



Acupuncture For Kids Relatively Safe, If Practitioner Is Well Qualified

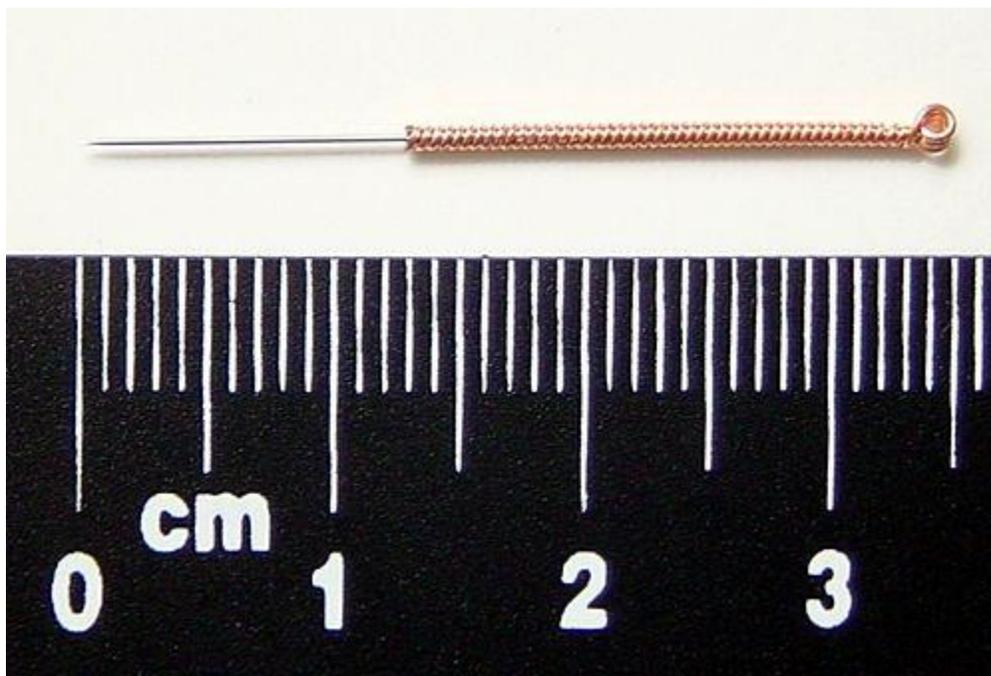
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Using acupuncture to treat children is generally safe as long as the practitioner is properly trained, researchers from the University of Alberta, Canada, reported in the journal *Pediatrics*. Even when adverse events associated with acupuncture were detected, they were mostly mild in severity, the authors added.

The researchers explained as background information that the usage of acupuncture in children has been increasing significantly over the last few years. However, there has been no systematic review of pediatric acupuncture.

Sunita Vohra, MD, MSc. and team set out to determine what the adverse events linked to needle acupuncture in children might be. They looked at articles dated up to September 2010 (all languages). They were seeking articles that were original and peer-reviewed, included kids aged up to 17 years, focused on the use of needle acupuncture, and included data on adverse events. They extracted safety data from all the studies.

They identified a total of 9,537 articles, and included 450 for assessment, which were then narrowed down to 28, plus 9 additional reports, i.e. a total of 37 articles.



An acupuncture needle

Their meta-analysis revealed:

- 279 adverse events from 146 randomized human studies, 95 cohort studies and 38 case reports.
- There were 25 serious adverse events, including:
 - thumb deformity (12 cases)
 - infections (5 cases)
 - cardiac rupture (1 case)
 - hemoptysis (1 case) - coughing up blood or bloody-stained sputum (or spitting it)
 - pneumothorax (1 case) - gas or air in the cavity between the lungs and the chest wall, causing collapsed lung
 - having to spend the night in hospital (1 case)
 - reversible coma (1 case)
 - nerve impairment (1 case)
 - subarachnoid hemorrhage (1 case)
 - intestinal obstruction (1 case)
- There were 253 cases of mild and one of moderate infection
- Examples of mild adverse events included bleeding, pain, bruising, and symptoms getting worse

They worked out that the chances of experiencing a mild adverse reaction were 168 per 1,422 patients, or an 11.8% risk.

The investigators wrote that of the adverse events linked to acupuncture (with needle), most of them were mild.

In an Abstract in the same journal, the authors wrote:

"Many of the serious AEs might have been caused by substandard practice. Our results support those from adult studies, which have found that acupuncture is safe when performed by appropriately trained practitioners."

Written by Christian Nordqvist

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