

Acupuncture effective in preventing tension-type headache

Clinical Question	How effective is acupuncture in reducing headache frequency in adults with episodic or chronic tension-type headache?
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Bottom Line	Acupuncture added to routine care or treatment of headaches only on onset (usually with analgesics) in two large trials resulted in 48% of participants having headache frequency at least halved, compared to 17% given routine care only. In six trials comparing acupuncture with sham acupuncture, headache frequency halved in 52% of participants receiving acupuncture compared with 43% receiving sham acupuncture. Overall the quality of the evidence was moderate.
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Caveat	Long-term effects (beyond four months) were not investigated in the trials involving routine care. In those involving sham acupuncture, the effect of true acupuncture was still present after six months.
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Context	Acupuncture is often used for prevention of tension-type headache but its effectiveness is still controversial.
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Cochrane Systematic Review	Linde K et al. Acupuncture for the prevention of tension-type headache. Cochrane Reviews, 2016, Issue 7. Art. No.: CD007587.DOI: 10.1002/14651858. CD007587.pub2. This review contains 12 studies involving 2,349 participants.
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