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The effect of acupuncture on working memory and anxiety

Objective: The purpose of this study was to investigate whether acupuncture can improve memory and reduce anxiety.

Design, setting & subjects: A two-group, randomized, single-blind study involving 90 under-graduate university students was conducted from January to December of 2011.

Interventions: Subjects completed the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI) form Y-1 (State Anxiety, SA) and Y-2 (Trait Anxiety, TA). Then, each subject lay on a treatment table for 20 minutes. The acupuncture group had needles inserted into select acupoints; control subjects did not. Subjects then completed the STAI form Y-1 again, after which they completed the Automated Operation Span Task (AOSPAN) - a computerized test of working memory.

Main Outcome Measures: Performance on the AOSPAN and the STAI scores were the main measures of the outcomes.

Results: The acupuncture group scored 9.5% higher than the control group on the AOSPAN Total Correct Score (65.39 vs. 59.9, $p=0.0134$), and committed 36% fewer math errors (2.68 vs. 4.22, $p=0.0153$). Acupuncture subjects also reported lower SA after intervention than control subjects (26.14 vs. 29.63, $p=0.0146$).

Biography

Jason Bussell, PhD, LAc is a President Emeritus at Illinois Association of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine. He serves as a Vice-Chairman for Illinois State Government Board of Acupuncture and as an Adjunct Professor for DePaul University College of Science and Health, USA

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