**Appendix S1. Trial level information and patient level information where analysed**.

| **Pain Type** | **Trial** | **Patient counts for those included in primary analysis** | **Result reported by author** |
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| **Chronic headache/migraine (n=6)** |
| Migraine n=2 | Linde 2005[1](#_ENREF_1) | **Total n=272****Acupuncture n=132****Sham** Penetrating needle **n=76****No acupuncture control**  Usual care **n=64** | **Difference between groups** **Acupuncture vs. sham: 0.0 (95% CI -0.7, 0.7) p>0.9** **Acupuncture vs no acupuncture control: 1.4 (95% CI 0.8, 2.1) p<0.001****Style of acupuncture: Combination of traditional Chinese and Western** **Point Prescription: Flexible Formula****Location of Needles: Both Local and Distal Points****Electrical stimulation allowed: No****Manual stimulation allowed: Yes****Moxibustion allowed: No****De Qi elicited: Yes****Acupuncture-specific patient practitioner interactions: No****Minimum years of experience required: 3****Maximum number of sessions: 12****Frequency of sessions: 1.5****Duration of sessions: 29****Number of needles used: 17** |
|  | Diener 2006[2](#_ENREF_2) | **Total n=794a** **Acupuncture n=290** **Sham** Penetrating needle **n=317** **No acupuncture control**  Guidelined care **n=187**  | **Difference between groups** **Acupuncture vs. sham: 0.57 (0.09, 1.05) p=0.021** **Acupuncture vs no acupuncture control: 0.50 (95% CI -0.06, 1.05) p=0.4****Style of acupuncture: Traditional Chinese****Point Prescription: Flexible Formula****Location of Needles: Both Local and Distal Points****Electrical stimulation allowed: No****Manual stimulation allowed: Yes****Moxibustion allowed: No****De Qi elicited: Yes****Acupuncture-specific patient practitioner interactions: No****Minimum years of experience required: 2****Maximum number of sessions: 10****Frequency of sessions: 2****Duration of sessions: 32 (patient level data analysed)****Number of needles used: 16 (patient level data analysed)** |
| Tension-type headache n=2 | Melchart 2005[3](#_ENREF_3) | **Total n=238****Acupuncture n=118****Sham**  Penetrating needle  **n=57****No acupuncture control**  Usual care **n=63** | **Difference between groups** **Acupuncture vs. sham: 0.06 (-1.2, 2.4) p=0.5** **Acupuncture vs no acupuncture control: 5.8 (95% CI 4.0, 7.6) p<0.001****Difference between groups** **Acupuncture vs. sham: 0.57 (0.09, 1.05) p=0.021** **Acupuncture vs no acupuncture control: 0.50 (95% CI -0.06, 1.05) p=0.4****Style of acupuncture: Combination of traditional Chinese and Western****Point Prescription: Flexible Formula****Location of Needles: Both Local and Distal Points****Electrical stimulation allowed: No****Manual stimulation allowed: Yes****Moxibustion allowed: No****De Qi elicited: Yes****Acupuncture-specific patient practitioner interactions: No****Minimum years of experience required: 3****Maximum number of sessions: 12****Frequency of sessions: 1.5****Duration of sessions: 30****Number of needles used: 15** |
|  | Endres 2007[4](#_ENREF_4) | **Total n=398****Acupuncture n=204****Sham**  Penetrating needle  **n=194** | **Difference between groups** **Acupuncture vs. sham: 1.94 (95% CI 0.69, 3.18) p=0.002****Style of acupuncture: Traditional Chinese****Point Prescription: Flexible Formula****Location of Needles: Both Local and Distal Points****Electrical stimulation allowed: No****Manual stimulation allowed: Yes****Moxibustion allowed: No****De Qi elicited: Yes****Acupuncture-specific patient practitioner interactions: No****Minimum years of experience required: None****Minimum years of experience required: 0****Maximum number of sessions: 10****Frequency of sessions: 2****Duration of sessions: 32****Number of needles used: 16** |
| Both migraine and headachen=2 | Vickers 2004[5](#_ENREF_5) | **Total n=301** **Acupuncture n=161****No acupuncture control**  Usual care **n=140** | **Difference between groups** **Acupuncture vs no acupuncture control: 4.6 (95% CI 2.2, 7.0) p=0.0002****Style of acupuncture: Traditional Chinese****Point Prescription: Fully Individualized****Location of Needles: Both Local and Distal Points****Electrical stimulation allowed: No****Manual stimulation allowed: Yes****Moxibustion allowed: Yes****De Qi elicited: Yes****Acupuncture-specific patient practitioner interactions: Yes****Minimum years of experience required: None****Minimum years of experience required: 0****Maximum number of sessions: 24 (patient level data analysed)****Frequency of sessions: 1****Duration of sessions: 30****Number of needles used: Not Provided** |

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| **Pain Type** | **Trial** | **Patient counts for those included in primary analysis** | **Result reported by author**  |
|  | Jena 2008[6](#_ENREF_6) | **Total n=2871b****Acupuncture n=1447****No acupuncture control**  Usual care **n=1424** | **Difference between groups** **Acupuncture vs no acupuncture control:** 27.9 (95% CI 25.1, 30.6) p<0.001**Style of acupuncture: Combination of traditional Chinese and Western****Point Prescription: Fully Individualized****Location of Needles: Both Local and Distal Points****Electrical stimulation allowed: No****Manual stimulation allowed: Yes****Moxibustion allowed: No****De Qi elicited: Not Provided****Acupuncture-specific patient practitioner interactions: Yes****Minimum years of experience required: None****Minimum years of experience required: 0****Age of acupuncturists: Yes (patient level data analysed)****Sex of acupuncturists: Yes (patient level data analysed)****Maximum number of sessions: 30 (patient level data analysed)****Frequency of sessions: 1****Duration of sessions: Not Provided****Number of needles used: Not Provided** |

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| **Pain Type** | **Trial** | **Patient counts for those included in primary analysis** | **Result reported by author**  |
| **Non-specific Musculoskeletal****n=13** |
| Back n=8 | Carlsson 2001[7](#_ENREF_7) | **Total n=27****Acupuncture n=21****Sham** Non-needle **n=6** | **Difference between groups** **Acupuncture vs. sham**:  Morning VAS: p=0.13 (no estimate given) Night VAS: p=0.056 (no estimate given)**Style of acupuncture: Combination of traditional Chinese and Western****Point Prescription: Flexible Formula****Location of Needles: Both Local and Distal Points****Electrical stimulation allowed: Yes****Manual stimulation allowed: Yes****Moxibustion allowed: No****De Qi elicited: Yes****Acupuncture-specific patient practitioner interactions: No****Minimum years of experience required: 5****Maximum number of sessions: 10****Frequency of sessions: 1****Duration of sessions: 20****Number of needles used: 16** |
|  | Cherkin 2001[8](#_ENREF_8) | **Total n=172d****Acupuncture n=89****No acupuncture control**  Non-specific advice **n=83** | **Difference between groups** **Acupuncture vs no acupuncture control:** adjusted p=0.75 (no estimate given)**Style of acupuncture: Traditional Chinese****Point Prescription: Fully Individualized****Location of Needles: Both Local and Distal Points****Electrical stimulation allowed: Yes****Manual stimulation allowed: Yes****Moxibustion allowed: Yes****De Qi elicited: Yes****Acupuncture-specific patient practitioner interactions: Yes****Minimum years of experience required: 3****Maximum number of sessions: 10****Frequency of sessions: 1.5****Duration of sessions: 28****Number of needles used: 12** |
|  | Kerr 2003[9](#_ENREF_9) | **Total n=46** **Acupuncture n=26****Sham**  Non-needle **n=20** | **Difference between groups** **Acupuncture vs. sham**: p=0.2 (no estimate given)**Style of acupuncture: Western****Point Prescription: Fixed Formula****Location of Needles: Both Local and Distal Points****Electrical stimulation allowed: No****Manual stimulation allowed: Yes****Moxibustion allowed: No****De Qi elicited: Yes****Acupuncture-specific patient practitioner interactions: Yes****Minimum years of experience required: None****Minimum years of experience required: 0****Maximum number of sessions: 6****Frequency of sessions: 1****Duration of sessions: 30****Number of needles used: 11** |
|  | Brinkhaus 2006[10](#_ENREF_10) | **Total n=284****Acupuncture n=140****Sham**  Penetrating needle **n=70****No acupuncture control**  Usual care **n=74** | **Difference between groups**  **Acupuncture vs. sham**: 5.1 (95% CI −3.7, 13.9) p=0.3 **Acupuncture vs no acupuncture control:** 21.7 (95% CI 13.9, 30.0) p<0.001**Style of acupuncture: Traditional Chinese****Point Prescription: Flexible Formula****Location of Needles: Both Local and Distal Points****Electrical stimulation allowed: No****Manual stimulation allowed: Yes****Moxibustion allowed: No****De Qi elicited: Yes****Acupuncture-specific patient practitioner interactions: Yes****Minimum years of experience required: 3****Age of acupuncturists: Yes (patient level data analysed)****Sex of acupuncturists: Yes (patient level data analysed)****Maximum number of sessions: 12 (patient level data analysed)****Frequency of sessions: 1.5****Duration of sessions: 28 (patient level data analysed)****Number of needles used: 17 (patient level data analysed)** |
|  | Thomas 2006[11](#_ENREF_11) | **Total n=182****Acupuncture n=123****No acupuncture control**  Usual care **n=59** | **Difference between groups** **Acupuncture vs no acupuncture control:** 8.0 (95% CI 2.8, 13.2) p=0.003**Style of acupuncture: Traditional Chinese****Point Prescription: Fully Individualized****Location of Needles: Both Local and Distal Points****Electrical stimulation allowed: Yes****Manual stimulation allowed: Yes****Moxibustion allowed: Yes****De Qi elicited: Yes****Acupuncture-specific patient practitioner interactions: Yes****Minimum years of experience required: 3****Maximum number of sessions: 10****Frequency of sessions: 1****Duration of sessions: 25****Number of needles used: 10** |
|  | Witt 2006[12](#_ENREF_12) | **Total n=2594b****Acupuncture n=1350****No acupuncture control**  Usual care **n=1244** | **Difference between groups**  **Acupuncture vs no acupuncture control:** 9.4 (95% CI 8.3, 10.5) p<0.001**Style of acupuncture: Combination of traditional Chinese and Western****Point Prescription: Fully Individualized****Location of Needles: Both Local and Distal Points****Electrical stimulation allowed: No****Manual stimulation allowed: Yes****Moxibustion allowed: No****De Qi elicited: Not Provided****Acupuncture-specific patient practitioner interactions: Yes****Minimum years of experience required: None****Minimum years of experience required: 0****Age of acupuncturists: Yes (patient level data analysed)****Sex of acupuncturists: Yes (patient level data analysed)****Maximum number of sessions: 25 (patient level data analysed)****Frequency of sessions: 1****Duration of sessions: Not Provided****Number of needles used: Not Provided** |

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| **Pain Type** | **Trial** | **Patient counts for those included in primary analysis** | **Result reported by author**  |
|  | Haake 2007[13](#_ENREF_13) | **Total n=1117**e**Acupuncture n=377****Sham** Penetrating needle  **n=376****No acupuncture control**  Guidelined care **n=364** | **Difference between groups in treatment success h** **Acupuncture vs. no acupuncture control:** 20.2% (95% CI 13.4%, 26.7%) p<.001 **Acupuncture vs. sham:** 3.4% (95% CI −3.7%, 10.3%) p=0.4**Style of acupuncture: Traditional Chinese****Point Prescription: Flexible Formula****Location of Needles: Both Local and Distal Points****Electrical stimulation allowed: No****Manual stimulation allowed: Yes****Moxibustion allowed: No****De Qi elicited: Yes****Acupuncture-specific patient practitioner interactions: No****Minimum years of experience required: 2****Maximum number of sessions: 10****Frequency of sessions: 2****Duration of sessions: 32 (patient level data analysed)****Number of needles used: 16 (patient level data analysed)** |
|  | Kennedy 2008[14](#_ENREF_14) | **Total n=40****Acupuncture n=22****Sham** Needle, non-penetrating **n=18** | **Difference between groups** **Acupuncture vs. sham**: 2.6 (95% CI −0.7, 5.9) p= 0.12**Style of acupuncture: Western****Point Prescription: Flexible Formula****Location of Needles: Both Local and Distal Points****Electrical stimulation allowed: No****Manual stimulation allowed: Yes****Moxibustion allowed: No****De Qi elicited: Yes****Acupuncture-specific patient practitioner interactions: No****Minimum years of experience required: 10****Maximum number of sessions: 12****Frequency of sessions: 1.5****Duration of sessions: 30****Number of needles used: 11** |
| **Neck n=5** | Irnich 2001[15](#_ENREF_15) | **Total n=108** **Acupuncture n=51****Sham** Non-needle **n=57** | **Difference between groups**  **Acupuncture vs. sham**: 6.9 (-5.0, 18.9 ) p=0.3**Style of acupuncture: Combination of traditional Chinese and Western****Point Prescription: Fully Individualized****Location of Needles: Both Local and Distal Points****Electrical stimulation allowed: No****Manual stimulation allowed: Yes****Moxibustion allowed: No****De Qi elicited: Yes****Acupuncture-specific patient practitioner interactions: No****Minimum years of experience required: None****Minimum years of experience required: 0****Maximum number of sessions: 5****Frequency of sessions: 2****Duration of sessions: 30****Number of needles used: 9** |
|  | White 2004[16](#_ENREF_16) | **Total n=124 f****Acupuncture n=63****Sham** Non-needle **n=61** | **Difference between groups** **Acupuncture vs. sham:** 6.3 (95% CI 1.4, 11.3) p =0.012**Style of acupuncture: Western****Point Prescription: Flexible Formula****Location of Needles: Both Local and Distal Points****Electrical stimulation allowed: No****Manual stimulation allowed: Yes****Moxibustion allowed: No****De Qi elicited: Yes****Acupuncture-specific patient practitioner interactions: No****Minimum years of experience required: 5****Maximum number of sessions: 8****Frequency of sessions: 2****Duration of sessions: 30****Number of needles used: 6** |
|  | Salter 2006[17](#_ENREF_17) | **Total n=21****Acupuncture n=9****No acupuncture control**  Usual care **n=12** | **Difference between groups** **Acupuncture vs. no acupuncture control:** 1.75 (no confidence interval given) p = 0.8**Style of acupuncture: Traditional Chinese****Point Prescription: Fully Individualized****Location of Needles: Both Local and Distal Points****Electrical stimulation allowed: Yes****Manual stimulation allowed: Yes****Moxibustion allowed: Yes****De Qi elicited: Yes****Acupuncture-specific patient practitioner interactions: Yes****Minimum years of experience required: 3****Maximum number of sessions: 10****Frequency of sessions: 1****Duration of sessions: 25****Number of needles used: 13** |
|  | Vas 2006[18](#_ENREF_18) | **Total n=123c****Acupuncture n=61****Sham**  Non-needle **n=62** | **Difference between groups** **Acupuncture vs. sham**: 28.1 (95% CI 21.4, 34.7) p<0.001**Style of acupuncture: Traditional Chinese****Point Prescription: Flexible Formula****Location of Needles: Both Local and Distal Points****Electrical stimulation allowed: No****Manual stimulation allowed: Yes****Moxibustion allowed: No****De Qi elicited: Yes****Acupuncture-specific patient practitioner interactions: No****Minimum years of experience required: 3****Maximum number of sessions: 5****Frequency of sessions: 1.5****Duration of sessions: 30****Number of needles used: 10** |
|  | Witt 2006[19](#_ENREF_19) | **Total n=3162b****Acupuncture n=1618****No acupuncture control**  Usual care **n=1544** | **Difference between groups** **Acupuncture vs no acupuncture control:** 12.3 (95% CI 11.3, 13.3) p < 0.001**Style of acupuncture: Combination of traditional Chinese and Western****Point Prescription: Fully Individualized****Location of Needles: Both Local and Distal Points****Electrical stimulation allowed: No****Manual stimulation allowed: Yes****Moxibustion allowed: No****De Qi elicited: Not Provided****Acupuncture-specific patient practitioner interactions: Yes****Minimum years of experience required: None****Minimum years of experience required: 0****Age of acupuncturists: Yes (patient level data analysed)****Sex of acupuncturists: Yes (patient level data analysed)****Maximum number of sessions: 30 (patient level data analysed)****Frequency of sessions: 1****Duration of sessions: Not Provided****Number of needles used: Not Provided** |

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| **Pain Type** | **Trial** | **Patient counts for those included in primary analysis** | **Result reported by author**  |
| **Osteoarthritis****n=7** |
|  | Berman 2004[20](#_ENREF_20) | **Total n=391****Acupuncture n=142****Sham**Both penetrating and non-penetrating needles **n=141****No acupuncture control**  Non-specific advice **n=108** | **Difference between groups** **Acupuncture vs. sham**: 0.87 (95% CI 0.16, 1.58) p=0.003 **Acupuncture vs no acupuncture control:** (not given)**Style of acupuncture: Traditional Chinese****Point Prescription: Fixed Formula****Location of Needles: Both Local and Distal Points****Electrical stimulation allowed: Yes****Manual stimulation allowed: Yes****Moxibustion allowed: No****De Qi elicited: Yes****Acupuncture-specific patient practitioner interactions: No****Minimum years of experience required: 2****Maximum number of sessions: 23****Frequency of sessions: .88****Duration of sessions: 20****Number of needles used: 11** |
|  | Vas 2004[21](#_ENREF_21) | **Total n=88****Acupuncture n=47****Sham**  Non-penetrating needle  **n=41** | **Difference between groups** **Acupuncture vs. sham**: 4.7 (95% CI 2.9, 6.5) p<0.001**Style of acupuncture: Traditional Chinese****Point Prescription: Flexible Formula****Location of Needles: Both Local and Distal Points****Electrical stimulation allowed: Yes****Manual stimulation allowed: Yes****Moxibustion allowed: No****De Qi elicited: Yes****Acupuncture-specific patient practitioner interactions: No****Minimum years of experience required: 3****Maximum number of sessions: 13****Frequency of sessions: 1****Duration of sessions: 30****Number of needles used: 8** |
|  | Witt 2005[22](#_ENREF_22) | **Total n=286****Acupuncture n=145****Sham** Penetrating needle  **n=73****No acupuncture control**  Usual care **n=67** | **Difference between groups** **Acupuncture vs. sham**: 8.8 (95% CI 4.2, 13.5) p<0.001 **Acupuncture vs no acupuncture control:** 22.7 (95% CI 17.9, 27.5) p<0.001**Style of acupuncture: Combination of traditional Chinese and Western****Point Prescription: Flexible Formula****Location of Needles: Both Local and Distal Points****Electrical stimulation allowed: No****Manual stimulation allowed: Yes****Moxibustion allowed: No****De Qi elicited: Yes****Acupuncture-specific patient practitioner interactions: Yes****Minimum years of experience required: 3****Age of acupuncturists: Yes (patient level data analysed)****Sex of acupuncturists: Yes (patient level data analysed)****Maximum number of sessions: 12 (patient level data analysed)****Frequency of sessions: 1.5****Duration of sessions: 29 (patient level data analysed)****Number of needles used: 17 (patient level data analysed)** |
|  | Scharf 2006[23](#_ENREF_23) | **Total n=1085b****Acupuncture n=318****Sham**  Penetrating needle **n=360****No acupuncture control**  Ancillary care **n=307** | **Difference between groups** **Acupuncture vs sham:** 0.3 (95% CI -0.05, 0.59) (no p value given) **Acupuncture vs no acupuncture control:** 1.0 (95% CI 0.71, 1.38) (no p value given)**Style of acupuncture: Traditional Chinese****Point Prescription: Flexible Formula****Location of Needles: Both Local and Distal Points****Electrical stimulation allowed: No****Manual stimulation allowed: Yes****Moxibustion allowed: No****De Qi elicited: Yes****Acupuncture-specific patient practitioner interactions: No****Minimum years of experience required: 2****Maximum number of sessions: 10****Frequency of sessions: 1.67****Duration of sessions: 30 (patient level data analysed)****Number of needles used: 13 (patient level data analysed)** |
|  | Witt 2006[24](#_ENREF_24) | **Total n=579b****Acupuncture n=300****No acupuncture control**  Usual care **n=279** | **Difference between groups**  **Acupuncture vs no acupuncture control:** 16.7 (SEM 1.4) p<0.001 **Style of acupuncture: Combination of traditional Chinese and Western****Point Prescription: Fully Individualized****Location of Needles: Both Local and Distal Points****Electrical stimulation allowed: No****Manual stimulation allowed: Yes****Moxibustion allowed: No****De Qi elicited: Not Provided****Acupuncture-specific patient practitioner interactions: Yes****Minimum years of experience required: None****Minimum years of experience required: 0****Age of acupuncturists: Yes (patient level data analysed)****Sex of acupuncturists: Yes (patient level data analysed)****Maximum number of sessions: 15 (patient level data analysed)****Frequency of sessions: 1****Duration of sessions: Not Provided****Number of needles used: Not Provided** |
|  | Foster 2007[25](#_ENREF_25) | **Total n=325** **Acupuncture n=108****Sham** Non-penetrating needle **n=112****No acupuncture control**  Ancillary care **n=105** | **Difference between groups** **Acupuncture vs sham:** (not given) **Acupuncture vs no acupuncture control:** 0.08 (95% CI −1.0, 0.9) p= 0.9 **Style of acupuncture: Traditional Chinese****Point Prescription: Flexible Formula****Location of Needles: Both Local and Distal Points****Electrical stimulation allowed: No****Manual stimulation allowed: Yes****Moxibustion allowed: No****De Qi elicited: Yes****Acupuncture-specific patient practitioner interactions: Yes****Minimum years of experience required: None****Minimum years of experience required: 0****Maximum number of sessions: 9 (patient level data analysed)****Frequency of sessions: 1****Duration of sessions: 30****Number of needles used: 8** |

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| **Pain Type** | **Trial** | **Patient counts for those included in primary analysis** | **Result reported by author**  |
|  | Williamson 2007[26](#_ENREF_26) | **Total n=121c****Acupuncture n=60** **No acupuncture control**  Non-specific advice **n=61** | **Difference between groups**  **Acupuncture vs no acupuncture control**: 3.5 (95% CI 0.66, 6.33) Bonferroni p=0.016**Style of acupuncture: Western****Point Prescription: Flexible Formula****Location of Needles: Both Local and Distal Points****Electrical stimulation allowed: No****Manual stimulation allowed: Yes****Moxibustion allowed: No****De Qi elicited: Yes****Acupuncture-specific patient practitioner interactions: No****Minimum years of experience required: None****Minimum years of experience required: 0****Maximum number of sessions: 6****Frequency of sessions: 1****Duration of sessions: 20****Number of needles used: 9** |

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| **Pain Type** | **Trial** | **Patient counts for those included in primary analysis** | **Result reported by author**  |
| **Specific shoulder (n=3)** |
|  | Kleinhenz 1999[27](#_ENREF_27) | **Total n=45****Acupuncture n=22****Sham**  Non-penetrating needle  **n=23** | **Difference between groups**  **Acupuncture vs. sham**: (no estimate given) (95% CI 2.3, 19.4) p=0.001**Style of acupuncture: Traditional Chinese****Point Prescription: Flexible Formula****Location of Needles: Both Local and Distal Points****Electrical stimulation allowed: No****Manual stimulation allowed: Yes****Moxibustion allowed: No****De Qi elicited: Yes****Acupuncture-specific patient practitioner interactions: No****Minimum years of experience required: None****Minimum years of experience required: 0****Maximum number of sessions: 8****Frequency of sessions: 2****Duration of sessions: 20****Number of needles used: 10** |
|  | Guerra de Hoyos 2004[28](#_ENREF_28) | **Total n=110** **Acupuncture n=55****Sham**  Non-penetrating needle  **n=55** | **Difference between groups**  **Acupuncture vs. sham**: 2.0 (95% CI 1.2, 2.9) p<0.0005**Style of acupuncture: Traditional Chinese****Point Prescription: Fixed Formula****Location of Needles: Both Local and Distal Points****Electrical stimulation allowed: Yes****Manual stimulation allowed: Yes****Moxibustion allowed: No****De Qi elicited: Yes****Acupuncture-specific patient practitioner interactions: No****Minimum years of experience required: None****Minimum years of experience required: 0****Maximum number of sessions: 7****Frequency of sessions: 1****Duration of sessions: 15****Number of needles used: 7** |
|  | Vas 2008[29](#_ENREF_29) | **Total n=425c****Acupuncture n=205****Sham**  Non-needle **n=220** | **Difference between groups**  **Acupuncture vs. sham**:6.0 (95% CI 3.2, 8.8) p<0.001**Style of acupuncture: Traditional Chinese****Point Prescription: Fixed Formula****Location of Needles: Distal Points Only****Electrical stimulation allowed: No****Manual stimulation allowed: Yes****Moxibustion allowed: No****De Qi elicited: Yes****Acupuncture-specific patient practitioner interactions: No****Minimum years of experience required: .5****Maximum number of sessions: 3****Frequency of sessions: 1****Duration of sessions: 30****Number of needles used: 1** |

**Notes**

Ancillary care: Programme of care received by both acupuncture and non-acupuncture groups (e.g. trial comparing physiotherapy plus acupuncture to physiotherapy alone).

Usual care: Protocol did not specify treatments received in control group (e.g. trials with “waiting list controls”).

Non-specific advice: Patients in control group receive general advice and support (“attention control”).

Guidelined care: Patients in control group received care according to national guidelines.

a These differ from the patient counts in the forest plot of the primary research30. Authors confirmed this was an error on their part and have published an *erratum*.

b Patient counts lower in the forest plots of the primary research30 due to missing baseline scores for some patients.

c Patient counts lower in the forest plots of the primary research30 as number reported in paper includes imputed data.

d One person in the no acupuncture control group was missing Roland Morris Disability Questionnaire data but this was not reported in the paper

e Lower patient counts in our analyses of the primary research30 are due to missing randomization stratification variables: baseline Von Korff, chronification, fear avoidance belief, levels of activity, patient expectations,

 or trial center.

f We averaged weeks 4, 5, & 6 to get a 1 month score.

g These numbers were taken from data provided, can only be estimated from what is given in the paper

h Values are given as percentage of patients (95% confidence interval). Success was defined as 33% improvement or better on 3 pain-related items on the CPGS.

i Pain relief >= 50%

j We combine the individualized and standardized acupuncture estimates in our analyses.

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