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Temporomandibular disorders: perspective clinical usage of acupuncture

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Abstract

Background: One of the oldest medical practices is acupuncture, which was developed for about 3 thousand years. It includes also methods of treatment for various diseases and disorders of the stomatognathic region. Currently, there is an increased interest for the usage of these alternative methods of treatment. Acupuncture methods are widespread worldwide and are endorsed by WHO. The use of alternative medicine methods in dental practice has more positive aspects than negative ones, attracting the attention of patients and doctors and even of countries with different economic levels of development. The most important indications of acupuncture in dentistry are: 1) glossodynia; 2) stomatodynia; 3) primary trigeminal neuralgia; 4) spasm/contracture of the masticatory muscles; 5) myogenous dysfunction of the temporomandibular joint; 6) salivary disorders. For the treatment of various pathologies in dentistry, various stimulation of acupuncture points is being used (needling, electro-puncture, laser-puncture, pressopuncture, thermo-puncture, magneto-puncture, etc.). Currently, there is ongoing research on defining differential indications for these methods, based on the highest efficiency for particular pathologies.

Conclusions: Currently, there is ongoing research on defining differential indications for these methods, based on the highest efficiency for particular pathologies. It is not concluded yet which acupuncture treatment is more efficient: the one based on the reflexogenic theory (local, regional, distal points) or the one based on Traditional Chinese Medicine (meridian theory, etc.). There are being developed complex treatment protocols for dental pathologies, with the inclusion of various acupuncture methods (magneto-puncture, laser-puncture, etc.).

Key words: acupuncture, moxibustion, zhen-jiu, temporomandibular disorders, myogenous disorders.