

PRIMARY FROZEN SHOULDER (PFS). THE EFFECT OF SINGLE POINT ACUPUNCTURE ON PAIN, DISABILITY AND RANGE OF MOVEMENT (ROM).

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Purpose

To study the effect of single point acupuncture to Stomach 38 (St. 38), an empirical point sited in the lower limb, for the treatment of shoulder pathology, increasing ROM, pain and disability.

Relevance

PFS is a condition of unknown aetiology, associated with severe restriction to glenohumeral movements, pain and disability. St 38 is recommended for pain and stiffness in the shoulder, though there is no evidence to support its efficacy in management of PFS.

Subjects

Four female subjects, (mean age 55) gave informed consent and fulfilled the inclusion criteria for Gleno-humeral capsular pathology. Exclusion criteria were any associated pathology or contraindications to acupuncture.

Method

A single system, ABAB design was employed. Subjects were randomly allocated to the protocols. Three subjects adhering to five phases involving an initial Baseline. An exercise A phase; an acupuncture intervention and exercise B phase, a further exercise A phase and a final acupuncture and exercise B phase. Outcome measurements were recorded on four occasions during each phase, totalling twenty measurements over fifty days. An independent blinded assessor measured active shoulder elevation with a fluid goniometer in each phase of the trial and administered the Shoulder Pain and Disability Index (SPDI) before and after the trial.

Analysis/ Results

ROM in each phase was subject to graphic representation and visual analysis, pre and post trial scores for SPDI were compared. Two subjects demonstrated improvement in pain and disability with a minor increase in active shoulder elevation. Two subjects showed no improvement.

Discussion

Two subjects had overall improvement, demonstrating pain relief and improved temperature changes in the affected shoulder in keeping with physiological evidence for acupuncture intervention.

Subjects demonstrated large fluctuations in their symptoms throughout, in keeping with the reported literature. FS is not a homogenous condition, the trial highlights the difficulties of investigating FS and informed the decision to choose a single subject design.

Though the findings are inconclusive, they provide further insight into this complex condition and may inform the design of a randomised control trial.