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Intraoperative electrical stimulation of the acupoints P6 to prevent post-operative nausea and vomiting in women undergoing breast cancer surgery

Since 1600 BCE, acupuncture has been a respected Chinese medicine, and is still in use today. By stimulating energy channels throughout the body, known as meridians, an imbalance of qi can be corrected. Such imbalance is said to cause disease. Acupuncture points can be stimulated invasively with needles, “acupuncture”, or non-invasively, “acupressure” using physical pressure applied by the hand, elbow, or with various devices, including low amperage nerve stimulators. Current scientific research indicates that stimulation of meridian point P6 is more effective than placebos in the relief of certain types of post-operative nausea/vomiting (PONV). The incidence of postoperative nausea and vomiting (PONV) after general anesthesia is up to 30% when inhalational anesthetics are used with no prophylaxis. This makes PONV one of the most common complaints following surgery under general anesthesia, together with postoperative pain. The relevant risk factors include: female sex, nonsmoker status, prior history of PONV, motion sickness, use of opioids preoperatively, use of inhalational anesthetics, and type of surgery, particularly breast surgery. Consequences of PONV include dehydration, prolonged recovery, admission, increased cost, impaired surgical recovery, and lower satisfaction. Studies have shown that the stimulation of the P6 has the capacity to lower PONV rates. Acupuncture's use for certain conditions has been endorsed by the United States National Institutes of Health, the National Health Service of the United Kingdom, the World Health Organization, and the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine. By utilizing acustimulation at P6 in patients who are at risk for PONV, we were better at preventing PONV. Utilization of this globally approved technique can significantly decrease PONV, impact hospital stay, and contribute to greater patient satisfaction.

Biography

Alicia M Kowalski has obtained her undergraduate degree from Rice University, and her MD from the University of Texas Health Science Center in Houston, Texas. She has dedicated her entire career to the cancer patients at MD Anderson Cancer Center, and has risen through all ranks of faculty to Professor. She serves as the Chair of the GME Wellness and Career Sustainability Committee, and Co-Chair of the Faculty Wellness Committee. She has lectured nationally and internationally, and has published more than 30 papers in peer reviewed journals.

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