

MEDLINE Abstract

Auricular acupuncture for dental anxiety: a randomized controlled trial.

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Auricular acupuncture can be an effective treatment for acute anxiety, but there is a lack of direct comparisons of acupuncture to proven standard drug treatments. In this study we compared the efficacy of auricular acupuncture with intranasal midazolam, placebo acupuncture, and no treatment for reducing dental anxiety. Patients having dental extractions (n = 67) were randomized to (i) auricular acupuncture, (ii) placebo acupuncture, and (iii) intranasal midazolam and compared with a no treatment group. Anxiety was assessed before the interventions, at 30 min, and after the dental extraction. Physiological variables were assessed continuously. With the no treatment group as control, the auricular acupuncture group, and the midazolam group were significantly less anxious at 30 min as compared with patients in the placebo acupuncture group (Spielberger State-Trait Anxiety Inventory X1, P = 0.012 and <0.001, respectively). In addition, patient compliance assessed by the dentist was significantly improved if auricular acupuncture or application of intranasal midazolam had been performed (P = 0.032 and 0.049, respectively). In conclusion, both, auricular acupuncture and intranasal midazolam were similarly effective for the treatment of dental anxiety.

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