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A randomized clinical trial of laser acupuncture for the treatment of obesity

Chi-Chuan Tseng^{1,2}¹Chang Gung Memorial Hospital, Taiwan²Chang Gung University, Taiwan

The worldwide prevalence of obesity has increased significantly in recent decades. Obesity-related health problems are detrimental to the individual and society. Much more needs to be done to improve treatments for obesity. Laser acupuncture (LA) is an intervention that stimulates traditional acupuncture point using low-level laser therapy. Compared to traditional manual acupuncture, LA has multiple advantages, including ease of application, dose measurement precision, painlessness, and non-invasiveness. It is also quick, safe, and carries no risk of infection. As LA does not produce local sensation, double-blind randomized controlled studies are also much easier to perform. Several studies have shown that LA could be an effective treatment of obesity. However, there are several experimental limitations have been highlighted. This study aims to validate the clinical effectiveness of LA on obesity. In a patient-assessor-blinded, randomized, sham-controlled crossover trial, obese subjects were randomly assigned to either the laser acupuncture group or the sham laser acupuncture group. Each subject received the treatment relevant to their group 3 times a week for 8 weeks. After 8 weeks of treatment the subject entered a 2-week washout period, after which the subjects switched groups. We found that LA improves body mass index, fat mass, waist-to-hip ratio, and overall well-being when compared to the control. These findings suggest that LA may offer an alternative approach to the treatment of obesity. However, a long-term multicentre study is needed to confirm the above findings and to evaluate the underlying mechanisms.

Biography

Chi-Chuan Tseng received his Master of Medical Science from the Graduate Institute of Integrated Medicine, China Medical University, Taichung, Taiwan. He is a Lecturer at the College of Medicine, Chang Gung University. He is board certified in Family Medicine, Rheumatology and Internal Medicine. He has several peer-reviewed publications in internationally reputed journals. He reviews paper for Elsevier and is the Director of Chinese Medical Association of Acupuncture.

acupmox@gmail.com

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