

String of PEARLS

Practical Evidence About Real Life Situations

Smoking cessation

PEARLS are succinct summaries of Cochrane Systematic Reviews for primary care practitioners—developed by Prof. Brian McAvoy for the Cochrane Primary Care Field (www.cochraneprimarycare.org), New Zealand Branch of the Australasian Cochrane Centre at the Department of General Practice and Primary Health Care, University of Auckland (www.auckland.ac.nz/uoa), funded by the Ministry of Health, and published in NZ Doctor (www.nzdoctor.co.nz).

- Reduction and abrupt cessation equally effective for smokers wanting to quit
- Motivational interviewing may assist smokers to quit
- Mobile phone-based interventions effective in short term for smoking cessation
- Nicotine receptor partial agonists effective for smoking cessation
- Insufficient evidence for effectiveness of acupuncture for smoking cessation
- Insufficient evidence for hypnotherapy in smoking cessation
- Limited evidence for exercise in smoking cessation

DISCLAIMER: PEARLS are for educational use only and are not meant to guide clinical activity, nor are they a clinical guideline.



Acupuncture for migraine is at least as effective as prophylactic drug treatment

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THE PROBLEM: Migraine is a common problem in the general population, often leading to a patient retreating to a darkened room until the symptoms pass. Some patients suffer from attacks so frequently that they require prophylactic intervention; however, pharmacological treatments may be accompanied by adverse and sometimes distressing side effects, which patients and doctors alike would prefer to avoid. Acupuncture is a widely used complementary therapy that causes neurophysiological changes in the patient, without the side effects of medication that may lead to poor compliance.

CLINICAL BOTTOM LINE: This review shows acupuncture is more effective than no treatment and at least as effective as, or possibly more effective than, prophylactic drug treatment, and has fewer adverse effects.

Treatments for migraine: acupuncture vs prophylactic drug treatment

	Success	Evidence	Harms
Acupuncture vs prophylactic drug treatment	Effective: Up to 8–12 weeks NNT for acupuncture vs no treatment = 4.5 (range 1 to 7) NNT for acupuncture vs medication = 8 (range 7 to 9)	Cochrane review ¹	No major harms

NNT = numbers needed to treat. An NNT of 4.5 means that for every 4–5 people given the treatment, 1 person will find the treatment effective.

Reference

1. Linde K, Allais G, Brinkhaus B, Manheimer E, Vickers A, White AR. Acupuncture for migraine prophylaxis. Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews 2009, Issue 1. Art. No.: CD001218. DOI: 10.1002/14651858.CD001218.pub2.

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