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Therapeutic effects of acupuncture on obesity and HbA1c

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Introduction & Aim: Therapeutic management of obesity includes exercise, a balanced diet, and healthy living habits. In addition, acupuncture therapy in body weight reduction (BWR) in obese patients is approved. There are more effects than BWR. This therapy is affecting glucose metabolism which is measurable with HbA1c levels before and after the acupuncture therapy for obesity, periodically. Our aim was to investigate whether acupuncture reduces HbA1c levels, weight and BMI in obese patients.

Methods: Patients presented to the acupuncture clinic for weight loss with a BMI greater than 25 were enrolled into this prospective before and after study. Each patient received 20 sessions of acupuncture therapy delivered by a certified acupuncturist. Weight, BMI and HbA1c levels were measured both before and after the full course of acupuncture treatments for comparison. Comorbid conditions that influence the development of obesity such as diabetes, age and postmenopausal state were reviewed.

Results: A total of 42 patients were enrolled into the study mean age of 42.6 ± 11.9 years. Of the 42 patients completing all 20 sessions, the average of body weight was 99.7 ± 21.6 and BWR was 6.9 ± 4.5 kg (95% CI, 5.5–8.3; $p < 0.001$). At the beginning and end of the acupuncture treatment, mean BMI was 38.1 ± 7.6 kg/m² (25.2–59.5 kg/m²) and 35.4 ± 7.2 kg/m² (95% CI, 2.1–3.2; $p < 0.001$), respectively. The mean HbA1c level before and after acupuncture was $5.9 \pm 0.8\%$ and $5.7 \pm 0.4\%$ (95% CI, 0.1–0.4; $p = 0.015$), respectively.

Conclusions: 20 sessions of acupuncture treatment for obese patients may confer reductions in weight, BMI and HbA1c levels.

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