

POSTER PRESENTATION

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P02.69. Self administered acupuncture for treatment of chemotherapy associated nausea: a pilot study

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Purpose

Acupuncture has gained popularity since the National Institutes of Health 1997 Consensus Statement concluded that acupuncture is an effective anti-emetic for adult post-operative and chemotherapy-induced nausea and vomiting. The most commonly used acupuncture point to control nausea and vomiting is the Pericardium 6 (P6), or Neiguan point. Some evidence suggests that the anti-emetic effects of P6 stimulation by acupuncture on chemotherapy-induced nausea and vomiting may last about eight hours. Most patients do not have access to a trained acupuncturist at such intervals. The purpose of this pilot study was to learn whether: 1) patients can be taught safe self-administration of acupuncture at P6 during cycles of their chemotherapy regimen and 2) self administered acupuncture reduces the severity of chemotherapy associated nausea and reduces use of anti-nausea medications.

Methods

Twenty patients with chemotherapy associated nausea were recruited from Huntsman Cancer Hospital. Patients were randomized to groups A or B for a crossover trial. Patients were taught how to self-administer acupuncture at the P6 site. Acupuncture was self-administered a minimum of one and a maximum of three times per day during the first week of chemotherapy cycle #1 for group A and chemotherapy cycle #2 for group B. Acupuncture was used in conjunction with ongoing standard care. Both groups maintained daily logs documenting nausea on a scale of 1-10, emesis, medications used and time of acupuncture administration.

Results

16 out of 20 patients successfully completed their daily logs. There was a small but statistically significant reduction in nausea severity during the acupuncture treatment cycle compared to control cycle. There was not a statistically significant reduction in episodes of emesis. There were no adverse events.

Conclusion

Cancer patients can be safely taught self administration of acupuncture at P6 in order to reduce the severity of chemotherapy associated nausea.

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