Reviewer’s report

Title: Changes in cytokine production in healthy subjects practicing Guolin Qigong: A pilot study

Authors:

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Reviewer: Dr Yong Ming Li

Level of interest: not specified

Advice on publication: Accept after revision, which I do not need to see

The paper entitled “Changes in cytokine production in healthy subjects practicing Guolin qigong: a pilot study” by Brian Jones presents some interesting information on qigong research, which is an under-studied area in alternative and complementary medicine and certainly deserves more attention of careful experimental research.

As the author pointed out, there are not many peer-reviewed published studies on medical qigong and even fewer in English literature. This study revealed that qigong exercise could alter the some changes of cytokine profile in healthy individuals although the significance of this alternation is sill unknown and no conclusion can be drawn on its medical effects.

This paper can be improved by further addressing the following points:

1. Qigong is a very loosely defined term and there are hundreds of different types of qigong in China. The author did not, however, provide a clear definition of Guolin qigong. It is used to be a popular type of qigong for cancer survivors and what is the major difference of this qigong from other types?

2. Obviously, there are some limitations of this uncontrolled study which was designed to have only self-control with limited power. The individual selection is probably not randomized or truly representative of the healthy population. The limitations of this pilot study should be addressed clearly in both abstract and text.

Overall, this paper provides some interesting information on the effects of qigong on the immune system and should be published with some revision. It is not necessary for me to review the revised version.

Competing interests:

None declared.