

A comparison of acupuncture and oral estradiol treatment of vasomotor symptoms in postmenopausal women.

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OBJECTIVE: To compare the effects of electro-acupuncture with oral estradiol and superficial needle insertion on hot flushes in postmenopausal women. **MATERIAL AND METHODS:** Forty-five postmenopausal women with vasomotor symptoms were randomized to electro-acupuncture, superficial needle insertion or oral estradiol treatment during 12 weeks, with 6 months' follow-up. The number and severity of flushes were registered daily and the Kupperman index and a general estimate of climacteric symptoms were completed before, during and after therapy. **RESULTS:** In the electro-acupuncture group, the mean number of flushes/24 h decreased from 7.3 to 3.5 (ANOVA, $p < 0.001$). Eleven of the 15 women had at least a 50% decrease in number of flushes (with a mean decrease of 82%). Superficial needle insertion decreased the number of flushes/24 h from 8.1 to 3.8 ($p < 0.001$). In seven out of 13 women, the number of flushes decreased by at least 50% (mean decrease 83%). In the estrogen group, the number of flushes decreased from 8.4 to 0.8 ($p < 0.001$). The decrease in number of flushes persisted during the 24-week follow-up period in all treatment groups. The Kupperman index and the general climacteric symptom score decreased, and remained unchanged 24 weeks after treatment in all groups ($p < 0.001$). Electro-acupuncture decreased the number of flushes/24 h significantly over time, but not to the same extent as the estrogen treatment. No significant difference in effect was found between electro-acupuncture and the superficial needle insertion. **CONCLUSION: We suggest that acupuncture is a viable alternative treatment of vasomotor symptoms in postmenopausal women and cannot recommend superficial needle insertion as an inactive control treatment.**

Publication Types:

- * Clinical Trial
- * Randomized Controlled Trial

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