

Supplement 2. Summary of randomised controlled trials of bee sting therapy on acupoints for rheumatoid arthritis

First author (Year)	Mean age (yr); Duration of disease (yrs)	Experimental intervention (Regimen)	Control intervention (Regimen)	Primary outcome		Secondary outcome	
				measurement	result	measurement	result
Liu (2008)	(A) 47.4; 5.0 (B) 48.3; 4.9	(A) Bee sting therapy (Ashi points, dialectical acupoints, 8-15bees, n.r., once every other day for 3 months, n=50), plus (B)	(B) WM (Oral: MTX: 7.5mg, once a week for 3 months; SASP:0.5g, third daily for 3 months; Meloxicam:7.5mg, twice daily for 3 months, n=50)	(1) Total improvement score (2) Joint swelling score (3) Joint pain score	(1) RR, 1.22[1.01, 1.47], P=0.04 (2) MD, -0.24[-0.42,-0.06],P=0.010 (3) MD, -0.34[-0.37, -0.31], P<0.00001	(1) Number of Joint-swelling (2) RF (3) ESR	(1) MD, -0.46[-0.62, -0.30], P<0.00001 (2) MD, -7.74[-14.10, -1.38], P=0.02 (3) MD, -4.38[-6.28, -2.48], P<0.00001
Zhang (2011) China	(A) 33.8; 3.6 (B) 32.2; 3.4	(A) Bee sting therapy (Ashis points near the knee, 5-15bees, n.r., two or three times a week for 3months, n=23), plus (B)	(B) WM (Oral: MTX: 7.5mg, once a week for 3 months; SASP:0.5g, third daily for 3 months; Meloxicam:7.5mg, once daily for 3 months, n=23)	(1) Total improvement score (2) VAS (3) HSS	(1) RR, 1.17[0.91, 1.50] (2) MD, -1.00[-1.20, -0.80], P<0.00001 (3) MD, 3.37[3.24, 3.50], P<0.00001	(1) ESR (2) CRP	(1) MD, -4.20[-7.35, -1.05], P=0.009 (2) MD, -2.50[-5.56, 0.56], P=0.11
Deng (2011) China	n.r.	(A) Bee sting therapy (Ashi points, dialectical acupoints, before 15-25d: 2-3bees; after 15-25d: 1-3bees increase every time, n.r., three times a week for 2 months, n=20), plus (B)	(B) WM (Oral: MTX: 10mg, once a week for 2 months, n=20) (C) WM (Oral: Prednisone Acetate:7.5mg, once daily for 2 months, n=20) plus (B)	(1) Total improvement score (2) Morning stiffness (3) Joint pain score (4) Joint swelling score	(1) A vs. B: RR, 1.46[1.04, 2.05], P=0.03; A vs. C: RR, 1.36[1.00, 1.84], P=0.05 (2) A vs. B: MD, -0.29 [-0.42, -0.17], P<0.00001; A vs. C: MD, -0.11[-0.25, 0.02], P=0.05 (3) A vs. B: MD, -0.50 [-0.64, -0.36], P<0.00001; A vs. C: MD, -0.13[-0.26, 0.00], P=0.05 (4) A vs. B: MD, -0.33[-0.47, -0.19], P<0.00001; A vs. C: MD, 0.05[-0.12, 0.21], P=0.56	(1) RF (2) ESR (3) CRP	(1) A vs. B: MD, -28.00[-37.21, -18.79], P<0.00001; A vs. C: MD, -14.30[-17.60, -11.00], P<0.00001 (2) A vs. B: MD, -18.60 [-27.04,-10.16], P<0.00001; A vs. C: MD, -8.10[-15.41, -0.79], P=0.03 (3) A vs. B: MD, -10.30 [-12.46,-8.14], P<0.00001; A vs. C: MD, -3.70[-5.99,-1.41], P=0.002
Zhou (2012) China	(A) 37.9; 15.6 (B) 36.4; 14.0 (C) 40.7; 16.6	(A) Bee sting therapy (Ashi points, acupoints near the pain point, 5-10bees, n.r., three times a week for 3 months, n=40) plus NSAIDS	(B) EA (30min, three times a week y for 3 months, n=30) plus NSAIDS (C) WM (Oral:MTX:5-10mg, once a week for 3 months; Folic acid: 10mg, once a week for 3 months, n=30) plus NSAIDS	Total improvement score	A vs. B: RR, 1.23[0.97, 1.56], P=0.09; A vs. C: RR, 1.04 [0.87, 1.24], P=0.67	(1) ESR (2) CRP	(1) A vs. B: MD, -13.70[-15.08, -12.32], P<0.00001; A vs. C: MD, -2.72[-6.54, 1.10] P=0.16 (2) A vs. B: MD, -9.18[-11.47, -6.89], P<0.00001; A vs. C: MD, 3.93[-0.07, 7.93], P= 0.05

CRP: C - reactive protein; EA: electro acupuncture; ESR: erythrocyte sedimentation rate; HSS: hss knee score; HAQ: health assessment questionnaire; MTX: methotrexate; n.r.: not reported; NSAIDS: nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs; RF: rheumatoid factor; SASP: sulfasalazine; VAS: visual analogue scale; TNF- α : tumor necrosis factor-alpha; WM: Western medicine

References

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