

EVALUATION OF AN AURICULAR ACUPUNCTURE PROTOCOL TO TREAT KNEE OSTEOARTHRITIS

by
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Abstract

INTRODUCTION: Osteoarthritis is the most common cause of chronic knee pain, a disabling condition that affects nearly 50% of Americans.

PURPOSE: Implications for this population are poor quality of life, restrictions in daily activities and disability. Based on literature review, a lack of studies exist which examine the application of auricular acupuncture to treat knee pain due to osteoarthritis.

DESIGN: This study was a quasi-experimental design using a pretest/posttest design with two arms: one experimental group and one control group. Participants were randomly assigned to the groups.

The experimental group received the auricular acupuncture protocol treatment twice a week for four weeks. Participants completed pre and post-treatment surveys to assess health status, treatment expectations and quality of life. Repeated Measures Analysis of Variance used to determine between group pain levels.

RESULTS: The two-way interaction of group by time showed significant results ($p = .038$) demonstrating significant difference between two groups on their pain reduction throughout the study. The main effect of time was significant ($p = .002$), while the main effect of group was not significant ($p = .104$) indicating importance of acupuncture dose.

CONCLUSIONS: The auricular acupuncture protocol used in this study may be an effective and feasible treatment option for reducing knee pain due to osteoarthritis. This pilot study shows promise for providing low cost, effective, and a safe treatment option. The results are encouraging but need further investigation on a larger scale.