture, electro-acupuncture, body acupuncture, manual acupuncture, warm acupuncture, or acupuncture therapy in combination with the treatments received by the control group.

Comparator: The control group received the following treatments: Conventional medication (CM), rehabilitation training (RT), sham acupuncture (SA), and placebo. The intervention group received acupuncture treatment, including plum blossom acupuncture, fire acupuncture, electro-acupuncture, body acupuncture, manual acupuncture, warm acupuncture, or acupuncture therapy in combination with the treatments received by the control group.

Study designs to be included: This overview includes SRs/MAs of randomized controlled trials (RCTs) of the acupuncture on VaD.

Eligibility criteria: The criteria for exclusion of SRs/MAs in this overview are as follows:

(1) Animal studies; (2) Network MAs, research protocols, narrative reviews, overviews, dissertation, and conference abstracts.

Information sources: PubMed, Cochrane Library, EMBASE, Chongqing VIP, Wanfang Database, CNKI, and SinoMed.

Main outcome(s): The main outcomes are the vascular dementia Assessment Scale (VADAS-COG) and the Simple Mental State Examination (MMSE) scale and adverse events (rash, itching, pain, etc.).

Quality assessment / Risk of bias analysis: 2.4.1. Assessment of Methodological Quality The methodological quality of the included SRs/MAs was assessed by the Assessment System for Evaluating Methodological Quality 2 (AMSTAR-2) [13]. Seven (2, 4, 7, 9, 11, 13, and 15) of the 16 items in the tool are critical areas. 2.4.2. Assessment of Risk of Bias The Risk of Bias in Systematic Review (ROBIS) [14] scale was used in this overview to evaluate the risk of bias in the inclusion of SRs/MAs and the evaluation was carried out in three stages. 2.4.3. Assessment of Reporting Quality The quality of each SR/MA report of the included SRs/MAs was evaluated by the list of PRISMA [15] which consists of 27 items focusing on the reporting methods and results that were incorporated into SRs/MAs. 2.4.4. Assessment of Certainty of Quality The certainty of quality for each SR/MA outcome was evaluated by The Grading of Recommendations Assessment, Development, and Evaluation (GRADE) [16], and five aspects will lead to the degradation of certainty of quality, including limitations, inconsistencies, indirectness, imprecision, and publication bias.

Strategy of data synthesis: NA.

Subgroup analysis: NA.

Sensitivity analysis: NA.

Country(ies) involved: China.

Contributions of each author:
Author 1 - Hongshuo Shi.
Author 2 - Xuecheng Zhang.
Author 3 - Min Wang.