In this manuscript, the authors have conducted a randomized active controlled clinical trial to test the efficacy and safety of acupuncture for participants with mild to moderate Alzheimer's disease. This seemed generally well conducted and this subject is of interest. However, there are some concerns on ethics and scant information on RCT conducted.

Please check your whole manuscript following reporting guideline of CONSORT 2010 [1].


In this reporting guideline, pre-trial registration is important, but your registration was conducted retrospectively [2].


Major Concerns

1. I am not able to agree with your conclusions which contained effective results in improving all aspects of cognitive function, global clinical status, activities of daily life and behavioral symptoms of AD. However your results seemed to support positive results only in cognitive function from ADAS-cog and clinical status from CIBIC-Plus, but not in activities of daily
life from ADCS-ADL23 and behavioral symptoms from NPI. Please change your conclusions based on supportive results.

2. The other issue is ethical one. As a research subjects for AD, as you know, AD patients are vulnerable one because they may not have normal cognitive function or an ability to make a decision by their own. Therefore, in the process of inclusion or the process of receiving written informed consent, a legal guardian who has an alternative right to decide should be involved in those process for being double-checked or protecting human right.

3. For becoming more rigorous RCT,
   - Please supply important time information as when finished ethical approval, when conducted clinical trial (clinical research period), when did you do trial registration, or others.
   - How did you standardize nine acupuncturists?
   - How did you do if when participants have had their own medications before inclusion?
   - How did you do if when participants have changed their medications during the trial?

4. For sample size calculation in page 5
   I am not able to agree with you sample size calculation.
   As your primary outcomes are ADAS-cog and CIBIC-plus, you should determine your sample size based on you primary outcomes. However you calculation was conducted based on MMSE score, which seemed to me make no sense.

5. For Table 1
   - Men plus women (n=79) makes no 87 (total participants).
   - Also all men (n=27) differ from acupuncture (n=12) plus Donepezil (n=14).
   - Please check you whole data from Table 1.

Minor Essential Revisions
1. Abstract
   - Please check your abbreviations in abstract. There were no full name of AG, DG.
2. In introduction, page 2
   - effectiveness, line 58 -> efficacy
   - Please check another related systematic review [1].


3. Please check you typo.
   - Table 1, Donepezi -> Donepezil
   - Table 1, Moderaten -> Moderate
   - ASAS-COG, in Figure 2 -> ADAS-COG

7. Please check abbreviations. Please define it at its first appearance, if defined, please use the defined one.
   - MMSE, ADL in page 3

Thank you.

Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Does the work include the necessary controls?
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

No
Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

I am able to assess the statistics

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

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