Reviewer’s report

Title: Acupuncture Treatment for Carotid Atherosclerotic Plaques: Study Protocol for a Pilot Randomized, Single Blinded, Controlled Clinical Trial

Version: 0 Date: 31 May 2020

Reviewer: Aline Barbosa Ribeiro

Reviewer's report:

In this manuscript, Zhou et al. report that will use Acupuncture treatment for carotid atherosclerotic plaques. However, I have questions and suggestions for revision.

1. Attention to detail with grammar throughout the paper.
2. I think that the author needs to include one more group: TA group (receiving acupuncture and moxibustion therapy) and the medication group (taking aspirin and statins).
3. The author needs to improve in Figure 1.
4. Is important include the informed consent form.
5. "All participants can receive treatment unrelated to atherosclerotic disease." Please explain in the METHODS section.
6. There is a need for greater control over the severity of the disease to ensure that all patients have the same degree of seriousness.
7. Specifics points:
Correct: on a voluntary basis to voluntarily, in line 31. The treatment will last for 12 weeks, with 2 treatments. Consider adding a comma (after weeks) and spelling out the number (2). This trail to trial, in line 41. Arteritis to arthritis, in line 57. metabolic diseases to metabolic disorders, line 58. highest morbidity to highest morbidities, line 67. Remains to remain, line 70. aspirin, combined with statins, can reduce.. Consider adding a comma, line 76. not good to not suitable, line 80. Stenosis to stenoses, line 84. As an adjuvant to as adjuvant, line 104. than 5 plaques; spelling out the number, line 121. than 5 plaques; spelling out the number, line 131. have serious adverse to have severe adverse, line 143. on a voluntary basis to voluntarily, line 154. 2 week to two weeks …spelling out the number and plural; line 169. a tiny to a little, line 234. Detailed to individual situations, line 244. On carotid to on the carotid, line 302. least 1 treatment to least one treatment, line 361.
course of the disease, line 368.
Trial, remove the, line 383.
both the ethics, include the article, line 386.
provide 3 months, spelling out the number, line 395.
The formation and rupture of carotid atherosclerotic plaque ARE; correct, line 413.
the way in which to how.

Level of interest
Please indicate how interesting you found the manuscript:

An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

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

Needs some language corrections before being published

Quality of figures
All images and figures within the manuscript should be genuine i.e. without evidence of manipulation. No specific feature within an image may be enhanced, obscured, moved, removed, or introduced. If you have concerns about the veracity of the figures you should choose the first option below.

Statistical review
Is it essential that this manuscript is seen by an expert statistician? If so, please give your reasons in your report.

Declaration of competing interests
Please complete a declaration of competing interests, considering the following questions:

1. Have you in the past five years received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

2. Do you hold any stocks or shares in an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

3. Do you hold or are you currently applying for any patents relating to the content of the manuscript?
4. Have you received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organization that holds or has applied for patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

5. Do you have any other financial competing interests?

6. Do you have any non-financial competing interests in relation to this paper?

If you can answer no to all of the above, write 'I declare that I have no competing interests' below. If your reply is yes to any, please give details below.

I declare that I have no competing interests.

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal. I understand that my name will be included on my report to the authors and, if the manuscript is accepted for publication, my named report including any attachments I upload will be posted on the website along with the authors' responses. I agree for my report to be made available under an Open Access Creative Commons CC-BY license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/). I understand that any comments which I do not wish to be included in my named report can be included as confidential comments to the editors, which will not be published.

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal

Were you mentored through this peer review?

No