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

Wyon Y, Wijma K, Nedstrand E, Hammar M.

Faculty of Health Sciences, University Hospital, Linkoping, Sweden.

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

PMID: 15497904 [PubMed – indexed for MEDLINE]