Reviewer's report

Title: Acupressure for smoking cessation - a pilot study

Version: Date: 2 11 December 2006

Reviewer: Janneke Kaper

Reviewer's report:

General

Dear Authors and Editor,

Acupressure for smoking cessation is an interesting topic. Whether it is effective or not, remains under debate and methodological good studies are scarce. I enjoyed reading the manuscript, but was a little disappointed about the presentation of the feasibility outcome.

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

For me, the title suggests that the manuscript is about the effectiveness of acupressure but it is about the feasibility of the trial. Therefore the title might be changed in for example: the feasibility of a trial to assess acupressure for smoking cessation.

With NRT and group behavioral therapy, there is little room for improvement. What were the expectations about the effect? And what can be done in future studies to equal the use of NRT and the number of therapy sessions.

The manuscript would benefit from adding a paragraph regarding recommendations for future studies. The manuscript now only demonstrates why this trial is not feasible, but what should be done in the future? The points for improvement in methodology should be made more clear. The methodological consequences of for example an open randomized study instead of a blinded randomized study can be discussed.

Although it is not the aim of the study, it is interesting to look at the effectiveness of the intervention. In the introduction, I interpreted that the effectiveness of the intervention can be up to 72% after 6 months. The effectiveness in this trial is difficult to interpret from the result section. Is it 7 of 19 (37%)after 6 weeks? Can this difference be explained?

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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: background: There is evidence to support the effectiveness of two of these .... This suggests that these are the only two effective treatment methods available.

For future studies: the cut-off point for CO-measurement can probably be lowered. It is even better to use urinary cotinine.

The structure of the results section can be improved.

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)
What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests.