



Correspondence

Acupuncture on aromatase inhibitor-induced arthralgia in patients with breast cancer



To the Editor

Dr Lawrence Chen and colleagues [1] conducted a meta-analysis which concluded that “acupuncture is a safe and viable non-drug treatment that may relieve joint pain in patients with aromatase inhibitor-induced arthralgia (AIA)”. However, there are a few issues that require comment.

First, acupuncture therapy originated in China about 2000 years ago. One of the most important applications of acupuncture is for pain relief [2]. Acupuncture is widely used in China for various types of cancer pain [3]. However, this meta-analysis did not search the Chinese databases (such as CNKI, VIP, Wangfang and CBM), resulting in missed literature reviews. Furthermore, the search strategy is also not mentioned “Zhenjiu”, “Zhenci” and so on in Chinese.

Another question involves the success of the blinding method that mentioned in the included studies was questionable. The acupuncture group was often given verbal cues, such as asking the patients whether they had the feeling of soreness, distension or numbness, but the sham acupuncture group might not have those feelings [4]. Therefore, we suggest that the methods should not be described as double blinded.

In addition, this study focused on patient-reported outcomes, such as BPI, rather than objective indicators and end-point outcomes.

Author disclosure statement

The authors have no conflicts of interest or financial ties to disclose.

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Kai Zhang^{a,*}, Qilin Tang^b

^a Department of Acupuncture and Moxibustion, Tianjin Gong An Hospital, Tianjin, China

^b Tianjin University of Traditional Chinese Medicine, Tianjin, China

* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: coolzhangkai@163.com (K. Zhang).

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Reply to correspondence concerning “Acupuncture on aromatase inhibitor-induced arthralgia in patients with breast cancer”



We greatly appreciate the letter by Zhang et al. [1] commenting on our recently published manuscript regarding the effect of acupuncture on aromatase inhibitor-induced arthralgia (AIA) in breast cancer [2].

According to Zhang et al., the Chinese databases such as China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI), Chinese Science and

Technology Journal Database (VIP), Wang Fang Data Knowledge Service Platform and Chinese Biomedical Literature Database (CBM) should be searched for the issue of acupuncture. Besides, the keywords “Zhenjiu”, “Zhenci” may consider to add in the search strategy. We agree with the suggestion. However, some Chinese databases are not available used outside the Mainland China region