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The effect of acupuncture on working memory and anxiety

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Objective: To investigate whether acupuncture can improve memory and reduce anxiety.

Design setting and participants: A two-group, randomized, single-blind study (throughout 2011) involving 90 undergraduate university students.

Interventions: Participants completed the state-trait anxiety inventory (STAI) form Y-1 (state anxiety, SA) and STAI Y-2 (trait anxiety), and each participant lay on a treatment table for 20 minutes. The Acupuncture group had needles inserted into select acupoints; Controls did not. Participants then completed the STAI form Y-1 again and the automated operation span task (AOSPAN), a computerized test of working memory.

Main outcome measures: Performance on the AOSPAN and STAI scores.

Results: Acupuncture group scored 9.5% higher than Controls on the AOSPAN total correct score (65.39 vs. 59.9 $p < 0.0134$), and made 36% fewer math errors (2.68 vs. 4.22, $p < 0.0153$). Those who had acupuncture also reported lower state anxiety after intervention than controls (26.14 vs. 29.63, $p < 0.0146$).

Biography

Jason Bussell earned his PhD in acupuncture from the Guangzhou University of Chinese Medicine. He is the founder and President of A Center for Oriental Medicine near Chicago, Illinois, Past President of the Illinois Association of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine, and an Adjunct Professor at DePaul University. He is author of the book *The Asian Diet: Simple secrets for eating right, losing weight, and being well*.

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