

Acupuncture as a therapeutic intervention has been used for the treatment of many functional disorders including substance abuse. However, there are still many unanswered question about the basic mechanism underlying acupuncture’s effectiveness in the treatment of drug addiction. Repeated injection of psychostimulants or morphine can produce behavioral and neurochemical sensitization and have been used as a model for studying drug addiction. The present study was designed to investigate the effect of acupuncture on repeated morphine-induced changes in extracellular dopamine levels using in vivo microdialysis and repeated morphine-induced behavioral changes. Male Sprague-Dawley rats were treated with saline or increasing doses of morphine (10, 20 and 40 mg/kg, s.c., twice daily for 3 days). Following 15 days of withdrawal, acupuncture was applied at bilateral Shenmen (HT7) points for 1 min after the systemic challenge with morphine HCl (5 mg/kg, s.c.). Results showed that acupuncture at the specific acupoint HT7, but not at control points (TE8 and tail) significantly decreased both dopamine release in the nucleus accumbens and behavioral hyperactivity induced by a systemic morphine challenge. These results suggest that the therapeutic effect of acupuncture on morphine addiction occurs through inhibition of neurochemical and behavioral sensitization to morphine.

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[Effect of scalp acupuncture on glucose metabolism in brain of patients with depression]

OBJECTIVE: To observe the effect of scalp acupuncture (SA) on the glucose metabolism in different regions of brain in patients with depression by positron emission computed tomography (PET). METHODS: Twelve depressive patients were treated by scalp acupuncture on middle line of vertex (MS5), middle line of forehead (MS1) and bilateral lateral line 1 of forehead (MS2), once a day for six days per week, and received PET detection on different region of brain before and after 6 weeks acupuncture treatment. Semiquantitative analysis was used to compare the average values of radioactive count gotten from various brain regions before and after treatment, which could reflect the condition of glucose metabolism at the brain region detected. RESULTS: SA could increase the glucose metabolism at bilateral frontal lobes, bilateral parietal lobes, right occipital lobe, right caudate nucleus, right cingulated gyrus and left cerebellum and decrease that at right temporal lobe and bilateral thalamus. CONCLUSION: SA on MS5, MS1 and MS2 in depressive patients could influence the glucose metabolism in various brain regions. It primarily illustrated that the mechanism of SA in treating depression is related with
its regulation on cortex-limbic circuitry dysfunction and increase the glucose metabolism in various brain regions.

13. Berman AH, Lundberg U

Auricular acupuncture in prison psychiatric units: a pilot study.

OBJECTIVE: The study explores whether auricular acupuncture can be a viable treatment form for inmates in prison psychiatric units. METHOD: Inmates in a prison psychiatric unit and in a support unit for violent behavior were offered group treatment with auricular acupuncture three times a week over a period of 9 months. Another prison psychiatric unit served as a control group. RESULTS: Twenty-two inmates received treatment, and 11 inmates received treatment for over 8 weeks. Cortisol levels were higher for inmates in the support unit than for the other two groups. Inmates treated at least 25 times were prescribed fewer psycholeptic drugs than controls. Perceived autonomy increased for treated inmates in the psychiatric unit. Inmates treated for over 8 weeks experienced improved inner harmony and calm and better clarity over future plans. CONCLUSION: Acupuncture is a non-verbal form of treatment appropriate for prison psychiatric units. The treatment facilitates contact and complements other psycho-social treatment forms.


The response to AP of 18 anxious adult subjects who complained of insomnia was assessed in an open prepost clinical trial study. Five weeks of AP treatment was associated with a significant (p=0.002) nocturnal increase in endogenous melatonin secretion (as measured in urine) and significant improvements in polysomnographic measures of sleep onset latency (p=0.003), arousal index (p=0.001), total sleep time (p=0.001), and sleep efficiency (p=0.002). Significant reductions in state (p=0.049) and trait (p=0.004) anxiety scores were also found. These objective findings are consistent with clinical reports of AP's relaxant effects. AP treatment may be of value for some categories of anxious patients with insomnia. (PsycINFO Database Record (c) 2004 APA, all rights reserved)