



Acupuncture To Treat Nausea and Vomiting in Early Pregnancy: A Randomized Controlled Trial

Caroline Smith PhD, MSc, BSc, Lic Ac¹,
Caroline Crowther MD, FRCOG,
RANZCOG, CMFM¹, Justin Beilby MBBS,
RACGP, MPH²

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Background: Nausea and vomiting in early pregnancy are troublesome symptoms for some women. We undertook a single blind randomized controlled trial to determine whether acupuncture reduced nausea, dry retching, and vomiting, and improved the health status of women in pregnancy. **Methods:** The trial was undertaken at a maternity teaching hospital in Adelaide, Australia, where 593 women less than 14 weeks' pregnant with symptoms of nausea or vomiting were randomized into 4 groups: traditional acupuncture, pericardium 6 (p6) acupuncture, sham acupuncture, or no acupuncture (control). Treatment was administered weekly for 4 weeks. The primary outcomes were nausea, dry retching, vomiting, and health status. Comparisons were made between groups over 4 consecutive weeks. **Results:** Women receiving traditional acupuncture reported less nausea ($p < 0.01$) throughout the trial and less dry retching ($p < 0.01$) from the second week compared with women in the no acupuncture control group. Women who received p6 acupuncture ($p < 0.05$) reported less nausea from the second week of the trial, and less dry retching ($p < 0.001$) from the third week compared with women in the no acupuncture control group. Women in the sham acupuncture group ($p < 0.01$) reported less nausea and dry retching ($p < 0.001$) from the third week compared with women in the no acupuncture group. No differences in vomiting were found among the groups at any time. **Conclusion:** Acupuncture is an effective treatment for women who experience nausea and dry retching in early pregnancy. A time-related placebo effect was found for some women. (BIRTH 29:1 March 2002)

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