Healthcare professionals’ attitudes towards acupuncture: an analysis of barriers and enablers to its integration

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Australian doctors and nurses or midwives’ attitudes and perceptions of acupuncture and acupressure practice in Perioperative Care - National Survey

Figure 1. Matthews (2017), http://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-4274898/Ditch-paracetamol-try-ACUPUNCTURE.html.

Figure 2. “Acupressure”, n.d. https://fullbodybalancing.com/acupressure-5-benefits-health/
Definition of terms

• Acupuncture: needles

• Acupressure: pressure

• Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM)
  – broad set of health care practices ≠ conventional medicine
Side Effects after operations/GA

![Figure 3. Gayer (2014), http://www.outpatientsurgery.net/guides/ambulatory-anesthesia/2014/images/9_prevention.jpg](image3)

PONV
(Post Operative Nausea and Vomiting)

![Figure 4. "Boy in hospital bed" (2016), http://www.med.uio.no/helsam/english/research/projects/pediatric-pain-management-practices-postoperative/](image4)

Pain
Aims and Study Design

**Aim 1**
Purposive literature review to identify key themes associated with barriers, enablers and acceptance of acupuncture use in perioperative care

**Study 1**
Literature Review

**Aim 2**
Examine the beliefs, attitudes, perceptions, clinical use, knowledges and perceptions of Australian doctors and nurses toward the use of acupuncture and acupressure in perioperative care

**Study 2**
National Survey

**Aim 3**
Identify any potential barriers that may impact on the implementation of the use of acupuncture / acupressure in perioperative care

**Further analysis of Study 2**
Why examine attitudes?

- Proven Effectiveness

Cochrane review: compared PC 6 stimulation with sham treatment → PC6 acupoint stimulation significantly ↓ the incidence of nausea, vomiting and the need for rescue antiemetics (Lee, Chan & Fan, 2015).

Acupuncture (Level I), specifically auricular acupuncture (Level I [PRISMA] ↓ postoperative pain, opioid requirements as well as opioid-related adverse effects compare to a variety of controls (Schug et al., 2015).
Why examine attitudes? (Continued)

- **Attitudes of physicians – 80% considered it is effective & safe**
- Current literature focuses on CAM in general
- High referral rate of acupuncture
  - **Australia:** 70-80% (Easthope et al., 2000; Wardle et al., 2013)
  - **International:** 50-94% (Chen et al., 2010)
To explore the attitudes and perceptions of acupuncture use in peri-operative care

Integrative Review

- Broadest type of research review method inclusion of experimental and non-experimental research
- Study selection - Purposive sampling
- PRISMA flowchart of study selection process followed - 12 studies selected
PRISMA Flowchart

Identification

Records identified through database searching (PubMed, CINAHL, AMED, EMBASE, Cochrane Library & SCOPUS) (n = 512)

Additional records identified through other sources (analysis of reference lists of retrieved articles, internet searching) (n = 0)

Records after duplicates removed (n = 488)

Records screened (n = 488)

Full-text articles assessed for eligibility (n = 15)

Records excluded with reasons: (n = 473)
- focused on CAM
- ratings of effectiveness of CAM
- patients' perception of CAM
- clinical interventions
- health professionals' attitudes on clinical studies
- not written in English
- Full text not available

Full-text articles excluded, with reasons (n = 3)
- anecdote
- commentary

Studies included in qualitative synthesis (n = 2)

Studies included in quantitative synthesis (n = 10)
Literature Review Findings

- **Perceptions and attitudes**

  - Overall positive attitudes and perception among surveyed health care professionals despite low knowledge of and exposure to acupuncture.


- **Who referred patients and to whom**

  GPs, Age groups, Sex
Barriers and enablers of integrating acupuncture into conventional medicine (Manias et al, 2015)

Three themes identified

- Intrapersonal
- Interpersonal
- Environmental & External
Findings (Continued)

1. **Intrapersonal** barriers +/- enablers
   - Knowledge of and exposure to acupuncture
   - Personal use
   - Prior positive experiences
   - Prescribed CAM previously and comfortable with referral to acupuncture
   - Belief in the efficacy of acupuncture
   - Perceived lack of evidence
   - Scepticism and Prejudice
Findings (Continued)

2. **Interpersonal** barriers +/- enablers
   - Patients’ own request
   - Number of patients asking about acupuncture
   - Using CAM practitioners for source of information
   - Direct interactions with the acupuncturists to build trust
   - Patient feedback and refusal
   - Different medical paradigms of Western Medicine and Traditional Chinese Medicine
Findings (Continued)

3. **Environmental/External** barriers +/- enablers
   - Lack of options
   - Side effects from conventional therapies
   - Availability of credentialed providers
   - Difficulty in finding a practitioner
   - Lack of reimbursement & insurance coverage
   - Lack of regulation
   - Logistical (facility, issues with administration such as frequency, timing, length of time, hospital setting, body parts, number of needles)
Limitations of prior research: areas to further explore

• Low response rate associated with large online studies

• Bias with regional/small number of participants/single site study
  – limits the generalisability of results

• Cultural diversity and geographical differences

• Missing data from nurses!!!
Implications for future clinical practice

• Change in patient and societal interest in CAM.

• Healthcare professionals must be well informed about acupuncture and the potential benefits and limitation.

• Attitudes are important to this integration. Knowledge shapes attitudes.

• Education is the key!!!
Overcoming Barriers

Figure 2: A conceptual framework for translating evidence into practice adapted from Gonales et al (2012)
Key Points

• The national survey (Study 2) focuses on the GAP between translating evidence into practice

• Participants including nurses/midwives (whom spend most of our time with our patients during their hospitalization!!!)

• First nationwide survey in Australia

• Willingness of receiving further education has been included in the survey questionnaire.

• Provide the foundation for further studies
“Innovation is taking two things that already exist and putting them together in a new way.”

Tom Freston
References


References (Continued)


Thank you