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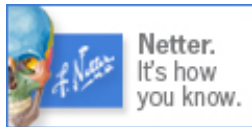
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Acupuncture: a promising treatment for depression during pregnancy

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Abstract

Background

Few medically acceptable treatments for depression during pregnancy are available. The aim of this randomized controlled pilot study was to determine whether acupuncture holds promise as a treatment for depression during pregnancy.

Methods

Sixty-one pregnant women with major depressive disorder and a 17-item Hamilton Rating Scale for Depression (HRSD₁₇) score ≥ 14 were randomly assigned to one of three treatments, delivered over 8 weeks: an active acupuncture (SPEC, $N=20$), an active control acupuncture (NSPEC, $N=21$), and massage (MSSG, $N=20$). Acupuncture treatments were standardized, but individually tailored, and were provided in a double-blind fashion. Responders to acute phase treatment (HRSD₁₇ score < 14 and $\geq 50\%$ reduction from baseline) continued the treatment they were initially randomized to until 10 weeks postpartum.

Results

Response rates at the end of the acute phase were statistically significantly higher for SPEC (69%) than for MSSG (32%), with an intermediate NSPEC response rate (47%). The SPEC group also exhibited a significantly higher average rate of reduction in BDI scores from baseline to the end of the first month of treatment than the MSSG group. Responders to the acute phase of all treatments combined had significantly lower depression scores at 10 weeks postpartum than nonresponders.

Limitations

Generalizability is limited by the small sample and its relative homogeneity.

Conclusion

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Acupuncture holds promise for the treatment of depression during pregnancy.

Keywords: [Depression](#), [Pregnancy](#), [Postpartum](#), [Acupuncture](#), [Massage](#)

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