Clinical Observation on Warm Acupuncture Therapy for Rheumatoid Arthritis
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Abstract
Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA) is a chronic, inflammatory disease, frequently associated with joint destruction. The aim is this clinical observation was to contribute to warm needle acupuncture treatment of rheumatoid arthritis. We studied the before and after warm needle acupuncture and herbal medicine treatment of rheumatoid arthritis patient’s Rheumatoid Factor (RF), Erythrocyte Sedimentation Rate (ESR), and C-reactive Protein (CRP), the plasma samples were investigated at Pathlab Laboratory (M) Sdn. Bhd (37363-K) in Taman Perling branch, Johor, Malaysia. Our result showed that, after warm needle acupuncture and herbal medicine treatment, rheumatoid arthritis patient’s RF, ESR, and CRP are reduced, but warm needle acupuncture seem to have decreased in significantly comparison with the before. Authors suggested that warm needle acupuncture could help rheumatoid arthritis patients, but basic mechanisms and long-term observations will be needed.

Keywords: Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA); Warm needle therapy; Sedimentation Rate (ESR)

Introduction
Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA) is a chronic, inflammatory disease, which primarily affects synovial joints. The extended inflamed synovial eroses the articular cartilage and bone thus causing joint deformity, leading to progressive physical disability [1]. The exact aetiology of rheumatoid arthritis is unknown. Numerous studies have suggested that rheumatoid arthritis has a complex pathogenesis in which genes, environment, accident, and immunity act together in the development of the disease. The disease is more frequent among women than men and the prevalence as well as incidence increases with age [2].

In industrialized countries, the prevalence of rheumatoid arthritis has been estimated to be between 0.5% and 1%. The occurrence of rheumatoid arthritis is believed to vary among different populations, and the majority of studies have been carried out in Northern Europe and North America. The variation in prevalence could be explained by environmental and genetic factors, but also by diverse disease classifications, the denominator used for prevalence, variability in the age of onset, study design, sample size and sampling method [3].

Warm needle acupuncture is an indirect way to combination of acupuncture with moxibustion by stimulating acupoints with a burning moxa stick is attached at the tail of the needle that has been inserted into an acupoint, and the moxa stick is burned to provide heat via the needle [4,5]. The use of warm needle acupuncture was first documented in Shang Han Za Bing Lun, a classical Chinese medical book of Zhong-jing Zhang (Eastern Han dynasty, 25-220 C.E) [6]. Warm needle acupuncture treatment is transmitted to the acupoint by radiation, moreover, by direction conduction through the shaft of the acu needle, thereby stimulating deep tissue within the acupoint and warming the acupoint on the surface [7], practitioners to be mention of safe for risk of burning in patients skin.

Methods and Materials
Participants
The study was prospectively carried out at Southern TCM Centre, Southern University College, Johor, Malaysia, from October 2016 to March 2017. Fifty adults (38 women and 12 men) aged 36-65 years provided their informed consent in writing and were entered into

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Received June 05, 2017; Accepted June 14, 2017; Published June 19, 2017


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Rheumatoid arthritis is a progressive inflammatory disease in which T cells, B cells, and pro-inflammatory cytokines play a key role in the pathophysiology [9].

Patients already diagnosed rheumatoid arthritis, the usual trails of nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDS) and/or prednisone; patients are generally offered hydroxychloroquine or methotrexate. If those fail, newer Disease-modifying Antirheumatic Drugs (DMARDS) are considered. We consider the problems raised by Non-steroidal Anti-inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDS) treatment in the elderly [10]. The NSAIDS have three risks: cardiovascular, gastro-intestinal, and renal. The increase in cardiovascular risk in the absence of a past cardiovascular history due to an NSAID has been clearly established for both selective and non-selective NSAIDS from a meta-analysis of placebo-controlled, randomized trials and from observational studies [11].

In Traditional Chinese Medicine, painful joints are referred to as Bi syndrome. Because Traditional Chinese Medicine really has no concept of genetic inheritance, Bi syndrome is generally regarded as being the result of an invasion of pathogenic influences coming from outside the patient [12]. Warm needle acupuncture treatment is transmitted to the acupoint by radiation, moreover, by direction conduction through the shaft of the needle, thereby stimulating deep tissue within the acupoint and warming the acupoint on the surface [15].

This clinical observation of the methodology of warm needle acupuncture treatment clinical research, our preliminary suggests that warm needle acupuncture in terms of changes in the RF, ESR and CRP levels. RF are a variety of antibodies that are present in 70-90% of people with rheumatoid arthritis, however, can be found in people without rheumatoid arthritis or with other autoimmune disorders. In general, when no RF is present in someone with rheumatoid arthritis, the course of the disease is less severe. ESR reflects the degree of inflammation in the body, in healthy people, the ESR is low and it increases with inflammation, it is a general indication of the amount of inflammation present. Both CRP and RF are useful in the diagnosis of rheumatoid arthritis; if the CRP is high, it means there is significant inflammation or injury in the body, reducing these levels is not meant to be improved with rheumatoid arthritis all the time. Both CRP and ESR levels are used to monitor disease activity and to monitor how well patients are responding to treatment [16]. Acupuncture carries several potential advantages, such as low cost, few complications, and the possibility of personalized treatment. Acupuncture is also a safe intervention in the hands of competent practitioners. Yamashita et al. [17] prospectively evaluated 55,291 acupuncture treatments administered by acupuncturists with medical training and documented only 64 adverse events (0.12%) [18]. All of those adverse events were minor, with the most common being bruising, dizziness, perspiration, discomfort, and dermatitis; warm needle acupuncture is safe and may be effective as an adjunct in reducing the number of RA patients. One of the limitations in this study, further clinical observation may consider whether the autoimmune response is directed against particular tissues or against antigens as in chronic inflammatory autoimmune diseases such as systemic lupus erythematosus and rheumatoid arthritis, both are characterized by the presence of autoantibodies that play a major role in their etiopathogenesis. Systemic lupus erythematosus is characterized by circulating antibodies and immune complex deposition that can trigger an inflammatory damage in organs.

A common feature of autoimmune disease is the presence of autoantibodies and inflammation, including autoimmune T lymphocytes, mononuclear phagocytes, and B cells. It has long been known that B cells produce autoantibodies and, thereby, contribute to the pathogenesis of many autoimmune diseases. Autoimmune disease known that B cells produce autoantibodies and, thereby, contribute to the pathogenesis of many autoimmune diseases. Autoimmune disease.

### Table 1: Comparison of pre- and post-treatment RF positive (%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Before</th>
<th>After</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Warm Needle Acupuncture</td>
<td>25 (100%)</td>
<td>12 (48%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herbal Medicine</td>
<td>25 (100%)</td>
<td>8 (32%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A higher score indicates a better outcome.

### Table 2: Comparison of pre- and post-treatment ESR and CRP levels.

<table>
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<th>Before</th>
<th>After</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ESR</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>24.71 ± 36.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRP</td>
<td>15.60 ± 26.80</td>
<td>23.80 ± 21.56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Values represent means ± Standard error of the mean

A lower score indicates a better outcome

P<0.05
anti-inflammatory effects and including pain score and tender joint count as the main outcome assessment, also to be made to facilitate the design of a large-scale trial, long-term observation, which in turn will help to clarify the existing evidence base on warm needle acupuncture for rheumatoid arthritis.

Disclosure Statement

The authors declare no conflicts of interest and no financial interests related to the material of this manuscript.

References