

## **ACUPUNCTURE AND ELECTROACUPUNCTURE FOR TREATING WHIPLASH ASSOCIATED DISORDER: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW**

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The aim of this systematic review was to determine the effectiveness of acupuncture for treating whiplash associated disorder (WAD). The recent Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta Analyses (PRISMA) statement was used to lend a framework for the reporting structure of this systematic review. Nineteen databases were searched from their inceptions to October 2012. Randomized clinical trials (RCTs) of acupuncture and/or electroacupuncture (EA) for the treatment of WAD were considered eligible. The risk of bias was assessed using the Cochrane tool. Six RCTs met the inclusion criteria. One RCT found that acupuncture plus usual care (UC) was superior to UC alone. The second RCT found EA superior to sham EA. The third trial suggested that EA plus medication was superior to sham EA plus medication. The fourth trial found no difference between acupuncture plus physiotherapy (PT) and sham acupuncture plus PT. The fifth RCT described improvements in acupuncture group compared to PT and drugs, albeit statistically insignificant. The last trial reported acupuncture superior to relaxation. Only limited evidence exists for the effectiveness of acupuncture as a treatment of whiplash. The evidence for the effectiveness of acupuncture for WAD is encouraging but inconclusive. Studies with more rigorous study design, methodological quality, and larger sample size seem warranted.