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Effect of Acupuncture on Intraocular Pressure

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Purpose: To evaluate the short-term effect of acupuncture on the intraocular pressure.

Methods: A randomized controlled trial was performed. Forty eight healthy volunteers (94 eyes) were randomly allocated into three groups: Acupuncture group - 19 subjects (38 eyes) submitted to a 20-minute session of acupuncture with needles inserted in specific points (Tongziliao, Yangbai and Jingming); Sham group - 14 subjects (27 eyes) submitted to a 20 minutes session of acupuncture with needles inserted in false points; Control group - 15 subjects (29 eyes) had no intervention. All subjects had the intraocular pressure measured by Goldmann applanation tonometry immediately before the intervention, as well as 30 minutes and 24 hours after the acupuncture. The intraocular pressure measurement was taken by a physician who was masked to the patient's group.

Results: The mean (SD) intraocular pressure in the Acupuncture group was 17.9 (3.3) mmHg at baseline, 16.4 (3.9) mmHg at 30 minutes, and 16.3 (3.3) mmHg at 24 hour. The mean (SD) intraocular pressure in the Sham group was 18.6 (3.3) mmHg at baseline, 17.7 (2.6) mmHg at 30 minutes, and 15.9 (3.6) mmHg at 24 hour. The mean (SD) intraocular pressure in the Control group was 16.9 (3.5) mmHg at baseline, 16.5 (3.8) mmHg at 30 minutes, and 15.8 (3.3) mmHg at 24 hour. There was no statistically significant difference in the change of the intraocular pressure (post-intervention minus baseline measurements) between groups after 30 minutes ($P = 0.13$) and 24 hours ($P = 0.21$).

Conclusion: Acupuncture did not produce a short-term effect on the intraocular pressure.