

# ACUPUNCTURE IN COMBINATION WITH AN ORTHOPAEDIC STANDARDTHERAPY FOR CHRONIC LOW BACK PAIN – A RANDOMIZED, MONOCENTRE, CONTROLLED AND BLINDED TRIAL WITH 3-MONTH AND 9-YEAR-FOLLOW-UP

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## **Abstract**

### **Background**

We undertook a clinical trial to compare the effectiveness of verum acupuncture with conservative conventional orthopaedic treatment in pain management of chronic low back pain. We were focusing our interest especially on the long term results three months after completing the therapy. All results were controlled by a sham acupuncture group.

### **Methods**

186 in-patients of a low back pain rehabilitation centre were randomised into three parallel groups and received a 4 week treatment of: group 1: high-level-verum acupuncture and orthopaedic standardtherapy (Verum + OST); group 2: unspecific needling and orthopaedic standardtherapy (Sham + OST); OST alone (Nil + OST). Verum and sham acupuncture were patient and observer blinded. The primary endpoint was a pain reduction on the VAS  $\geq 50\%$  three months after the end of the treatment protocol.

### **Results**

for the primary endpoint are: Verum + OST 77 % (95 % CI 62 - 88 %), Sham + OST 29 % (95 % CI 16 - 46 %), Nil + OST 14 % (95 % CI 4 - 30 %) - effects are significant for Verum + OST over Sham + OST ( $p < 0.001$ ) and for Verum + OST over Nil + OST ( $p < 0.001$ ). Nine years after the end of the clinical part of

the trial (2005), we made a follow-up via telephone to control the postulated blinding and correctness of using acupuncture. We don't find any signs for misconceived blinding or incorrectness of using acupuncture.

**Conclusion**

to these two studies: the combination of conservative orthopaedic standard therapy and high-level-Chinese acupuncture improves the pain management for low back pain.