

PEER REVIEW HISTORY

BMJ Open publishes all reviews undertaken for accepted manuscripts. Reviewers are asked to complete a checklist review form (<http://bmjopen.bmj.com/site/about/resources/checklist.pdf>) and are provided with free text boxes to elaborate on their assessment. These free text comments are reproduced below.

ARTICLE DETAILS

TITLE (PROVISIONAL)	Acupuncture for postoperative pain in laparoscopic surgery: a systematic review protocol
AUTHORS	Lee, Jae Dong; Lee, Seunghoon; Park, Jimin; Kim, Jihye; Kang, Jung Won; Choi, Do-Young; Park, Sun Jin; Nam, Dongwoo

VERSION 1 - REVIEW

REVIEWER	George Lewith University of Southampton UK
REVIEW RETURNED	04-Nov-2014

GENERAL COMMENTS	This manuscript represents a very standard, well-structured, competent systematic review which will be completed in accordance with all the Cochrane guidelines. I was not aware that BMJ Open was publishing protocols but this would be an entirely appropriate protocol publication. Based on the quality of the submitted article, I would recommend publication.
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REVIEWER	Gur Kreindler Israel
REVIEW RETURNED	17-Nov-2014

GENERAL COMMENTS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The introduction was weak, lacking information regarding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is lap (laparoscopic) What are the benefits, why is it now the most common surgery.... Side effects – there was no acknowledgement of shoulder pain (one of the most common side effects 40% - 80%). What is given as standard protocol treatment and what are the side effects of the protocol? They include all lap surgery but the way the surgery is performed is not addressed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the gas wormed Is the gas drained What position is the surgery done, for example Trendelenburg. When where the acupuncture treatment given (time from surgery) Which acupuncture protocols were utilized – (TCM, 5 elements, pain protocol.....) Results were unclear : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The presentation of the results needs redoing . The results were hard to find and unclear and vague. What was the benefit of this article What is acupuncture good for – vomiting, pain , well Being..... What is the hospitals benefit from incorporating this acupuncture
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	<p>in their processes</p> <p>7. What is the patients' benefits</p> <p>This article has great potential but the utilization is very weak. It is not enough to say that acupuncture is safe. The paper must address the strengths and weaknesses of acupuncture and why it should be used in hospitals.</p> <p>In this article, I would like to read about what acupuncture can benefit a patient. What symptoms can it treated and to what degree of success.</p>
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VERSION 1 – AUTHOR RESPONSE

[1] Reviewer Name George Lewith
Institution and Country University of Southampton
UK

Please state any competing interests or state 'None declared': None declared.

This manuscript represents a very standard, well-structured, competent systematic review which will be completed in accordance with all the Cochrane guidelines. I was not aware that BMJ Open was publishing protocols but this would be an entirely appropriate protocol publication. Based on the quality of the submitted article, I would recommend publication.

Response: Thank you for your positive comments.

[2] Reviewer Name Gur Kreindler
Institution and Country Israel

Please state any competing interests or state 'None declared': None declared

Response: I believe that there has been some misunderstanding regarding the nature of this article. I hope that the following explanation will clarify the issues you have raised.

This manuscript is a "protocol of systematic review"; the protocol aims to reduce the impact of authors' biases, promote transparency of methods and processes, and reduce the potential for duplication of identical systematic review. The nature of this article is therefore distinct from a systematic review, individual clinical trial, or informative review article about laparoscopic surgery or postoperative pain. The present article included just the methods of analysis for the systematic review, which we will perform subsequently. As such, we do not have results to report. Whether acupuncture helps alleviate pain and vomiting and ensures well-being and benefits patients will be determined from the results of the systematic review, which will be conducted according to this protocol. The benefits acupuncture offers patients, the symptoms that can be treated, and the degree of success will also be evaluated during the review process, according to this protocol. We are aware that "BMJ Open" publishes this type of "systematic review protocol". We will fully reflect on your careful recommendations while conducting this systematic review. We would be grateful if you could review our manuscript with reference to these points. Thank you so much.

1. The introduction was weak, lacking information regarding:

- What is lap (laparoscopic)

Response: We agree with this comment, and have added the following explanation of "laparoscopic" to the "Introduction: Description of condition": "Laparoscopic surgery is a specialized technique that allows a surgeon to examine the inside of an abdomen or a pelvis using a miniature video camera, known as a laparoscope, through small incisions in the skin, known as ports."

- What are the benefits, why is it now the most common surgery....

Response: We agree with the necessity of explaining the advantages of laparoscopic surgery. We have added the following explanation in the "Introduction: Description of condition": "Laparoscopic surgery has advantages over traditional open surgery in terms of reduced postoperative pain, shorter hospital stay, faster recovery time, decreased postoperative ileus, reduced scarring, and preserved

immune function; however, laparoscopic surgery still results in substantial postoperative pain around the incision site". This is in addition to the already mentioned benefit of reduced requirement for pain relief ("The dosage of opioid consumption after laparoscopic surgery is significantly lesser than that after open surgery.") in the "Introduction: Why it is important to perform this review".

- Side effects – there was no acknowledgement of shoulder pain (one of the most common side effects 40% - 80%).

Response: We agree with this recommendation. We have explained in more detail the postoperative pain and side effects of laparoscopic surgery, with inclusion of the following text: "laparoscopic surgery still results in substantial postoperative pain around the incision site. Moreover, inflation with carbon dioxide during the surgical procedure frequently induces laparoscopy-induced shoulder pain, secondary to irritation of the phrenic nerve." in the "Introduction: Description of condition". Several other types of postoperative pain have been mentioned in the "Methods: Types of outcome measures".

- What is given as standard protocol treatment and what are the side effects of the protocol?

Response: The protocol described in this article is a "method for systematic review" of acupuncture for postoperative pain; it is not a "method for treatment" for laparoscopic surgery. We hope that we have explained this point above, and that it answers the concerns you have outlined here.

2. They include all lap surgery but the way the surgery is performed is not addressed

- Is the gas wormed
- Is the gas drained
- What position is the surgery done, for example Trendelenburg.

Response: The protocol described in this article is a "method for systematic review" of acupuncture for postoperative pain; it is not a "method for treatment" for laparoscopic surgery. Detail surgical methods for laparoscopic surgery will be explained in each of the individual trials included and analysed in the systematic review. We hope that we have explained this point above, and that it answers the concerns you have outlined here.

3. When where the acupuncture treatment given (time from surgery)

Response: The protocol described in this article is a "method for systematic review" of acupuncture for postoperative pain; it is not a "method for treatment" for acupuncture. Detailed acupuncture treatment protocols will be explained in each of the individual trials included and analysed in the systematic review. The timing and points of acupuncture in each RCT to be included in the analysis are explained in "Methods: Types of interventions" and "Methods: Subgroup analysis and investigation of heterogeneity". We hope that we have explained this point above, and that it answers the concerns you have outlined here.

4. Which acupuncture protocols were utilized – (TCM, 5 elements, pain protocol.....)

Response: The protocol described in this article is a "method for systematic review" of acupuncture for postoperative pain; it is not a "method for treatment" for acupuncture. Detail acupuncture treatment protocol will be explained in each of individual trials included and analyzed in the systematic review. The acupuncture protocol in each RCTs to be included in the for analysis are explained in "Methods: Types of interventions". We hope that we have explained this point above, and that it answers the concerns you have outlined here.

5. Results were unclear :

- The presentation of the results needs redoing .
- The results were hard to find and unclear and vague.
- What was the benefit of this article
- What is acupuncture good for – vomiting, pain , well Being.....

Response: Since this manuscript is a "protocol of systematic review", the review has not yet been conducted, and therefore, the results have not yet been reported. These analyses will be conducted in the systematic review, according to this protocol, and will be subsequently reported. We hope that we have explained this point above, and that it answers the concerns you have outlined here.

6. What is the hospitals benefit from incorporating this acupuncture in their processes

Response: This manuscript is a "protocol of systematic review"; the systematic review has not yet

been conducted, and therefore, we are not yet reporting the results. As such, information relating to the potential for hospitals to benefit from the use of acupuncture is not available for inclusion in the present article. These analyses will be conducted in the systematic review, according to this protocol, and will be subsequently reported. We hope that we have explained this point above, and that it answers the concerns you have outlined here.

7. What is the patients' benefits

Response: This manuscript is a “protocol of systematic review”; the systematic review has not yet been conducted, and therefore, we are not yet reporting the results. These analyses will be conducted in the systematic review, according to this protocol, and will be subsequently reported. We hope that we have explained this point above, and that it answers the concerns you have outlined here.

This article has great potential but the utilization is very weak. It is not enough to say that acupuncture is safe. The paper must address the strengths and weaknesses of acupuncture and why it should be used in hospitals.

In this article, I would like to read about what acupuncture can benefit a patient. What symptoms can it treated and to what degree of success.

Response: This manuscript is a “protocol of systematic review”, not a “results of systematic review”. Therefore, the results, in terms of the strengths and weakness of acupuncture, were not analysed in this article. These analyses will be conducted in a systematic review, according to this protocol, and will be subsequently reported. We hope that we have explained this point above, and that it answers the concerns you have outlined here.

We hope the revised manuscript will better meet the requirements of your journal for publication. We thank the editor and the reviewers once again for their constructive review of our paper.