

ANSWERING REVIEWERS

Dear Editor,

Please find enclosed the edited manuscript in word format (file name: 16499-review.doc).



Title: Traditional Chinese manual acupuncture for management of obesity: A systematic review

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Name of Journal: *World Journal of Meta-Analysis*

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The manuscript has been improved according to the suggestions of reviewers:

1 Format has been updated.

2 Revision has been made according to the suggestions of the reviewer:

Reviewer 1

(1) As acupuncture is mainly practiced and studied in China, I suggest that the CBM database should be included in your search strategy to reduce the potential selective bias.

We searched these 3 Chinese databases: VIP Information (www.cqvip.com), China National Knowledge Infrastructure (www.cnki.net), and Wanfang Data (www.wanfangdata.com) which contain all data identical to CBM database.

(2) Figure 1 (Flow diagram of study selection process) is not clear. I suspect that the author did not carefully check the article before submitting.

The text boxes have been adjusted to show all text.

(3) Similar questions are also encountered in Table 1: Characteristics of participants and interventions in the included studies. Could you please explain this error?

Corrected; this was due to uploaded procedure.

Reviewer 2

(1) One of your study selection criteria is 'Studies of non-traditional acupuncture such as electro-acupuncture, dry needling, ear-acupuncture or transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation were excluded'. As you mentioned in introduction, three reviews involving different types of needling and needle stimulation techniques (including traditional Chinese acupuncture, electro-acupuncture, dry needling, ear-acupuncture and transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation) for weight loss have been published.[1,2,3] Their conclusions were generally negative effectiveness of acupuncture when treating weight control. Even you conducted separately another systematic review based on traditional Chinese acupuncture, but your conclusion seemed also inconclusive or negative. This makes no academic advance in this area. [1]

Lin XM, Li B, Du YH, et al. [Systematic evaluation of therapeutic effect of acupuncture for treatment of simple obesity]. *Zhongguo Zhen Jiu*. 2009;29:856-60. [2] Cho SH, Lee JS, Thabane L, et al. Acupuncture for obesity: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Int J Obes (Lond)*. 2009;33:183-96. [3] Sui Y, Zhao HL, Wong VC, et al. A systematic review on use of Chinese medicine and acupuncture for treatment of obesity. *Obes Rev*. 2012;13:409-30.

The effects of traditional Chinese acupuncture have not been evaluated before thus this review makes an important contribution to the body of knowledge.

(2) Please check your manuscript following the standardized manner of PRISMA statement. [4] [4] www.prisma-statement.org

This manuscript strictly followed PRISMA statement. For example, the Fig. 1 is constructed on PRISMA flow diagram template.

(3) Please refer to PROSPERO [5]. It is an international prospective register of systematic reviews. [5] <http://www.crd.york.ac.uk/PROSPERO/>

The review followed the methods specified in the Cochrane Handbook for Systematic Reviews of Interventions. Registration with PROSPERO was not a requirement for publication in *Word Journal of Meta-Analysis*.

(4) Your inclusion criteria is diagnosed as obesity or overweight. Please supply the criteria when you find your inclusion / exclusion criteria. Is it overweight ($23 \text{ kg/m}^2 \leq \text{overweight} < 25 \text{ kg/m}^2$) and obesity ($25 \text{ kg/m}^2 \leq$)? As you know, it differs between Asian standard and western standard. Please clarify this point.

We are aware of the differences in criteria between Asian and Caucasian participants so we have used criteria according to WHO recommendation (page 6).

(5) Please check your reference 1. It does not match with referred sentence.

Checked and replaced (page 5).

(6) What are your main primary outcome(s) or secondary outcome(s)?

The primary outcomes included effectiveness rate, body weight and body mass index (BMI) and the secondary outcome was adverse events (page 7).

(7) Please check your 'a total of 2621' in page 5. It differs from your abstract.

This has been updated in the abstract.

(8) What did you check 'other bias' in the domains of risk of bias assessment in page 5? Please clarify this.

We assessed the baseline imbalance in other bias. The relevant information has been updated in page 6.

(9) Figure 2 and 3 showed same results. Please unify those as one.

These figures 2 and 1 were developed according to the Cochrane Handbook which cannot be merged.

(10) The conclusion of the authors seemed to me somewhat too positive to be generalized when considering the results from the meta-analysis. There were no differences in terms of more solid outcomes as body weight and BMI, but showed effectiveness in terms of more soft outcomes as effectiveness rate. Therefore your conclusions should be considered in the concepts of outcomes between objective vs. subjective ones.

Effectiveness rate was calculated (scores before treatment – scores after treatment)/scores before treatment x 100% (page 7) with scores referring to BMI or bodyweight therefore effectiveness rate is not subjective.

(11) Please check your reference 9. Treatment of -> treatment of.
Corrected.

3 References and typesetting were corrected.

Thank you again for publishing our manuscript in the *World Journal of Meta-Analysis*.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'George Lenon', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

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