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Essential Tremor

Tremblement essentiel : évaluation de l'acupuncture

1. Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis

1.1. Generic Acupuncture

1.1.1. Shi 2026

Shi Q, Han J, Chen B, Gao S, Shen M. Comparative Efficacy of Acupuncture Therapy in Primary Essential Tremor: A Network Meta-Analysis and Systematic Review. Healthcare (Basel). 2026;14(6):803. https://doi.org/10.3390/healthcare14060803

Background	Essential tremor (ET) is a common movement disorder that predominantly affects older adults, with rising global prevalence due to population aging. Pharmacological treatments, including propranolol and primidone, are often limited by inadequate efficacy or poor tolerability, and surgical options carry inherent risks. Acupuncture has shown promise as an alternative or adjunctive therapy for ET, but evidence comparing the effectiveness of different acupuncture modalities remains limited.
Objective	To systematically evaluate the comparative efficacy and safety of various acupuncture-related interventions for essential tremor (ET) through a network meta-analysis, and to provide evidence-based recommendations for clinical practice.
Methods	We systematically searched eight electronic databases (PubMed, EMBASE, Web of Science, Cochrane Library, CNKI, VIP, Wanfang, and CBM) from inception to 20 October 2025. Randomized controlled trials (RCTs) evaluating any form of acupuncture therapy for ET were included. Conventional pairwise meta-analysis and network meta-analysis were performed to compare the efficacy (response rate, Tremor Six Score) and safety (adverse events) of different interventions. Surface under the cumulative ranking curve (SUCRA) values were used to rank treatment modalities.
Results	**Twenty randomized controlled trials involving 1067 participants** were included. Traditional meta-analysis indicated that acupuncture-related interventions significantly outperformed controls in improving response rate [RR 4.36, 95% CI (3.14, 6.03), $p < 0.00001$], reducing Tremor Six Score [MD -1.99, 95% CI (-2.25, -1.73), $p < 0.00001$], and lowering the incidence of adverse events [RR 0.13, 95% CI (0.07, 0.25), $p < 0.00001$]. Network meta-analysis based on SUCRA values revealed that: for symptom relief, scalp acupuncture (S) demonstrated the highest effectiveness (SUCRA = 81.5%); for reducing Tremor Six Score, manual acupuncture (A) showed the most significant effect (SUCRA = 76.6%); and for safety outcomes, Acupuncture + Scalp Acupuncture + Propranolol (A+S+P) achieved the highest SUCRA score (SUCRA = 73.1%).

Conclusion	This network meta-analysis demonstrates that acupuncture-related interventions are effective and safe for treating essential tremor. However, caution is warranted in interpreting these findings due to methodological limitations in the included randomized controlled trials (small sample sizes, lack of blinding, inadequate allocation concealment), sparse data for some interventions, and the concentration of studies within China, which limits their generalizability. Despite these limitations, acupuncture offers a valuable non-pharmacological treatment option for patients with poor medication tolerance. Future large-scale, multicenter trials with rigorous designs are needed to validate these findings.

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