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## **Effectiveness and Safety of Transcutaneous Electrical Cranial-auricular Acupoint Stimulation (TECAS) for Patients with Mild-to-Moderate Depression**

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### **Background:**

In view of traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) and the latest medical literature, acupoints Baihui (DU11) and Yintang (DU13) located on the forehead are suggested as a primary stimulation site for electroacupuncture in treating depression together with ear acupuncture therapy. To this end, we intend to further create a novel and self-administrable non-invasive brain stimulation therapy, namely transcutaneous electrical cranial-auricular acupoint stimulation (TECAS).

### **Objectives:**

This study compares the clinical efficacy and safety of TECAS with the antidepressant Escitalopram in treating mild to moderate depression through a randomized controlled trial.

### **Methods:**

70 patients were randomized into TECAS group (n=35) and antidepressant group (n=35). Both groups received 8-weeks of treatment with a 4-weeks post-treatment follow up. Patients in TECAS group received 30 minutes of stimulation treatment twice a day, once in the morning and once in the evening every day, while those in antidepressant group received 10-20mg q.d. of escitalopram each day.

### **Results:**

Over 60% of the participants in TECAS responded (50% score reduction from baseline) to the treatment and achieved remission (MADRS score of 10 or below) from depression. No significant differences were observed between the groups ( $p>0.05$ ) in all the assessment results. No serious adverse events were observed throughout the study.

### **Conclusions:**

TECAS can significantly reduce depression and anxiety in mild to moderate patients and reduce rumination activities in patients. It also improves their quality of sleep and quality of life. TECAS is an effective treatment for depression with an early-onset similar to escitalopram but with fewer side-effects.

### **Biography**

Yat Kwan graduated from the Beijing University of Chinese Medicine and is a licenced Chinese Medicine practitioner in Hong Kong. She is currently undergoing her PhD studies in the University of Hong Kong. She has a strong background in combining traditional Chinese medicine theories with non-invasive devices to develop novel psychiatric treatments for depression.

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