Reviewer's report

Title: The influence of a series of five dry cupping treatments on pain and mechanical thresholds in patients with chronic non-specific neck pain - a randomised controlled pilot study

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Reviewer: Jianping Liu

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The study was well designed, data statistical analysis methods were used appropriately, and the interpretation of result was reasonable. In general, the manuscript is of good quality, and the writing is acceptable. It can be accepted by the journal in case following comments have been addressed.

1. In the background (page 4, line 2 and 3), the authors mentioned that cupping therapy is an ancient medical technique of various European and Middle Eastern cultures, however, cupping therapy is also a common traditional therapy in the eastern countries like China, Korea and Japan. The authors stated that cupping therapy vanished in the history for some years, but as far as I know, in China, it never did.

2. In the part of “Statistical Analyses”(page 9), author mentioned that “The intention-to-treat principle was applied in this study”. But in the table 1 and table 2, 22 in WL group and 24 in TG group, since no data was collected in 3 participations in WL group, but 1 in TG group had baseline data. This participation’s data can’t be found in ITT analysis.

3. Regarding the treatment procedures, authors need to mention the qualification of the physicians who performed the cupping treatment, and they also need to justify the five treatment sessions of cupping therapy.

4. As this trial was designed as a pilot study, and the sample size is very small (25 participations in each group). Therefore, the conclusion of the positive findings need to be interpreted with care, and this limitation needs to be addressed. Also the authors need to discuss on whether a further randomized trial is warranted or not, and if so, how the future trials should be designed.

5. Please add legends to each figures.