Reviewer's report

Title: Immediate and Short-term Pain Relief by Acute Sciatic Nerve Press: A Randomized Controlled Trial

Version: 1 Date: 8 January 2007

Reviewer: Laxmaiah Manchikanti

Reviewer's report:

General

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

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Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

ABSTRACT
The authors state Abstracts in the plural. I believe there is only 1 abstract for this article.

Background
1) Page 1, second sentence. This study describes a novel manipulation. This sounds like an advertisement rather than a scientific paper.

The same sentence says “for immediately relieving clinical pain seen in dental and rental patients for short term purposes.”

The word rental should be changed to renal.

Methods
The section should reveal patient recruitment and the type of patients recruited. It may also be worthwhile to define renal patients.

Results
Please see the comments in Methods.

BODY OF TEXT

Background
The authors state that “the time necessary to acquire appropriate pharmaceuticals . . . means hours or days of sustained pain before relief.”

This may be accurate with regards to initial pain but not so if it is chronic, persistent or recurrent pain. In the modern era of over the counter drugs for almost anything, this is not an issue.

“For example, corticosteroids lead to hypertension and psychosis . . .” the authors may be best served to describe simple drugs first. Why would somebody take corticosteroids directly? The side effects also can come from over the counter non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, herbs, etc.

The most common issue with regards to opioids is the dependency and addiction, consequently, withdrawal, etc. That is not mentioned.

Methods
The comment with regards to the study design and procedure obviously relates to the blinding. The provider is not blinded but it appears that patients are. It would be surprising to know that most Chinese don’t know the acupuncture points while at the same time almost everyone knows where the sciatic nerve is located.
People receiving the pressure in the anterior part of the thigh would know that they are in the placebo group.

The authors should explain how this was avoided or if there was a mechanism that they tested prior to enrolling them.

The authors also need to explain the mechanism of pain relief in dental and renal patients with a sciatic press.

Participants
The authors should describe the participants in more detail, what kind of renal pain they were suffering with and why would they had sciatic pain

It appears that the inclusion was only slightly more than 50%. This appears to be an extremely low enrollment proportion considering that this is a non-invasive technique.

Discussion
The authors should clarify various points raised in other sections.

The authors should describe what type of effect this will have on various other types of pain problems.

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions
Level of interest: An article of limited interest
Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published
Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.
Declaration of competing interests:
'I declare that I have no competing interests'