Reviewer’s report

Title: Pain management with acupuncture in osteoarthritis: A systematic review and meta-analysis

Version: 3 Date: 15 March 2014

Reviewer: Chun-Xiang Su

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The study aims to conduct a systematic review to evaluate the effectiveness and safety of acupuncture on osteoarthritis. This review was conducted according to an a priori published protocol. Generally, the quality of reporting of this review is high. However, there are several minor issues in this review.

1. In result, 2nd paragraph, five trials were considered as low risk for selective outcome reporting. I am not sure how authors made their judgment on low risk of bias on selective outcome reporting.

2. In result-primary outcome-pain Intensity, author reported “we found a significant pain reduction in trials at low risk of bias (MD -0.59, 95%CI -1.18 to -0.00, I2 0%”. 95%CI was between -1.18 and -0.00, this means no significant pain reduction.

3. In discussion, author mentioned that in this review those trials where superficially penetrating needles were used as sham acupuncture and electrical needle stimulation was performed in the treatment arm were excluded. However, author did not describe in the exclusion criteria. It’s better to report in method section of this manuscript, although it was described in the registered protocol.

My decision on this manuscript is: Minor Essential Revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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