META-ANALYSIS

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Received: Accepted: Published:	2018.03.16 2018.04.04 2018.05.08		Efficacy and Safety of A Hypertension: A Meta-A	Acupuncture for Essential Analysis
Authors' o Stu Data Statistic Data Inte Manuscript P Literat Funds	Contribution: Idy Design A Collection B al Analysis C rpretation D reparation E ure Search F Collection G	ACDE 1 ACDE 1 BF 1,2 BF 1,3 AG 1	Hao Chen Fei-er Shen Xiao-dong Tan Wen-bo Jiang Yi-huang Gu	 The Second Clinical College, Nanjing University of Chinese Medicine, Nanjing, Jiangsu, P.R. China Department of Cardiology, Wuxi Hospital of Traditional Chinese Medicine, Wuxi, Jiangsu, P.R. China Department of Cardiology, Suqian Hospital of Traditional Chinese Medicine, Suqian, Jiangsu, P.R. China
_	Corresponding Source of	Author: support:	Yi-huang Gu, e-mail: guyihuang_nj@163.com This study was support both by the National Natural Science Fo Medicine Science and Technology Project funded by the Bur YB2015006)	oundation of China (Grant No. 81674063) and the Traditional Chinese eau of Traditional Chinese Medicine of Jiangsu province (Grant No.
	Backg Material/Me	ground: ethods:	The aim of this study was to assess the efficacy and sa We searched PubMed, Embase, the Cochrane Library National Knowledge Infrastructure, and the Wan-fa Randomized controlled trials investigating acupunctur	afety of acupuncture therapy for patients with hypertension. , the Chinese Biomedical Literature Database, the Chinese ng Data Database from inception through 29 April 2017. re therapy for hypertension were included. Review Manager
	F	Results:	A total of 30 RCTs involving 2107 patients were inc studies was low. Pooled results demonstrate that ac ti-hypertensive drugs alone at reducing systolic and was observed for pooled data from experiments that ture plus medication at reducing SBP and DBP. How hypertensive drugs alone do not differ in the effect also did not differ from sham acupuncture alone, an not significantly different at reducing SBP and DBP.	luded. The overall methodological quality of the included supuncture plus anti-hypertensive drugs is better than an- l diastolic blood pressure (SBP and DBP). The same result compared acupuncture plus medication to sham acupunc- rever, studies reveal that using acupuncture alone or anti- on lowering blood pressure. Similarly, acupuncture alone ad electroacupuncture versus anti-hypertensive drugs was
	Concl	usions:	Our systematic review indicates there is inadequate in treating hypertension, as the exact effect and safe Therefore, research with larger sample sizes and hig	high quality evidence that acupuncture therapy is useful by of acupuncture therapy for hypertension is still unclear. gher-quality RCTs is still needed.
	MeSH Key	words:	Acupuncture • Essential Hypertension • Meta-An	alysis • Randomized Controlled Trial
	Full-te	ext PDF:	https://www.medscimonit.com/abstract/index/idAu	t/909995
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Essential hypertension is a major risk factor for cardiovascular disease and stroke [1]. The number of adults with hypertension worldwide is predicted to reach 1.56 billion individuals by 2025 [2]. In China, hypertension affects more than one-fourth of the population. Moreover, the prevalence of hypertension has increased during recent decades and it has become a major health problem because treatment awareness and hypertension control rates are extremely low [3].

The basic treatment for hypertension is non-pharmacological therapy, and includes weight loss, restricted sodium intake, physical activity, and cessation of smoking and alcohol consumption. However, long-term compliance with non-pharmacological treatment is difficult for most patients. Therefore, anti-hypertensive drugs are the preferred option for treating hypertension [4]. However, they are associated with adverse effects such as drug resistance. Therefore, more effective and safe treatment options are urgently required for hypertension patients.

Acupuncture treatment is an ancient Chinese therapy that has played an important role for over 2500 years in the Chinese healthcare system and has now been adopted worldwide. Several systematic reviews have evaluated the efficacy of acupuncture for hypertension [5–11]. Recently, some new trials have been published, leading us to conduct a systematic review and meta-analysis of all available randomized controlled trials (RCTs), to evaluate the efficacy and safety of acupuncture therapy for treating essential hypertension.

Material and Methods

Systematic review details

This systematic review was performed in accordance with the Cochrane Handbook for Systematic Reviews of Interventions, and was reported in compliance with the PRISMA statement (see Supplementary Table 1 for PRISMA checklist) [12]. This systematic review has been registered (Reg. No. CRD 42017068032) in PROSPERO (https://www.crd.york.ac.uk/prospero/) [13].

Study search strategy

We systematically searched the PUBMED, EMBASE, the Cochrane Library, the Chinese Biomedical Literature Database (CBM), the Chinese National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI), and the Wan-fang databases for inclusion on 29 April 2017 with MeSH terms and key words, and without language restrictions. Search strategy terms were (acupuncture OR electroacupuncture OR acupoint) AND (high blood pressure OR hypertension OR blood pressure) AND (randomized controlled trial OR controlled clinical trial OR randomized OR clinical trials). We also checked the reference lists of relevant reviews and the included trials to identify further studies that met the inclusion criteria for this meta-analysis.

Inclusion criteria

Types of trials

We included randomized controlled trials (RCTs) and quasi-randomized controlled trials (quasi-RCTs) that were published in formal English or Chinese journals.

Types of participants

Based on the International Society of Hypertension Guidelines for the Management of Hypertension (1999 World Health Organization) [14], essential hypertensive patients were those with a systolic blood pressure (SBP) \geq 140 mmHg and/or a diastolic blood pressure (DBP) of \geq 90 mmHg. All patients with secondary hypertension caused by an identifiable underlying primary cause were all excluded.

Types of interventions

Acupuncture therapy included acupuncture or electroacupuncture with or without lifestyle modifications and/or anti-hypertensive drugs. Control groups received sham acupuncture without any treatment or lifestyle modifications or anti-hypertensive drugs.

Types of outcome measures

Primary outcomes included SBP and DBP changes [pre-treatment BP – post-treatment BP]. Secondary outcomes included the efficacy rates and the adverse events. Efficacy rates were reported as the percentage of the total number of participants that showed reduction of DBP by \geq 10 mmHg, or normal DBP (\leq 90 mmHg), or reduction of SBP by \geq 30 mmHg.

Data extraction

Two reviewers (HC and FES) screened all the literature and extracted data independently using a standardized form. The form was pre-designed for collecting information on trial characteristics, including first author, language, number of patients, mean age of the patients, diagnostic criteria, grades of hypertension, acupuncture treatment, control types, sessions of treatment, treatment course, and outcome measures. We defined the change values of blood pressure as pre-treatment BP minus post-treatment BP and extracted the change means and standard deviations (SD) for continuous outcome. For dichotomous



Figure 1. Flow chart of randomized controlled trial selection (based on PRISMA).

outcome measures, we used rates (the number of events out of total number in the study). If change means and standard deviations were missing, we calculated them according to the formula offered by the *Cochrane Handbook for Systematic Reviews of Interventions* (Version 5.10) (see Supplementary Figure 1 for formula). Disagreements were resolved in consultation with the third reviewer (YHG).

Assessment of the reporting quality of the included studies

Overall reporting quality score was evaluated for 30 parameters (items 1–4, 6–19) of the Consolidated Standards of Reporting Trials (CONSORT) [15]. The discussion section (items 20–22) was excluded because the items under this section could not be rated. We also excluded the section on other information (items 23–25) because they were not relevant for the methodology of the included studies. The Standards for Reporting Interventions in Controlled Trials of Acupuncture (STRICTA) includes 17 items that are substituted for item 5, 'interventions' in the CONSORT checklist [16]. Two reviewers (XDT and WBJ) assessed each item for the included studies independently.

Each reported item received 1 point, and any item not clearly presented received 0 points. Disagreements were resolved in consultation with the third reviewer (HC).

Risk of bias assessment

Two reviewers (XDT and WBJ) assessed the risk of bias of the included RCTs using the Cochrane Collaboration's tool for assessing risk of bias [17]. Each trial was scored as high, low, or unclear risk for the following 7 domains: (1) random sequence generation (selection bias); (2) allocation concealment (selection bias); (3) blinding of participants and personnel (performance bias); (4) blinding of outcome assessment (detection bias); (5) incomplete outcome data (attrition bias); (6) selective reporting (reporting bias); and (7) any other bias. Disagreements were resolved in consultation with the third reviewer (HC).

Statistical analysis

The overall reporting quality of the included studies and the potential differences between the studies from the Chinese journals and English journals were investigated in compliance

Table 1. Characteristics of included studies.

Study ID	Language	Mean age	Gender (Male/	*Included	Hyper- tension	Interv	ention	No. of p evalu	atients ated	Course	#Outcome
	88-	(T/C)	Female)	criteria	grades	Treatment	Control	Treatment	Control		
Chen BG et al., 2006	Chinese	54.75±7.12/ 51.7210.38	41/19	1	1, 2	AC (30 mins a day)	Metroprolol (100 mg per day)	30	30	4 weeks	1, 2, 3
Chen J et al., 2010	Chinese	48.2±7.2/ 50.5± 8.4	31/29	1	1	AC (30 mins a day) plus felodipine (5 mg per day)	Felodipine (5 mg per day)	30	30	15 days	3
Chen NY et al., 2010	Chinese	61.3±8.0/ 62.0± 7.1	41/39	1	Not reported	AC (30 mins a day)	Diovan (80 mg per day)	40	40	30 days	1, 3, 4
Chen Q et al., 2011	Chinese	59±8/ 59± 8	29/31	1	1, 2	AC (30 mins a day)	Metroprolol (100 mg per day)	30	30	30 days	3
Chen YF et al., 2000	Chinese	63.57±8.08/ 65.20± 8.86	38/32	1	2	AC (30 mins a day)	Nifedipine (10–20 mg tid)	35	35	2 weeks	1, 3
Choi WJ et al., 2015	English	48.04±6.13/ 46.20±9.26	Not reported	1	Not reported	AC (20 mins every treatment, 4 times totally)	SA	25	25	2 weeks	2, 4
Cui JK et al., 2013	English	56.7±8.9/ 54.7±8.1	55/37	1	Not reported	AC (once a day except Sunday) plus irbesartan	Irbesartan (150 mg per day)	46	46	4 weeks	3, 4
Flachskampf FA et al., 2007	English	58.8±8.2/ 58.0±7.9	66/74	1	1, 2	AC (30 mins; 22 sessions)	SA	83	77	6 weeks	1, 2, 4
Huang F et al., 2007	Chinese	56.51±6.28/ 58.12±6.15	27/33	1	1, 2	AC (30 mins a day) plus captopril (25 mg tid)	Captopril (25 mg tid)	30	30	4 weeks	1, 3
Kim HM et al., 2012	English	52.08±8.69/ 52.38±10.3	16/12	1	1	AC (20 mins, twice a week)	SA	12	16	8 weeks	1, 2
Liu Y et al., 2015	English	49.4±8.4/ 53.4±8.2	7/24	2	1,2	AC (30 mins, twice a week)	No treatment	15	15	8 weeks	2
Luo H et al., 2015	Chinese	45-75(range)	66/34	1	2	AC (30 mins a day) plus felodipine (5mg)	Felodipine (5 mg)	44	46	20 days	1, 3
Ma ZY et al., 2011	Chinese	66.39±5.47/ 64.58±7.13	47/33	1	1,2	EA (10 mins a day)	Nicardipine (20 mg tid)	40	40	15 days	1, 3
Shen ZK et al., 2007	Chinese	32±8.24/ 21±7.31	31/19	1	Not reported	AC (30 mins a day) plus nifedipine (20 mg bid)	Nifedipine (20mg bid)	25	25	20 days	1, 2, 3
Sun J et al., 2009	Chinese	47.23±5.66/ 48.42±6.13	48/39	1	1	AC (30 mins a day)	lifestyle	44	43	Not reported	2
Tian L et al., 2008	Chinese	59.17±3.16/ 59±3.01	33/27	1	1,2	AC (30 mins a day)	Levamlodipine (2.5 mg a day)	30	30	30 days	1, 2, 3
Yin C et al., 2007	English	52/54	9/21	3	1,2	AC plus antihypertensive	SA plus antihypertensive	15	15	8 weeks	1
Wan WJ et al., 2009	Chinese	63.72 <u>±</u> 8.23/ 65.24 <u>±</u> 6.41	36/24	1	1,2	AC (10mins a day)	nicardipine (20 mg tid)	30	30	15 days	1,3
Wang C et al., 2006	Chinese	25-60(range)	34/25	1	Not reported	EA (30 mins a day)	Lotensin (10 mg a day)	30	29	8 weeks	1,3
Wu XM et al., 2015	Chinese	49. 10±8. 7/ 48. 08±8. 8	52/47	1	1,2	AC (10 mins a day)	lifestyle	50	49	4 weeks	1, 2, 3
Wu YR et al., 2011	Chinese	54.75±7.10/ 51.72±10.3	70/50	1	1,2	AC (30 mins a day)	Metroprolol (100 mg a day)	60	60	20 days	1, 3
Xie B et al., 2014	Chinese	56±11/ 53±10	30/30	1	Not reported	AC (30 mins a day)	Captopril (25 mg tid)	30	30	3 weeks	1, 3

Study ID	Language	Mean age	Gender (Male/	*Included	Hyper- tension	Interv	ention	No. of p evalu	atients ated	Course	#Outcome
	88-	(T/C)	Female)	criteria	grades	Treatment	Control	Treatment	Control		
Xing H et al., 2016	Chinese	61.83±9.10/ 57.14±9.33	35/28	1	1,2	AC (30 mins a day)	Captopril (25 mg tid)	31	32	4 weeks	1, 3
Yang DH et al., 2010	Chinese	40.4±5.2/ 41.7±4.2	37/23	1	1,2	EA (30 mins a day)	Captopril (25 mg tid)	30	30	2 weeks	1, 2, 3
Zhao DJ et al., 2003	Chinese	40.3±11.4/ 46.1±14.2	37/23	1	1,2	AC plus lifesytle	Lifestyle	30	30	40 days	1
Zhang Y et al., 2012	Chinese	42–46 (range)	Not reported	1	Not reported	AC (30 mins a day)	Captopril (25 mg tid)	14	14	8 weeks	1
Zhang YB et al., 2011	Chinese	53.62±9.83/ 52.16±10.04	53/27	1	Not reported	AC (20 mins a day)	Amlodipine (2.5 mg a day)	45	35	4 weeks	1, 3
Zhang YL et al., 2005	Chinese	63.60±8.20/ 65.20±8.00	47/28	1	Not reported	AC (30 mins a day) plus nifedipine (10mg tid)	Nifedipine (10 mg tid)	45	30	20 days	1, 3
Zhang ZH et al., 2004	Chinese	56.5/55.5	42/18	1	1,2	AC (30 mins a day)	Compounds of Reserpine and Hydrochlo- rothiazidec	30	30	15 days	3
Zheng Y et al., 2016	English	56.53±7.52/ 56.73±4.91	8/22	1	1,2	AC (30 mins a day except weekends)	SA	15	15	2 weeks	1

Table 1 conitnued. Characteristics of included studies.

T – treatment; C – control; mins – minutes; AC – acupuncture; SA – sham acupuncture; EA – electro acupuncture; SBP – systolic blood pressure; DBP – diastolic blood pressure. * Included criteria: (1) SBP: \geq 140 mmHg or DBP: \geq 90 mmHg; (2) SBP: 120–159 mmHg or DBP: 80–99 mmHg; (3) SBP: 120–180 mmHg and DBP: 80–100 mmHg. * Outcomes: (1) Blood pressure after intervention; (2) Changes in magnitude of blood pressure after intervention; (3) Efficacy rate; (4) Adverse effects.

with the CONSORT and STRICTA statements. The overall scores of the CONSORT and the STRICTA are presented as medians and ranges, and data from each individual item are presented as frequencies. The difference between overall scores of different journals was assessed by the Mann-Whitney U test. Pearson's chi-square test was used when the sample size was more than 40 and Fisher's exact test was used when sample size was less than 40 for assessing the reporting difference of each individual item between the different journals. Statistical analysis was performed with the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) V.19.0 (SPSS Inc, Chicago, Illinois, USA).

Meta-analyses for acupuncture and electroacupuncture were done separately. Continuous data are presented as mean differences (MDs) with 95% confidence interval (CI) and data from studies were pooled using the inverse variance method. Dichotomous data are presented as relative risk (RR) with 95% CI and pooled using Mantel-Haenszel method. We also calculated the required information size based on the standard method [18,19]. Statistical heterogeneity across trials was assessed by the Cochran Q test (P<0.1 for statistical significance) and quantified by the l^2 statistic. Following the *Cochrane Handbook for Systematic Reviews of Interventions* (Version 5.10), we defined l^2 >50% as indicating significant heterogeneity. Heterogeneous data were pooled using the random-effects model. We performed subgroup analysis based on the classes of anti-hypertensive drugs such as calcium channel blockers (CCB), β -receptor antagonists, angiotensin-converting enzyme inhibitors (ACEI), and angiotensin receptor blockers (ARB). Moreover, in order to establish robust primary outcomes, we also performed sensitivity analysis for the primary outcomes. Publication bias was evaluated by visually inspecting a funnel plot. Meta-analysis was performed using RevMan 5.3 software.

Results

Study selection

Figure 1 provides a flow chart summarizing the study selection process based on PRISMA guidelines. The initial search yielded

 Table 2. Overall score of the CONSORT and STRICTA reporting quality of the included studies (N=30; 24 studies from Chinese journals; 6 studies from English journals).

Journals	CON Mediar	ISORT n (range)	STI Media	RICTA n (range)
Chinese journals (N=24)	10	(6–17)	11	(7–12)
English journals (N=6)	9	(4–29)	12	(11–17)*
All journals (N=30)	10	(4–29)	11	(7–17)

* Indicate a significant difference with the studies published in Chinese journals.

1146 records. After removing duplicate records, screening the titles and abstracts, and doing full text reviews, 30 trials were included in the meta-analysis [20-49].

Characteristics of the included studies

Characteristics of the included trials are summarized in Table 1. The 28 RCTs and 2 qusi-RCTs evaluated a total of 2107 patients (range: 28 to 160 patients per trial) and were published between 2000 and 2016. Six of the included studies were published in English [25–27,29,30,49] and the remaining 24 studies were published in Chinese [20–24,28,31–42,47,48]. Four studies reported adverse effects [22,26,40,41], 5 studies reported no adverse effects [25,27,29,30,38], and the remaining 21 studies did not report any information on adverse

 Table 3. CONSORT assessments of the reporting characteristics of the included studies (N=30; 24 studies from Chinese journals; 6 studies from English journals).

Section/ topic	ltem	Description	Po: sti	sitive udies	Posi Chir jour	tive 1ese nals	Pos Eng jou	itive glish rnals
			N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)
	1a	Identifying randomized trial in the title	4	(13%)	0	(0)	4	(67%)*
Title and Abstract	1b	Structured summary of trial design, methods, results, and conclusions; for specific guidance see CONSORT for Abstracts	28	(93)	22	(92)	6	(100)
Background	2a	Scientific background and explanation of rationale	23	(77)	17	(71)	6	(100)
and objectives	2b	Specific objectives or hypotheses	12	(40)	6	(25)	6	(100)*
Trial decign	3a	Description of trial design (e.g., parallel, factorial) including allocation ratio	29	(97)	23	(96)	6	(100)
That design	3b	Important changes to methods after trial commencement (e.g. eligibility criteria), with reasons	0		0	(0)	0	(0)
Dauticinante	4a	Eligibility criteria for participants	29	(97%)	23	(96)	6	(100)
Participants	4b	Settings and locations where the data were collected	24	(80%)	18	(75)	6	(100)
Outcomos	6a	Definition of pre-specified primary and secondary outcome measures, including how and when they were assessed	28	(93)	22(92)		6	(100)
Outcomes	6b	Reasoning of any changes to trial outcomes after the trial commenced	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
	7a	Protocol of determining sample size	1	(3)	0	(0)	1	(17)
Sample size	7b	Explanation of any interim analyses and stopping guidelines, whenever applicable	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
Sequence	8a	Method used to generate the random allocation sequence	21	(70)	18	(75)	3	(50)
generation	8b	Type of randomization and details of any restrictions (e.g., blocking and block size)	3	(10)	0	(0)	3	(50)*
Allocation concealment	9	Mechanism used to implement the random allocation sequence (e.g., sequentially numbered containers) and description of any steps taken to conceal the sequence until interventions were assigned	4	(13)	0	(0)	4	(67)*

Section/ topic	ltem	Description	Po: sti	sitive udies	Po: Chi jou	sitive inese rnals	Pos En; jou	sitive glish rnals
			N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)
Implementation	10	Individuals that generated the random allocation sequence, enrolled participants, and assigned participants to interventions	1	(3)	0	(0)	1	(17)
Blinding	11a	The group that was blinded after assignment to interventions (e.g. participants, care providers, those assessing outcomes) and the protocol of blinding, if performed	6	(20)	0	(0)	6	(100)*
	11b	If relevant, description of the similarity of interventions	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
Statistical	12a	Statistical methods used to compare groups for primary and secondary outcomes	23	(77)	17	(71)	6	(100)
methods	12b	Methods for additional analyses, such as subgroup analyses and adjusted analyses	3	(10)	1	(4)	2	(33)
Participant flow (A diagram	13a	The number of participants that were randomly assigned, received intended treatment, and were analyzed for the primary outcome are shown for each group	3	(10)	1	(4)	2	(33)
recommended)	13b	The number of participants that were lost or excluded after randomization and the reasons	2	(13)	0	(0)	2	(33)*
	14a	Dates defining the periods of recruitment and follow-up	19	(63)	15	(63)	4	(67)
Recruitment	14b	Reasons for ending or stopping the trial	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
Baseline data	15	A table showing baseline demographic and clinical characteristics for each group	14	(47)	8	(33)	6	(100)*
Numbers analyzed	16	For each group, the number of participants (denominator) included in each analysis and if the analysis was performed as originally assigned	3	(10)	1	(4%)	2	(33)
Outcomes and	17a	For each primary and secondary outcome, results for each group, and the estimated effect size and its precision (e.g., 95% confidence interval)	29	(97)	23	(96)	6	(100)
estimation	17b	For binary outcomes, presentation of both absolute and relative effect sizes is recommended	30	(100)	24	(100)	6	(100)
Ancillary analyses	18	Results of any other analyses performed, such as subgroup and adjusted analyses; distinguishing pre-specified from exploratory analyses	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
Harms	19	All important harms or unintended adverse effects in each group; for specific guidance see CONSORT for Harms#	8	(27)	3	(13)	5	(83)*

 Table 3 continued.
 CONSORT assessments of the reporting characteristics of the included studies (N=30; 24 studies from Chinese journals; 6 studies from English journals).

* Indicate a significant difference with the studies published in Chinese journals; # CONSORT for harms can be seen on *http://www. consort-statement.org/checklists/view/32--consort-2010/116-harms.*

Table 4. STRICTA assessment of the reporting	characteristics of included stu	udies (N=30; 24 studies fr	om Chinese journals; 6 studies
from English journals).			

Section/ topic	ltem	Description	Po st	sitive udies	Po: Ch jou	sitive inese ırnals	Po: En jou	sitive glish Irnals
			N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)
Acupuncture rationale	1a	Style of acupuncture (e.g. Traditional Chinese Medicine, Japanese, Korean, Western medical, Five Element, ear acupuncture, etc)	30	(100)	24((100%)	6	(100%)
	1b	Reasoning for treatment provided, historical context, literature sources, and/or consensus methods, with references provided wherever necessary	9	(30)	5	(21)	4	(67)*
	1c	Extent to which treatment varied	2	(7)	0	(0)	2	(33)*
Details of needling	2a	Number of needle insertions per subject per session (mean and range wherever relevant)	23	(77)	20	(83)	3	(50)
	2b	Names (or location if no standard name) of points used (uni/bilateral)	30	(100)	24	(24)	6	(100)
	2c	Depth of insertion, based on a specified unit of measurement or a particular tissue level	20	(67)	15	(63)	5	(83)
	2d	Response sought (e.g. de qi or muscle twitch response)	23	(77)	17	(71)	6	(100)
	2e	Needle stimulation (e.g. manual, electrical)	29	(97)	23	(96)	6	(100)
	2f	Needle retention time	29	(97)	23	(96)	6	(100)
·	2g	Needle type (diameter, length, and manufacturer or material)	22	(73)	16	(67)	6	(100)
Treatment	3a	Number of treatment sessions	30	(100)	24	(100)	6	(100)
regimen	3b	Frequency and duration of treatment sessions	30	(100)	24	(100)	6	(100)
Other components of treatment	4a	Details of other interventions administered to the acupuncture group (e.g. moxibustion, cupping, herbs, exercises, lifestyle modification advice)	10	(33)	5	(21)	5	(83)*
	4b	Setting and context of treatment, including instructions to practitioners, and information to patients	1	(3)	0	(0)	1	(17)
Practitioner background	5	Description of participating acupuncturists (qualification or professional affiliation, years in acupuncture practice and other relevant experience)	1	(3)	0	(0)	1	(17)
Control or comparator	6a	Rationale for the control or comparator in the context of the research question and sources justifying the choice	2	(7)	0	(0)	2	(33)*
interventions	6b	Precise description of the control or comparator. If sham acupuncture or any other type of acupuncture-like control is used, provide details as for Items 1 to 3 above	28	(93)	22	(92)	6	(100)

* Indicates a significant difference with the studies published in Chinese journals.

effects. Twenty-eight of the 30 studies defined the criteria for hypertension as a systolic blood pressure (SBP) \geq 140mmHg or diastolic blood pressure (DBP) \geq 90 mmHg [22–29,31–48]. Liu et al. [30] included hypertension patients with SBP ranging from 120–159 mmHg or DBP ranging from 80–99 mmHg. Yin et al. [49] included patients with SBP ranging from 120 to 180 mmHg or DBP 80 to 100 mmHg. We analyzed the therapeutic outcomes of acupuncture or electroacupuncture with or without lifestyle modifications or anti-hypertensive drugs. The 5 most frequently used acu-points were Ll11 (quchi; 18 studies), LR3 (taichong; 15 studies), GB20 (fengchi; 12 studies), ST36 (zusanli; 9 studies), and DU20 (baihui; 7 studies). Control groups included untreated patients and patients undergoing treatment by lifestyle modifications



Figure 2. Risk of bias graph of the included trials. (A) Summary of the risk of bias in 7 domains in the 30 RCTs. (B) Graphical representation of the overall risk of bias in the 7 domains. Green, yellow and red represent low, unclear and high risk of bias. Length of the rectangles (green, yellow or red) show the percentage of studies with low, unclear, or high risk of bias for the 7 domains analyzed.

or anti-hypertensive drugs. The median course of the included studies was 28 days (range: 14–56).

Reporting quality of the included studies

We evaluated the reporting quality of the included studies according to CONSORT and STRICTA guidelines. The CONSORT median quality score was 10 (range: 4–29, Table 2), Based on the CONSORT, Chinese journals (median score: 10; range: 6–17) and English journals (median score: 9; range: 4–29) had similar reporting quality (P=0.875). However, consideration of individual items shows that the quality of English journals is better than Chinese journals for reporting items 1a, 2b, 8b, 9, 11a, 13b, 15, and 19 (all P<0.05; Table 3).

The STRICTA median score was 11 (range: 7–11, Table 2), and using STRICTA, English journals (median score: 12; range: 11–17) have a better reporting quality (P=0.03) than Chinese journals (median score: 11; range: 7–12). Similarly, the STRICTA report

shows that the quality of English journals is better than Chinese journals for items 1b, 1c, 4a, and 6a (all P<0.05; Table 4).

Risk of bias of the included studies

Most included studies had poor methodological quality because they lacked sufficient information to assess special items by the Cochrane risk of bias tool (Figure 2). Two trials were quasi-RCTs [35,45], in which the patients were randomized according to even and odd numbers. Twenty-one trials generated a randomized sequence for patients by using a random number table or software [20–23,25,27,28,30–33,36,38– 40,42,44,47–49]. The remaining 7 studies did not indicate how random assignments were made. Appropriate allocation concealment was reported in only 5 trials, all published in English [25,27,29,30,49]. Adequate blinding of patients and the doctors was not reported by any of the 30 trials. Blinding of the outcome assessment was mentioned in only 3 trials [25,30,44]. Only 1 study used intention-to-treat analysis [27]. Eight trials

reported dropouts [27,29–31,34,38,41,48]. Selective reporting is unknown for any of the included studies, since we have no access to the study protocol.

Analyzing the effects of different interventions

We performed the following 8 comparisons based on different types of interventions evaluated in the included studies: (1) acupuncture vs. anti-hypertensive drugs; (2) acupuncture vs. no treatment; (3) acupuncture vs. sham acupuncture; (4) acupuncture plus lifestyle modifications vs. lifestyle modifications; (5) acupuncture plus anti-hypertensive drugs vs. anti-hypertensive drugs; (6) acupuncture plus anti-hypertensive drugs vs. sham acupuncture plus anti-hypertensive drugs; (7) electroacupuncture vs. anti-hypertensive drugs; and (8) electroacupuncture plus anti-hypertensive drugs vs. anti-hypertensive drugs. The pooled effect estimates for all these comparisons are shown in Figures 3–5.

1. Acupuncture vs. anti-hypertensive drugs

Eight studies with 541 patients reported SBP and DBP compared acupuncture and anti-hypertensive drug treatments [20,22,24,35,39–41,43]. SBP and DBP changes were similar for acupuncture and anti-hypertensive drug treatments [SBP: MD=1.4 mmHg (95% CI: -1.32 to 4.12), l^2 =57%; DBP: MD=2.04 mmHg (95% CI: -0.59 to 4.67), l^2 =83%].

Nine studies with 517 patients reported efficacy rates of acupuncture and anti-hypertensive drug treatments [20,22–24,35,39–41,46]. The efficacy rates of both these treatments were similar [RR=1.12 (95% CI: 0.98 to 1.28), l^2 =78%].

2. Acupuncture vs. no treatment

Only 1 study with 30 patients reported SBP and DBP in patients treated with acupuncture compared to an untreated control group [30]. No differences were observed between treatments in SBP change [SBP: MD=5.2 mmHg (95% CI: -2.99 to 13.39)]. However, DBP changes were greater in patients treated with acupuncture than in untreated patients [DBP: MD=6.1mmHg (95% CI: 1.27 to 10.93)].

3. Acupuncture vs. sham acupuncture

Three studies with 106 patients reported SBP and DBP for acupuncture versus sham acupuncture treatments [25,48,49]. The SBP and DBP changes were similar for both acupuncture and sham acupuncture treatments [SBP: MD=1.59 mmHg (95% CI: -4.63 to 7.8 mmHg), l^2 =65%; DBP: MD=-0.01 mmHg (95% CI: -2.59 to 2.57), l^2 =15%].

4. Acupuncture plus lifestyle modifications vs. lifestyle modifications

Three studies with 246 patients compared acupuncture plus lifestyle modifications and lifestyle modifications alone [34,38,49]. Two of the three studies (n=187) also reported the efficacy rate of acupuncture plus lifestyle medications and lifestyle modifications alone [34,38]. SBP and DBP changes, as well as efficacy rate, were greater in the combined therapy than in lifestyle modifications alone [SBP: MD=10.38 mmHg (95% CI: 6.72 to 14.04), *I*²=86%; DBP: MD=5.74 mmHg (95% CI: 1.94 to 9.54), *I*²=91%; RR: 1.2 (95% CI: 1.05 to 1.36), *I*²=0%]. This suggests a synergy occurs between acupuncture and lifestyle modification.

5. Acupuncture plus anti-hypertensive drugs vs. antihypertensive drugs

Five studies with 365 patients compared treatments of acupuncture plus anti-hypertensive drugs vs. anti-hypertensive drugs alone for blood pressure effects [28,31,33,44,45], and 7 studies with 517 patients reported efficacy rates for these 2 treatments [21,26,28,31,33,44,45]. Both SBP and DBP changes, as well as efficacy rates, were higher in acupuncture plus antihypertensive drug treatment than in treatment with anti-hypertensive drugs alone [SBP: MD=9.8 mmHg (95% CI: 2.95 to 16.65), *l*²=94%; DBP: MD=7.82 mmHg (95% CI: 4.67 to 10.96), *l*²=79%; RR=1.17 (95% CI: 1.08 to 1.27), *l*²=0%].

6. Acupuncture plus anti-hypertensive drugs vs. sham acupuncture plus anti-hypertensive drugs

Two studies with 170 patients compared the treatments of acupuncture plus anti-hypertensive drugs and sham acupuncture plus anti-hypertensive drugs treatments on blood pressure [27,49]. Changes in SBP and DBP differed between these treatment groups (SBP: MD=8.82 mmHg) (95% CI; 5.1 to 12.54), l^2 =35%; DBP: MD=4.44 mmHg (95% CI: 1.7 to 7.19) l^2 =36%)

7. Electro-acupuncture vs. anti-hypertensive drugs

Three studies with 200 patients reported SBP and DBP changes with electroacupuncture vs. anti-hypertensive drugs [32,36,42] and two (n=99) reported on efficacy rate [32,36]. Electroacupuncture and anti-hypertensive drugs treatments showed similar SBP and DBP magnitude changes and efficacy rates [SBP: MD=1.63 mmHg (95% Cl: -3.25 to 6.52), l^2 =57%; DBP: MD=-1.98 mmHg (95% Cl: -4.85 to 0.62), l^2 =31%; RR=0.94 (95% Cl: 0.76 to 1.16), l^2 =0%].

8. Electro-acupuncture plus anti-hypertensive drugs vs. antihypertensive drugs

Only 1 study with 59 patients compared treatment effects of electro-acupuncture plus Lotensin vs. Lotensin alone on blood

	Acupu	nture th	erapy	••	Control	_ .		Mean difference	Mean difference
tudy or subgroup	Mean	SD	Total	Mean	SD	Total	Weight	IV. Kandom, 95% Cl	IV. Kandom, 95% Cl
hen BG 2006	6.83	7 10	30	7 15	6 13	30	17 4%	_0.32[_3.70.3.06]	1
hen NY 2010	29 51	16.82	40	18 36	17 28	40	8.5%	11 15 [3 68, 18 62]	
Then YF 2000	30.43	16.61	35	34.66	18.22	35	7.5%	-4.23 [-12.40, 3.94]	
ian L 2008	18.17	7	30	19.77	4.33	30	18.6%	-1.60 [-4.55, 1.35]	
Vu YR 2011	2.488	17.6	60	18.69	18.4	60	10.2%	6.19 [-0.25, 12.63]	
lie B 2014	27.57	11.77	30	23.86	9.12	30	12.4%	3.71 [-1.62, 9.04]	+
ling H 2016	26.49	13.49	31	2.453	11.65	32	10.6%	1.96 [-4.27, 8.19]	
hang Y 2012 S ubtotal (95% CI)	12.21	3.72	14 270	13.35	7.28	14 271	14.9% 100.0%	-1.14 [-5.42, 3.14] 1.40 [- 1.32, 4.12]	•
leterogeneity: Tau ² =0.09; Chi ² =16.43, df=7 est for overall effect: Z=1.01 (P=0.31)	r (P=0.02); I²=57%)						
.1.2 Acupuncture vs. No treatment									
iu Y 2015 ubtotal (95% CI)	6.5	11.4	15 15	1.3	11.5	15 15	100.0% 100.0 %	5.20 [–2.99, 13.39] 5.20 [–2.99, 13.39]	-
leterogeneity: Not applicable fest for overall effect: Z=1.24 (P=0.21)									
.1.3 Acupuncture vs. Sham acupunc	ture								
hoi WJ 2015	5.08	7.87	25	-0.4	3.97	25	45.4%	5.48 [2.02, 8.94]	-=-
(im HM 2012	-3	9.84	12	0.3	6.63	16	33.7%	-3.30 [-9.75, 3.15]	-=+
heng Y 2016	5.22	9.7	14	4.22	17.66	14	20.9%	1.00 [-9.55, 11.55]	<u> </u>
ubtotal (95% Cl)			51			55	100.0%	1.59 [-4.63, 7.80]	-
leterogeneity: Tau ² =19.05; Chi ² =5.74, df=2 est for overall effect: Z=0.50 (P=0.62)	(P=0.06); l²=65%)						
.1.4 Acupuncture plus lifestyle vs. L	ifestyle								
un J 2009	20.18	8.51	44	14.08	9.49	43	27.9%	6.10 [2.31, 9.89]	-=-
Vu XM 2015	14.06	5.39	49	3.58	5.67	50	34.9%	10.48 [8.30, 12.66]	*
hao DJ 2003	35.25	3.75	30	21.75	2.25	30	37.1%	13.50 [11.94, 15.06]	
ubtotal (95% CI)			123			123	100.0%	10.38[6./2, 14.04]	•
leterogeneity: Tau ² =8.77; Chi ² =14.63, df=2 est for overall effect: Z=5.55 (P<0.00001)	(P=0.00	07); l ² =8	5%						
. 1.5 Acupuncture plus antinyperten	sive vs.	Апсіпур	ertensiv	2					
luang F 2007	22.8	17.69	30	18.19	18.41	30	16.5%	4.61 [-4.53, 13.75]	
uo H 2015 han 7K 2007	39.65	6./9	44	33.93	1.42	46	22.4%	5./2[/./8,8.66]	
ileli ZK 2007 ibang VR 2011	دد 43 50	1.425	23 50	31 78	1.425	25 40	23.3% 20.1%	17.23 [10.40, 10.04] 11.81 [6.04, 17.58]	
hang YL 2005	40.59	16.96	45	32.9	18	30	17.6%	7.69 [-0.44, 15.82]	
ubtotal (95% CI)	10137	10020	194	5217		171	100.0%	9.80 [2.95, 16.65]	•
leterogeneity: Tau ² =52.15; Chi ² =68.33, df= est for overall effect: Z=2.80 (P=0.005)	4 (P<0.0	0001); l²=	=94%						
.1.6 Acupuncture plus antihyperten	sive vs.	Sham a	cupunctu	re plus an	tihyper	tensive			
laschskampf FA 2007	6	13.71	72	-1	11.08	68	52.1%	7.00 [2.88, 11.12]	
in C 2013	14.8		15	4	6.7	15	47.9%	10.80 [6.41, 15.19]	
ubtotal (95% CI) leterogeneity: Tau²=2.51; Chi²=1.53, df=1 est for overall effect: 7—4.65 (P<0.00001)	(P=0.22);	l²=35%	87			83	100.0%	8.82 [5.10, 12.54]	•
1 7 Flortroacununcturo ve Antihum	artanci	10							
. 1.7 Electroacupulicture vs. Antinyp		10.70	10	15.55	11.00		22.00/	0.075 4.00 4.55	
/12 1 2011 Van WL 2000	14.48	12.72	40	15.35	11.99	40	33.9%	-0.87 [-6.29, 4.55]	1
van vvj 2009 Jang DH 2010	18.3 14.67	9./8 10.46	30 30	19.05	11.20	30 20	34.3% 31.7%	-0.75 [-0.09, 4.59] 6 89 [1 04 12 74]	
ubtotal (95% CI)	14.07	10.40	100	1.10	12.30	100	100.0%	1.63 [-3.25, 6.52]	•
leterogeneity: Tau ² =10.67; Chi ² =4.68, df=2 est for overall effect: Z=0.66 (P=0.51) . 1.8 Electroacupuncture plus antihv	(P=0.10); I²=57% ive vs. A	ntihvper	tensive					
Vang (2006	74 3	11 1	30	15 18	9 N7	20	100.0%	9 17 [3 96 14 79]	_
ubtotal (95% CI)	2 7 .J		30	01.0	2.07	29	100.0%	9.12 [3.96, 14.28]	
leterogeneity: Not applicable est for overall effect: Z=3.46 (P=0.0005)									
									· · · · · · · · · · · ·
									-25 0 25 50
act for subgroup differences (L:) 25 of 10	_7 (D ^	00051.12						-	

Figure 3. Forest plot of SBP magnitude changes in all 30 trials.

	Acupu	nture th	erapy		Control			Mean difference	Mean difference
tudy or subgroup	Mean	SD	Total	Mean	SD	Total	Weight	IV. Kandom, 95% CI	IV. Random, 95% CI
.2. i Acupuncture vs. Antinypertensi ihen BG 2006	ve 13 71	2.39	30	12 3	3 74	30	15 4%	1.41 [-0.18.3.00]	L
hen NY 2010	15.91	8.18	40	12.23	9.67	40	12.0%	3.68 [-0.25, 7.61]	-
hen YF 2000	9.2	11.86	35	14.48	10.94	35	9.8%	-5.28 [-10.63, 0.07]	
ian L 2008	11.4	5.33	30	12.13	4.11	30	14.4%	-0.73 [-3.14, 1.68]	
/u YR 2011	12.51	1.036	60	12.5	9.27	60	12.7%	0.01 [-3.51, 3.53]	
ie B 2014	23.46	8.31	30	9.93	9.25	30	11.1%	13.53 [9.08, 17.98]	
ing H 2016	21.77	11.41	31	16.98	10.4	32	9.7%	4.79 [-0.61, 10.19]	+
hang Y 2012	8.2	2.39	14	8	3.07	14	14.9%	0.20 [-1.84, 2.24]	+
ubtotal (95% CI)			270			2/1	100.0%	2.04 [-0.59, 4.67]	
eterogeneity: Tau ² =11.02; Chi ² =42.24, df= est for overall effect: Z=1.52 (P=0.13)	7 (P<0.0	0001); l²=	83%						
.2.2 Acupuncture vs. No treatment	4.0	5.2	15	10	0	15	100.004	6 10 [1 27 10 02]	
iu i 2015 Jubtotal (95% (1)	4.9	5.2	15	-1.2	ð	15	100.0%	6.10[1.27, 10.93]	
laterogeneity: Net applicable						CI.	100.070	0.10[1.27, 10.75]	
est for overall effect: Z=2.48 (P=0.01)									
2.3 Acupuncture vs. Sham acupunct	ture		25				FT D C		
hoi WJ 2015	3.2	6.76	25	1.84	2.84	25	57.3%	1.36 [-1.51, 4.23]	
.IM HM 2012 beng V 2016	-1.05	0.11 7 //	1Z 14	-0.21	5.55 10 7	16 14	29.3%	-0.84 [-5.24, 3.56]	
ultotal (95% (I)	-0.42	7.44	14 51	3.05	10.7	14	13.3% 100 00%	-4.07 [-10.90, 2.76] -0.01 [-2.50, 2.57]	
leterogeneity: Tau ² =0.87: Chi ² =2.34. df=2 (P=0.31).	1 ² =15%	1			22	100.0%	-0.01[-2.39, 2.37]	T
est for overall effect: Z=0.01 (P=0.99)									
2.4 Acupuncture plus lifestyle vs. Li	festyle	5.24	4.4	<i>~</i> ~ ~	() (42	21.69/	1 (41, 0.04, 4.22)	_
IN J 2009	8.35	5.34	44	6./1	6.84	43	31.6%	1.64 [-0.94, 4.22]	
ru Aivi 2013 hao DI 2003	11.90 15	5.05 1.5	49 30	1.0	/.)/ 15	20 20	31.8% 36.5%	10.30 [7.83, 12.91] 5 25 [7 70 6 01]	
ubtotal (95% CI)	CI	1.5	123	7.13	1.1	123	100.0%	5.74 [1 94 9 54]	
eterogeneity: Tau ² =10.14; Chi ² =23.17, df=	2 (P<0.0	0001); l ² =	:91%			125	100.070	5.7 ([1.7, 7.J4]	-
est for overall effect: Z=2.96 (P=0.003) .2.5 Acupuncture plus antihyperten	sive vs	Antihvn	ertensiv	2					
luang E 2007	10 71	۹ (۱ ۸	20	- 01	10 24	20	16 30%	3 21 [_1 60 9 22]	
uo H 2015	19 78	4.64	44	12 83	4 39	46	24.8%	6.45 [4 58 8 32]	
hen ZK 2007	18.	5.025	25	8.25	2.625	25	23.9%	9.75 [7.53, 11.97]	
hang YB 2011	20.76	10.67	50	6.48	9.44	40	18.4%	14.28 [10.12, 18.44]	
hang YL 2005	12.44	10.79	45	8.12	10.27	30	16.5%	4.32 [-0.52, 9.16]	
ubtotal (95% CI)			194			171	100.0%	7.82 [4.67, 10.96]	•
eterogeneity: Tau ² =9.47; Chi ² =19.46, df=4 est for overall effect: Z=4.87 (P<0.00001)	(P=0.00	06); l ² =79	1%						
.2.6 Acupuncture plus antihyperten	sive vs.	Sham ao	upunctu	ıre plus an	tihyper	tensive			
laschskampf FA 2007	3	9.85	72	0	9.34	68	48.4%	3.00 [-0.18, 6.18]	<u>⊢</u> ,
'in C 2013	6.9	3.7	15	1.1	4.7	15	51.6%	5.80 [2.77, 8.83]	
ubtotal (95% CI)			87			83	100.0%	4.44 [1.70, 7.19]	•
leterogeneity: Tau ² =1.41; Chi ² =1.56, df=1 (est for overall effect: Z=3.18 (P=0.001)	P=0.21);	l ² =36%							
2.7 Electroacupuncture vs. Antihyp	ertensiv	/e							
1a ZY 2011	7.12	6.49	40	8.88	6.51	40	46.2%	-1.76 [-4.61, 1.09]	-=+
Van WJ 2009	8.8	6.24	30	13.09	8.43	30	32.8%	-4.29 [-8.04, -0.54]	
ang DH 2010	16.32	10.24	30	15.2	9.75	30	21.0%	1.12 [-3.94, 6.18]	
ubtotal (95% CI)	D 0	12	100			100	100.0%	-1.98 [-4.58,0.62]	•
leterogeneity: Iau ² =1.70; Chi ² =2.92, df=2 (est for overall effect: Z=1.49 (P=0.13)	r=0.23);	1'=31%							
2.8 Electroacupuncture plus antihy	pertens	ive vs. A	ntihyper	tensive					
/ang C 2006	10.7	11.1	30	6.24	6.94	29	100.0%	4.46 [-0.25, 9.17]	+
ubtotal (95% CI) leterogeneity: Not applicable			30			29	100.0%	4.46 [-0.25, 9.17]	•
est for overall effect: Z=1.86 (P=0.06)									
est for overall effect: Z=1.86 (P=0.06)	- 15	0000	70.451						15 0 10 20
est for overall effect: Z=1.86 (P=0.06) est for subgroup differences: Chi ² =33.56, df	=7 (P<0.	0001); l²=	=79.1%					-20 Envoire	-15 0 10 20

Figure 4. Forest plot of DBP magnitude changes in all 30 trials.

	Acupunture	therapy	Con	trol		Risk ratio	Risk ratio
Study or subgroup	Events	Total	Events	Total	Weight	M-H, Random, 95% Cl	M-H, Random, 95% Cl
1.3.1 Acupuncture vs. Antihyperter	nsive						
Chen BG 2006	27	30	20	30	9.5%	1.35 [1.02, 1.79]	
Chen NY 2010	38	40	32	40	12.8%	1.19 [1.00, 1.41]	
Chen Q 2011	25	30	17	30	7.7%	1.47 [1.03, 2.09]	
Chen YF 2000	23	35	30	35	9.6%	0.77 [0.58, 1.01] –	
Tian L 2008	25	30	26	30	11.5%	0.96 [0.78, 1.19]	
Wu YR 2011	54	60	40	60	12.0%	1.35 [1.11. 1.65]	
Xie B 2014	28	30	27	30	13.4%	1.04 [0.89, 1.21]	
King H 2016	31	31	32	32	15.6%	1.00 [0.95, 1.88]	+
Zhang ZH 2012	24	30	18	30	7.9%	1.33 [0.95, 1.88]	
Subtotal (95% CI)		316		317	100.0%	1.12 [0.98, 1.28]	•
lotal events Heterogeneity: Tau ² =0.03; Chi ² =37.15, df [.] Test for overall effect: Z=1.65 (P=0.10)	275 ==8 (P<0.0001); l ² =	-78%	242				
1.3.2 Acupuncture plus lifemodific	ation vs. Lifemo	dification					
Sun J 2009	41	44	35	43	63.5%	1.14 [0.97, 1.35]	┼╋╌
<i>N</i> u XM 2015	44	50	34	50	36.5%	1.29 [1.04, 1.61]	
Subtotal (95% CI) Total events Heterogeneity: Tau²=0 00: Chi²=0 85. df=	85 =1 (P=0 36): l ² =0%	94	69	93	100.0%	1.20 [1.05, 1.36]	•
.3.3 Acupuncture plus antihyperter	nsive vs. Antihy	pertensive	22	20	0.20/	1 10 [0 01 1 53]	
LIIEII J 2010	20	50	22	50	9.5%	1.10[0.91, 1.33]	
Luing E 2007	36	40	24	40	12.2%	1.15 [0.92, 1.44]	
nualiy r 2007	20	50	24	50	19.05	1.00 [0.00, 1.30]	
Luo n 2013	41	44	22	40	10.95	1.22 [1.02, 1.47]	
SHEH ZA 2007	24	25	21	25	17.3%	1.14 [0.95, 1.38]	
Zildily TD 2011	44	50	29	40	15.2%	1.21 [0.96, 1.31]	
Linang YL 2005 Subtotal (05% CI)	43	45	24	30	17.2%	1.19 [0.99, 1.44]	
		270		247	100.0%	1.17 [1.06, 1.27]	
Total events Heterogeneity: Tau²=0.00; Chi²=0.92, df= Test for overall effect: Z=3.99 (P<0.0001)	242 ∈6 (P=0.99); I²=0%	1	188				
.3.4 Electroacupuncture vs. Antihy	pertensive						
Sun J 2009	28	40	30	40	61.9%	0.93 [0.71, 1.22]	
Wu XM 2015	20	30	21	30	38.1%	0.95 [0.67, 1.34]	
Subtotal (95% CI)		70		70	100.0%	0.94 [0.76, 1.16]	-
Total events Heterogeneity: Tau²=0.00; Chi²=0.01, df= Test for overall effect: Z=0.56 (P=0.57)	48 =1 (P=0.93); I ² =0%	I	51				
Test for subgroup differences: Chi ² =4.19, c	lf=3 (P=0.24); I²=	28.4%					

Figure 5. Forest plot of the efficacy rate of acupuncture therapy in all trials.

	Exp	perimer	tal		Control			Mean difference	Mean difference
Study or subgroup	Mean	SD	Total	Mean	SD	Total	Weight	IV. Random, 95% Cl	IV. Random, 95% Cl
2.1.1 Acupuncture vs. β-blocker									
Chen BG 2006	6.83	7.19	30	7.15	6.13	30	17.4%	-0.32 [-3.70, 3.06]	
Wu YR 2011	24.88	17.61	60	18.69	18.41	60	10.2%	6.19 [-0.26, 12.64]	
Subtotal (95% CI)			90			90	27.5%	2.33 [-3.94, 8.60]	
Heterogeneity: Tau ² =14.29; Chi ² =3.07, df= Test for overall effect: Z=0.73 (P=0.47)	=1 (P=0.08); l²=67%	Ď						
2.1.2 Acupuncture vs. CCB									
Chap VE 2000	20 /2	16.61	25	24.66	10 22	25	7 504	1 22 [12 10 2 01]	
Citeli ir 2000	30.43 10.17	10.01	20	54.00 10.77	10.22	20	7.3%	-4.25 [-12.40, 5.94]	
Han L 2008	18.17	/	30	19.77	4.33	30	18.0%	-1.00 [-4.55, 1.55]	
Subtotal (95% CI)			05			65	20.1%	-1.90[-4.67, 0.87]	
Heterogeneity: Tau ² =0.00; Chi ² =0.35, df= ⁻ Test for overall effect: Z=1.35 (P=0.18)	1 (P=0.55);	l ² =0%							
2.1.3 Acupuncture vs. ACEI									
Xie B 2014	27.57	11.77	30	23.86	9.12	30	12.4%	3.71 [-1.62, 9.04]	+
Xina H 2016	26.49	13.49	31	24.53	11.65	32	10.6%	1.96 [-4.27, 8.19]	
Zhang Y 2012	12 21	3 72	14	13 35	7 28	14	14 9%	-1 14 [-5 42, 3 14]	
Subtotal (95% CI)			75			76	37.9%	-1.90 [-4.67, 0.87]	•
Subtotal (5570 Cl)			75			70	57.570	1.50[4.07, 0.07]	
Heterogeneity: Tau ² =0.16; Chi ² =2.04, df= Test for overall effect: Z=0.69 (P=0.49) 2.1.4 Acupuncture vs. ARB	2 (P=0.36);	l²=2%							
Chen NY 2010	29.51	16.82	40	18.36	17.28	40	8.5%	11.15 [3.68, 18.62]	
Subtotal (95% CI)			40	.000		40	8.5%	11.15 [3.68, 18.62]	
Heterogeneity: Not applicable			10			10	0.370	11.15 [5.00, 10.02]	
Test for overall effect: 7–2.92 (P–0.003)									
Total (95% CI)			270			271	100.0%	1.40 [-1.32, 4.12]	•
Heterogeneity: Tau ² =8.09: Chi ² =16.43. df=	=7 (P=0.02): l ² =57%	'n						-+ + + +
Test for overall effect: Z=1.01 (P=0.31) Test for subgroup differences: Chi ² =11.14,	df=3 (P=0.	.01); l²=7	3.1%					—20 Favours [i	– 10 0 10 20 control] Favours [exprerimental]
	Exp	perimer	tal		Control			Mean difference	Mean difference
Study or subgroup	Mean	SD	Total	Mean	SD	Total	Weight	IV. Random, 95% Cl	IV. Random, 95% Cl
2.2.1 Acupuncture vs. B-blocker									
Lizit neupunceure isi p bioener									
Chen BG 2006	13.7	2.39	30	12.3	3.74	30	15.4%	1.40 [-0.19, 2.99]	-
Chen BG 2006 Wu YR 2011	13.7 12.51	2.39 10.36	30 60	12.3 12.5	3.74 9.27	30 60	15.4% 12.7%	1.40 [-0.19, 2.99] 0.01 [-3.51, 3.53]	
Chen BG 2006 Wu YR 2011 Subtotal (95% CI)	13.7 12.51	2.39 10.36	30 60 90	12.3 12.5	3.74 9.27	30 60 90	15.4% 12.7% 28.1 %	1.40 [-0.19, 2.99] 0.01 [-3.51, 3.53] 1.16 [-0.28, 2.61]	
Chen BG 2006 Wu YR 2011 Subtotal (95% Cl) Heterogeneity: Tau ² =0.00; Chi ² =0.50, df= Test for overall effect: Z=1.58 (P=0.11)	13.7 12.51 1 (P=0.48);	2.39 10.36 I ² =0%	30 60 90	12.3 12.5	3.74 9.27	30 60 90	15.4% 12.7% 28.1 %	1.40 [-0.19, 2.99] 0.01 [-3.51, 3.53] 1.16 [-0.28, 2.61]	•
Chen BG 2006 Wu YR 2011 Subtotal (95% Cl) Heterogeneity: Tau ² =0.00; Chi ² =0.50, df= Test for overall effect: Z=1.58 (P=0.11) 2.2.2 Acupuncture vs. CCB	13.7 12.51 1 (P=0.48);	2.39 10.36 I ² =0%	30 60 90	12.3 12.5	3.74 9.27	30 60 90	15.4% 12.7% 28.1%	1.40 [-0.19, 2.99] 0.01 [-3.51, 3.53] 1.16 [-0.28, 2.61]	•
Chen BG 2006 Wu YR 2011 Subtotal (95% Cl) Heterogeneity: Tau ² =0.00; Chi ² =0.50, df= Test for overall effect: Z=1.58 (P=0.11) 2.2.2 Acupuncture vs. CCB Chen YF 2000	13.7 12.51 1 (P=0.48); 9.2	2.39 10.36 1 ² =0% 11.86	30 60 90 35	12.3 12.5 14.48	3.74 9.27 10.94	30 60 90 35	15.4% 12.7% 28.1% 9.8%	1.40 [-0.19, 2.99] 0.01 [-3.51, 3.53] 1.16 [-0.28, 2.61] -5.28 [-10.63, 0.07]	•
Chen BG 2006 Wu YR 2011 Subtotal (95% Cl) Heterogeneity: Tau ² =0.00; Chi ² =0.50, df= Test for overall effect: Z=1.58 (P=0.11) 2.2.2 Acupuncture vs. CCB Chen YF 2000 Tian L 2008	13.7 12.51 1 (P=0.48); 9.2 11.4	2.39 10.36 1 ² =0% 11.86 5.33	30 60 90 35 30	12.3 12.5 14.48 12.13	3.74 9.27 10.94 4.11	30 60 90 35 30	15.4% 12.7% 28.1% 9.8% 14.4%	1.40 [-0.19, 2.99] 0.01 [-3.51, 3.53] 1.16 [-0.28, 2.61] -5.28 [-10.63, 0.07] -0.73 [-3.14, 1.68]	+ + +
Chen BG 2006 Wu YR 2011 Subtotal (95% Cl) Heterogeneity: Tau ² =0.00; Chi ² =0.50, df= Test for overall effect: Z=1.58 (P=0.11) 2.2.2 Acupuncture vs. CCB Chen YF 2000 Tian L 2008 Subtotal (95% Cl)	13.7 12.51 1 (P=0.48); 9.2 11.4	2.39 10.36 1 ² =0% 11.86 5.33	30 60 90 35 30 65	12.3 12.5 14.48 12.13	3.74 9.27 10.94 4.11	30 60 90 35 30 65	15.4% 12.7% 28.1% 9.8% 14.4% 24.2%	1.40 [-0.19, 2.99] 0.01 [-3.51, 3.53] 1.16 [-0.28, 2.61] -5.28 [-10.63, 0.07] -0.73 [-3.14, 1.68] -2.35 [-6.63, 1.92]	
Chen BG 2006 Wu YR 2011 Subtotal (95% Cl) Heterogeneity: Tau ² =0.00; Chi ² =0.50, df= Test for overall effect: Z=1.58 (P=0.11) 2.2.2 Acupuncture vs. CCB Chen YF 2000 Tian L 2008 Subtotal (95% Cl) Heterogeneity: Tau ² =5.88; Chi ² =2.31, df= Test for overall effect: Z=1 08 (P=0.28)	13.7 12.51 1 (P=0.48); 9.2 11.4 1 (P=0.13);	2.39 10.36 1 ² =0% 11.86 5.33	30 60 90 35 30 65	12.3 12.5 14.48 12.13	3.74 9.27 10.94 4.11	30 60 90 35 30 65	15.4% 12.7% 28.1% 9.8% 14.4% 24.2%	1.40 [-0.19, 2.99] 0.01 [-3.51, 3.53] 1.16 [-0.28, 2.61] -5.28 [-10.63, 0.07] -0.73 [-3.14, 1.68] -2.35 [-6.63, 1.92]	* * *
Chen BG 2006 Wu YR 2011 Subtotal (95% Cl) Heterogeneity: Tau ² =0.00; Chi ² =0.50, df= Test for overall effect: Z=1.58 (P=0.11) 2.2.2 Acupuncture vs. CCB Chen YE 2000 Tian L 2008 Subtotal (95% Cl) Heterogeneity: Tau ² =5.88; Chi ² =2.31, df= Test for overall effect: Z=1.08 (P=0.28) D 2 2 Acupuncture vs. 2521	13.7 12.51 1 (P=0.48); 9.2 11.4 1 (P=0.13);	2.39 10.36 1 ² =0% 11.86 5.33 1 ² =57%	30 60 90 35 30 65	12.3 12.5 14.48 12.13	3.74 9.27 10.94 4.11	30 60 90 35 30 65	15.4% 12.7% 28.1% 9.8% 14.4% 24.2%	1.40 [-0.19, 2.99] 0.01 [-3.51, 3.53] 1.16 [-0.28, 2.61] -5.28 [-10.63, 0.07] -0.73 [-3.14, 1.68] -2.35 [-6.63, 1.92]	•
Chen BG 2006 Wu YR 2011 Subtotal (95% Cl) Heterogeneity: Tau ² =0.00; Chi ² =0.50, df= Test for overall effect: Z=1.58 (P=0.11) 2.2.2 Acupuncture vs. CCB Chen YF 2000 Tian L 2008 Subtotal (95% Cl) Heterogeneity: Tau ² =5.88; Chi ² =2.31, df= Test for overall effect: Z=1.08 (P=0.28) 2.2.3 Acupuncture vs. ACEI	13.7 12.51 1 (P=0.48); 9.2 11.4 1 (P=0.13);	2.39 10.36 1 ² =0% 11.86 5.33 1 ² =57%	30 60 90 35 30 65	12.3 12.5 14.48 12.13	3.74 9.27 10.94 4.11	30 60 90 35 30 65	15.4% 12.7% 28.1% 9.8% 14.4% 24.2%	1.40 [-0.19, 2.99] 0.01 [-3.51, 3.53] 1.16 [-0.28, 2.61] -5.28 [-10.63, 0.07] -0.73 [-3.14, 1.68] -2.35 [-6.63, 1.92]	
Chen BG 2006 Wu YR 2011 Subtotal (95% Cl) Heterogeneity: Tau ² =0.00; Chi ² =0.50, df= Test for overall effect: Z=1.58 (P=0.11) 2.2.2 Acupuncture vs. CCB Chen YF 2000 Tian L 2008 Subtotal (95% Cl) Heterogeneity: Tau ² =5.88; Chi ² =2.31, df= Test for overall effect: Z=1.08 (P=0.28) 2.2.3 Acupuncture vs. ACEI Xie B 2014 Xie U 2016	13.7 12.51 1 (P=0.48); 9.2 11.4 1 (P=0.13); 23.46	2.39 10.36 1 ² =0% 11.86 5.33 1 ² =57% 8.31	30 60 90 35 30 65	12.3 12.5 14.48 12.13	3.74 9.27 10.94 4.11 9.25	30 60 90 35 30 65	15.4% 12.7% 28.1% 9.8% 14.4% 24.2%	1.40 [-0.19, 2.99] 0.01 [-3.51, 3.53] 1.16 [-0.28, 2.61] -5.28 [-10.63, 0.07] -0.73 [-3.14, 1.68] -2.35 [-6.63, 1.92]	•
Chen BG 2006 Wu YR 2011 Subtotal (95% Cl) Heterogeneity: Tau ² =0.00; Chi ² =0.50, df= Test for overall effect: Z=1.58 (P=0.11) 2.2.2 Acupuncture vs. CCB Chen YF 2000 Tian L 2008 Subtotal (95% Cl) Heterogeneity: Tau ² =5.88; Chi ² =2.31, df= Test for overall effect: Z=1.08 (P=0.28) 2.2.3 Acupuncture vs. ACEI Xie B 2014 Xing H 2016	13.7 12.51 1 (P=0.48); 9.2 11.4 1 (P=0.13); 23.46 21.77	2.39 10.36 1 ² =0% 11.86 5.33 1 ² =57% 8.31 11.41	30 60 90 35 30 65 30 30 31	12.3 12.5 14.48 12.13 9.93 16.98	3.74 9.27 10.94 4.11 9.25 10.4	30 60 90 35 30 65 30 30 32	15.4% 12.7% 28.1% 9.8% 14.4% 24.2% 11.1% 9.7%	1.40 [-0.19, 2.99] 0.01 [-3.51, 3.53] 1.16 [-0.28, 2.61] -5.28 [-10.63, 0.07] -0.73 [-3.14, 1.68] -2.35 [-6.63, 1.92] 13.53 [9.08, 17.98] 4.79 [-0.61, 10.19]	
Chen BG 2006 Wu YR 2011 Subtotal (95% Cl) Heterogeneity: Tau ² =0.00; Chi ² =0.50, df= Test for overall effect: Z=1.58 (P=0.11) 2.2.2 Acupuncture vs. CCB Chen YF 2000 Tian L 2008 Subtotal (95% Cl) Heterogeneity: Tau ² =5.88; Chi ² =2.31, df= Test for overall effect: Z=1.08 (P=0.28) 2.2.3 Acupuncture vs. ACEI Xie B 2014 Xing H 2016 Zhang Y 2012	13.7 12.51 1 (P=0.48); 9.2 11.4 1 (P=0.13); 23.46 21.77 8.2	2.39 10.36 1 ² =0% 11.86 5.33 1 ² =57% 8.31 11.41 2.39	30 60 90 35 30 65 30 31 14	12.3 12.5 14.48 12.13 9.93 16.98 8	3.74 9.27 10.94 4.11 9.25 10.4 3.07	30 60 90 35 30 65 30 32 14	15.4% 12.7% 28.1% 9.8% 14.4% 24.2% 11.1% 9.7% 14.9%	1.40 [-0.19, 2.99] 0.01 [-3.51, 3.53] 1.16 [-0.28, 2.61] -5.28 [-10.63, 0.07] -0.73 [-3.14, 1.68] -2.35 [-6.63, 1.92] 13.53 [9.08, 17.98] 4.79 [-0.61, 10.19] 0.20 [-1.84, 2.24]	
Chen BG 2006 Wu YR 2011 Subtotal (95% Cl) Heterogeneity: Tau ² =0.00; Chi ² =0.50, df= Test for overall effect: Z=1.58 (P=0.11) 2.2.2 Acupuncture vs. CCB Chen YF 2000 Tian L 2008 Subtotal (95% Cl) Heterogeneity: Tau ² =5.88; Chi ² =2.31, df= Test for overall effect: Z=1.08 (P=0.28) 2.2.3 Acupuncture vs. ACEI Xing H 2016 Zhang Y 2012 Subtotal (95% Cl)	13.7 12.51 1 (P=0.48); 9.2 11.4 1 (P=0.13); 23.46 21.77 8.2	2.39 10.36 1 ² =0% 11.86 5.33 1 ² =57% 8.31 11.41 2.39	30 60 90 35 30 65 30 31 14 75	12.3 12.5 14.48 12.13 9.93 16.98 8	3.74 9.27 10.94 4.11 9.25 10.4 3.07	30 60 90 35 30 65 30 32 14 76	15.4% 12.7% 28.1% 9.8% 14.4% 24.2% 11.1% 9.7% 14.9% 35.7%	1.40 [-0.19, 2.99] 0.01 [-3.51, 3.53] 1.16 [-0.28, 2.61] -5.28 [-10.63, 0.07] -0.73 [-3.14, 1.68] -2.35 [-6.63, 1.92] 13.53 [9.08, 17.98] 4.79 [-0.61, 10.19] 0.20 [-1.84, 2.24] 6.04 [-2.45, 14.53]	
Chen BG 2006 Wu YR 2011 Subtotal (95% Cl) Heterogeneity: Tau ² =0.00; Chi ² =0.50, df= Test for overall effect: Z=1.58 (P=0.11) 2.2.2 Acupuncture vs. CCB Chen YF 2000 Tian L 2008 Subtotal (95% Cl) Heterogeneity: Tau ² =5.88; Chi ² =2.31, df= Test for overall effect: Z=1.08 (P=0.28) 2.2.3 Acupuncture vs. ACEI Xie B 2014 Xing H 2016 Zhang Y 2012 Subtotal (95% Cl) Heterogeneity: Tau ² =51.84; Chi ² =29.11, df Test for overall effect: Z=1.39 (P=0.16) 2.2.4 Acupuncture vs. ARB	13.7 12.51 1 (P=0.48); 9.2 11.4 1 (P=0.13); 23.46 21.77 8.2 f=2 (P<0.0	2.39 10.36 1 ² =0% 11.86 5.33 1 ² =57% 8.31 11.41 2.39 0001); I ²	30 60 90 35 30 65 30 31 14 75 93%	12.3 12.5 14.48 12.13 9.93 16.98 8	3.74 9.27 10.94 4.11 9.25 10.4 3.07	30 60 90 35 30 65 30 32 14 76	15.4% 12.7% 28.1% 9.8% 14.4% 24.2% 11.1% 9.7% 14.9% 35.7%	1.40 [-0.19, 2.99] 0.01 [-3.51, 3.53] 1.16 [-0.28, 2.61] -5.28 [-10.63, 0.07] -0.73 [-3.14, 1.68] -2.35 [-6.63, 1.92] 13.53 [9.08, 17.98] 4.79 [-0.61, 10.19] 0.20 [-1.84, 2.24] 6.04 [-2.45, 14.53]	
Chen BG 2006 Wu YR 2011 Subtotal (95% CI) Heterogeneity: Tau ² =0.00; Chi ² =0.50, df= Test for overall effect: Z=1.58 (P=0.11) 2.2.2 Acupuncture vs. CCB Chen YF 2000 Tian L 2008 Subtotal (95% CI) Heterogeneity: Tau ² =5.88; Chi ² =2.31, df= Test for overall effect: Z=1.08 (P=0.28) 2.2.3 Acupuncture vs. ACEI Xing H 2016 Zhang Y 2012 Subtotal (95% CI) Heterogeneity: Tau ² =51.84; Chi ² =29.11, df Test for overall effect: Z=1.39 (P=0.16) 2.2.4 Acupuncture vs. ARB Chen NY 2010	13.7 12.51 1 (P=0.48); 9.2 11.4 1 (P=0.13); 23.46 21.77 8.2 f=2 (P<0.0 15.91	2.39 10.36 1 ² =0% 11.86 5.33 1 ² =57% 8.31 11.41 2.39 0001); l ² = 8.18	30 60 90 35 30 65 30 31 14 75 93%	12.3 12.5 14.48 12.13 9.93 16.98 8	3.74 9.27 10.94 4.11 9.25 10.4 3.07 9.67	30 60 90 35 30 65 30 32 14 76	15.4% 12.7% 28.1% 9.8% 14.4% 24.2% 11.1% 9.7% 14.9% 35.7%	1.40 [-0.19, 2.99] 0.01 [-3.51, 3.53] 1.16 [-0.28, 2.61] -5.28 [-10.63, 0.07] -0.73 [-3.14, 1.68] -2.35 [-6.63, 1.92] 13.53 [9.08, 17.98] 4.79 [-0.61, 10.19] 0.20 [-1.84, 2.24] 6.04 [-2.45, 14.53]	
Chen BG 2006 Wu YR 2011 Subtotal (95% Cl) Heterogeneity: Tau ² =0.00; Chi ² =0.50, df= Test for overall effect: Z=1.58 (P=0.11) 2.2.2 Acupuncture vs. CCB Chen YF 2000 Tian L 2008 Subtotal (95% Cl) Heterogeneity: Tau ² =5.88; Chi ² =2.31, df= Test for overall effect: Z=1.08 (P=0.28) 2.2.3 Acupuncture vs. ACEI Xing H 2016 Zhang Y 2012 Subtotal (95% Cl) Heterogeneity: Tau ² =51.84; Chi ² =29.11, df Test for overall effect: Z=1.39 (P=0.16) 2.2.4 Acupuncture vs. ARB Chen NY 2010 Subtotal (95% Cl)	13.7 12.51 1 (P=0.48); 9.2 11.4 1 (P=0.13); 23.46 21.77 8.2 f=2 (P<0.0 15.91	2.39 10.36 1 ² =0% 11.86 5.33 1 ² =57% 8.31 11.41 2.39 00001); l ² 8.18	30 60 90 35 30 65 30 31 14 75 93% 40 40	12.3 12.5 14.48 12.13 9.93 16.98 8 12.23	3.74 9.27 10.94 4.11 9.25 10.4 3.07 9.67	30 60 90 35 30 65 30 32 14 76 40 40	15.4% 12.7% 28.1% 9.8% 14.4% 24.2% 11.1% 9.7% 14.9% 35.7% 12.0% 12.0%	1.40 [-0.19, 2.99] 0.01 [-3.51, 3.53] 1.16 [-0.28, 2.61] -5.28 [-10.63, 0.07] -0.73 [-3.14, 1.68] -2.35 [-6.63, 1.92] 13.53 [9.08, 17.98] 4.79 [-0.61, 10.19] 0.20 [-1.84, 2.24] 6.04 [-2.45, 14.53] 3.68 [-0.25, 7.61] 3.68 [-0.25, 7.61]	
Chen BG 2006 Wu YR 2011 Subtotal (95% Cl) Heterogeneity: Tau ² =0.00; Chi ² =0.50, df= Test for overall effect: Z=1.58 (P=0.11) 2.2.2 Acupuncture vs. CCB Chen YF 2000 Tian L 2008 Subtotal (95% Cl) Heterogeneity: Tau ² =5.88; Chi ² =2.31, df= Test for overall effect: Z=1.08 (P=0.28) 2.2.3 Acupuncture vs. ACEI Xie B 2014 Xing H 2016 Zhang Y 2012 Subtotal (95% Cl) Heterogeneity: Tau ² =51.84; Chi ² =29.11, df Test for overall effect: Z=1.39 (P=0.16) 2.2.4 Acupuncture vs. ARB Chen NY 2010 Subtotal (95% Cl) Heterogeneity: Not applicable	13.7 12.51 1 (P=0.48); 9.2 11.4 1 (P=0.13); 23.46 21.77 8.2 f=2 (P<0.0 15.91	2.39 10.36 1 ² =0% 11.86 5.33 1 ² =57% 8.31 11.41 2.39 00011); l ² 8.18	30 60 90 35 30 65 30 31 14 75 93% 40 40	12.3 12.5 14.48 12.13 9.93 16.98 8 12.23	3.74 9.27 10.94 4.11 9.25 10.4 3.07 9.67	30 60 90 35 30 65 30 32 14 76 40 40	15.4% 12.7% 28.1% 9.8% 14.4% 24.2% 11.1% 9.7% 14.9% 35.7% 12.0% 12.0%	1.40 [-0.19, 2.99] 0.01 [-3.51, 3.53] 1.16 [-0.28, 2.61] -5.28 [-10.63, 0.07] -0.73 [-3.14, 1.68] -2.35 [-6.63, 1.92] 13.53 [9.08, 17.98] 4.79 [-0.61, 10.19] 0.20 [-1.84, 2.24] 6.04 [-2.45, 14.53] 3.68 [-0.25, 7.61] 3.68 [-0.25, 7.61]	
Chen BG 2006 Wu YR 2011 Subtotal (95% Cl) Heterogeneity: Tau ² =0.00; Chi ² =0.50, df= Test for overall effect: Z=1.58 (P=0.11) 2.2.2 Acupuncture vs. CCB Chen YF 2000 Tian L 2008 Subtotal (95% Cl) Heterogeneity: Tau ² =5.88; Chi ² =2.31, df= Test for overall effect: Z=1.08 (P=0.28) 2.2.3 Acupuncture vs. ACEI Xie B 2014 Xing H 2016 Zhang Y 2012 Subtotal (95% Cl) Heterogeneity: Tau ² =51.84; Chi ² =29.11, df Test for overall effect: Z=1.39 (P=0.16) 2.2.4 Acupuncture vs. ARB Chen NY 2010 Subtotal (95% Cl) Heterogeneity: Not applicable Test for overall effect: Z=1.84 (P=0.07)	13.7 12.51 1 (P=0.48); 9.2 11.4 1 (P=0.13); 23.46 21.77 8.2 f=2 (P<0.0 15.91	2.39 10.36 1 ² =0% 11.86 5.33 1 ² =57% 8.31 11.41 2.39 0001); I ²	30 60 90 35 30 65 30 31 14 75 93% 40 40	12.3 12.5 14.48 12.13 9.93 16.98 8 12.23	3.74 9.27 10.94 4.11 9.25 10.4 3.07 9.67	30 60 90 35 30 65 30 32 14 76 40 40	15.4% 12.7% 28.1% 9.8% 14.4% 24.2% 11.1% 9.7% 14.9% 35.7% 12.0% 12.0%	1.40 [-0.19, 2.99] 0.01 [-3.51, 3.53] 1.16 [-0.28, 2.61] -5.28 [-10.63, 0.07] -0.73 [-3.14, 1.68] -2.35 [-6.63, 1.92] 13.53 [9.08, 17.98] 4.79 [-0.61, 10.19] 0.20 [-1.84, 2.24] 6.04 [-2.45, 14.53] 3.68 [-0.25, 7.61] 3.68 [-0.25, 7.61]	
Chen BG 2006 Wu YR 2011 Subtotal (95% Cl) Heterogeneity: Tau ² =0.00; Chi ² =0.50, df= Test for overall effect: Z=1.58 (P=0.11) 2.2.2 Acupuncture vs. CCB Chen YF 2000 Tian L 2008 Subtotal (95% Cl) Heterogeneity: Tau ² =5.88; Chi ² =2.31, df= Test for overall effect: Z=1.08 (P=0.28) 2.2.3 Acupuncture vs. ACEI Xie 8 2014 Xing H 2016 Zhang Y 2012 Subtotal (95% Cl) Heterogeneity: Tau ² =51.84; Chi ² =29.11, df Test for overall effect: Z=1.39 (P=0.16) 2.2.4 Acupuncture vs. ARB Chen NY 2010 Subtotal (95% Cl) Heterogeneity: Not applicable Test for overall effect: Z=1.84 (P=0.07) Test (05% Cl)	13.7 12.51 1 (P=0.48); 9.2 11.4 1 (P=0.13); 23.46 21.77 8.2 f=2 (P<0.0 15.91	2.39 10.36 1 ² =0% 11.86 5.33 1 ² =57% 8.31 11.41 2.39 00001); l ² 8.18	30 60 90 35 30 65 30 31 14 75 93% 40 40 40	12.3 12.5 14.48 12.13 9.93 16.98 8 12.23	3.74 9.27 10.94 4.11 9.25 10.4 3.07 9.67	30 60 90 35 30 65 30 32 14 76 40 40 40	15.4% 12.7% 28.1% 9.8% 14.4% 24.2% 11.1% 9.7% 14.9% 35.7% 12.0% 12.0%	1.40 [-0.19, 2.99] 0.01 [-3.51, 3.53] 1.16 [-0.28, 2.61] -5.28 [-10.63, 0.07] -0.73 [-3.14, 1.68] -2.35 [-6.63, 1.92] 13.53 [9.08, 17.98] 4.79 [-0.61, 10.19] 0.20 [-1.84, 2.24] 6.04 [-2.45, 14.53] 3.68 [-0.25, 7.61] 3.68 [-0.25, 7.61]	
Chen BG 2006 Wu YR 2011 Subtotal (95% CI) Heterogeneity: Tau ² =0.00; Chi ² =0.50, df= Test for overall effect: Z=1.58 (P=0.11) 2.2.2 Acupuncture vs. CCB Chen YF 2000 Tian L 2008 Subtotal (95% CI) Heterogeneity: Tau ² =5.88; Chi ² =2.31, df= Test for overall effect: Z=1.08 (P=0.28) 2.2.3 Acupuncture vs. ACEI Xing H 2016 Zhang Y 2012 Subtotal (95% CI) Heterogeneity: Tau ² =51.84; Chi ² =29.11, df Test for overall effect: Z=1.39 (P=0.16) 2.2.4 Acupuncture vs. ARB Chen NY 2010 Subtotal (95% CI) Heterogeneity: Not applicable Test for overall effect: Z=1.84 (P=0.07) Total (95% CI)	13.7 12.51 1 (P=0.48); 9.2 11.4 1 (P=0.13); 23.46 21.77 8.2 f=2 (P<0.0 15.91	2.39 10.36 1 ² =0% 11.86 5.33 1 ² =57% 8.31 11.41 2.39 0001); l ² = 8.18	30 60 90 35 30 65 30 31 14 75 93% 40 40 40	12.3 12.5 14.48 12.13 9.93 16.98 8 12.23	3.74 9.27 10.94 4.11 9.25 10.4 3.07 9.67	30 60 90 35 30 65 30 32 14 76 40 40 40	15.4% 12.7% 28.1% 9.8% 14.4% 24.2% 11.1% 9.7% 14.9% 35.7% 12.0% 12.0%	1.40 [-0.19, 2.99] 0.01 [-3.51, 3.53] 1.16 [-0.28, 2.61] -5.28 [-10.63, 0.07] -0.73 [-3.14, 1.68] -2.35 [-6.63, 1.92] 13.53 [9.08, 17.98] 4.79 [-0.61, 10.19] 0.20 [-1.84, 2.24] 6.04 [-2.45, 14.53] 3.68 [-0.25, 7.61] 3.68 [-0.25, 7.61]	
Chen BG 2006 Wu YR 2011 Subtotal (95% Cl) Heterogeneity: Tau ² =0.00; Chi ² =0.50, df= Test for overall effect: Z=1.58 (P=0.11) 2.2.2 Acupuncture vs. CCB Chen YF 2000 Tian L 2008 Subtotal (95% Cl) Heterogeneity: Tau ² =5.88; Chi ² =2.31, df= Test for overall effect: Z=1.08 (P=0.28) 2.2.3 Acupuncture vs. ACEI Xing H 2016 Zhang Y 2012 Subtotal (95% Cl) Heterogeneity: Tau ² =51.84; Chi ² =29.11, df Test for overall effect: Z=1.39 (P=0.16) 2.2.4 Acupuncture vs. ARB Chen NY 2010 Subtotal (95% Cl) Heterogeneity: Not applicable Test for overall effect: Z=1.84 (P=0.07) Total (95% Cl) Heterogeneity: Tau ² =11.01; Chi ² =42.24, df	13.7 12.51 1 (P=0.48); 9.2 11.4 1 (P=0.13); 23.46 21.77 8.2 f=2 (P<0.0 15.91	2.39 10.36 1 ² =0% 11.86 5.33 1 ² =57% 8.31 11.41 2.39 0001); I ² = 8.18	30 60 90 35 30 65 30 31 14 75 93% 40 40 40 270 =83%	12.3 12.5 14.48 12.13 9.93 16.98 8 12.23	3.74 9.27 10.94 4.11 9.25 10.4 3.07 9.67	30 60 90 35 30 65 30 32 14 76 40 40 40	15.4% 12.7% 28.1% 9.8% 14.4% 24.2% 11.1% 9.7% 14.9% 35.7% 12.0% 12.0% 100.0%	1.40 [-0.19, 2.99] 0.01 [-3.51, 3.53] 1.16 [-0.28, 2.61] -5.28 [-10.63, 0.07] -0.73 [-3.14, 1.68] -2.35 [-6.63, 1.92] 13.53 [9.08, 17.98] 4.79 [-0.61, 10.19] 0.20 [-1.84, 2.24] 6.04 [-2.45, 14.53] 3.68 [-0.25, 7.61] 3.68 [-0.25, 7.61] 2.04 [-0.59, 4.67]	

Figure 6. Subgroup analyses of (A) SBP and (B) DBP magnitude changes in patients that underwent acupuncture or anti-hypertensive drug therapies.

	Exp	perimen	tal		Control			Mean difference	Mean difference
Study or subgroup	Mean	SD	Total	Mean	SD	Total	Weight	IV. Random, 95% Cl	IV. Random, 95% Cl
6.1.1 Acupuncture plus CCB vs. CCB									
Luo H 2015	39.65	6.79	44	33.93	7.42	46	22.4%	5.72 [2.78, 8.66]	
Shen ZK 2007	33	1.425	25	15.75	1.425	25	23.2%	17.25 [16.46, 18.04]	
Zhang YB 2011	43.59	13.13	50	31.78	14.44	40	20.1%	11.81 [6.04, 17.58]	
Zhang YL 2005	40.59	16.96	45	32.9	18	30	17.6%	7.69 [-0.44, 15.82]	
Subtotal (95% CI)			164			141	83.5%	10.83 [3.38, 18.27]	
Heterogeneity: Tau²=51.36; Chi²=62.06, df Test for overall effect: Z=0.2.85 (P=0.004)	=3 (P<0.0	0001); l²=	=95%						
Acupuncture plus ACEI vs. ACEI									
Huang F 2007	22.8	17.69	30	18.19	18.41	30	16.5%	4.61 [-4.53, 13.75]	
Subtotal (95% CI)			30			30	16.5%	4.61 [-4.53, 13.75]	
Heterogeneity: Not applicable Test for overall effect: Z=0.99 (P=0.32)									
Total (95% (1)			194			171	100.0%	9.80 [2.95, 16 65]	
Hotorogonoity: $T_{2}u^2 = F_2$ 15: $(hi^2 = 60.22)$ d	E-1 (D -0 (00011.12	_0.40/						
1000000000000000000000000000000000000	T-1/V-0	$(1) \cdot 1^{2} = 6$	5%					Iuvouis	
rest for subgroup unreferices. Chi = 1.07, u	I—I (I —U	50),1 —0.							
rest for subgroup unreferces. Cir — 1.07, u	Exp	perimen	tal		Control			Mean difference	Mean difference
test for subgroup unreferices, cin = 1.07, u Study or subgroup	Exp Mean	perimen SD	tal Total	Mean	Control SD	Total	Weight	Mean difference IV. Random, 95% Cl	Mean difference IV. Random, 95% Cl
Study or subgroup 6.2.1 Acupuncture plus CCB vs. CCB	Exp Mean	berimen SD	tal <u>Total</u>	Mean	Control	Total	Weight	Mean difference IV. Random, 95% Cl	Mean difference IV. Random, 95% Cl
Study or subgroup 6.2.1 Acupuncture plus CCB vs. CCB Luo H 2015	Exp <u>Mean</u> 19.28	oerimen SD 4.64	tal <u>Total</u> 44	Mean	Control SD 4.39	<u>Total</u> 46	Weight 24.8%	Mean difference IV. Random, 95% Cl 6.45 [4.58, 8.32]	Mean difference IV. Random, 95% Cl
Study or subgroup 6.2.1 Acupuncture plus CCB vs. CCB Luo H 2015 Shen ZK 2007	Exp <u>Mean</u> 19.28 18	berimen SD 4.64 5.025	tal <u>Total</u> 44 25	<u>Mean</u> 12.83 8.25	Control SD 4.39 2.625	Total 46 25	<u>Weight</u> 24.8% 23.9%	Mean difference IV. Random, 95% Cl 6.45 [4.58, 8.32] 9.75 [7.53, 11.97]	Mean difference IV. Random, 95% Cl
Study or subgroup 6.2.1 Acupuncture plus CCB vs. CCB Luo H 2015 Shen ZK 2007 Zhang YB 2011	Exp <u>Mean</u> 19.28 18 20.76	erimen <u>SD</u> 4.64 5.025 10.67	tal <u>Total</u> 44 25 50	Mean 12.83 8.25 6.48	Control SD 4.39 2.625 9.44	Total 46 25 40	Weight 24.8% 23.9% 18.4%	Mean difference IV. Random, 95% Cl 6.45 [4.58, 8.32] 9.75 [7.53, 11.97] 14.28 [10.12, 18.44]	Mean difference IV. Random, 95% Cl
Study or subgroup 5.2.1 Acupuncture plus CCB vs. CCB Luo H 2015 Shen ZK 2007 Zhang YB 2011 Zhang YL 2005	Exp <u>Mean</u> 19.28 18 20.76 12.44	erimen <u>SD</u> 4.64 5.025 10.67 10.79	tal <u>Total</u> 44 25 50 45	Mean 12.83 8.25 6.48 8.12	Control SD 4.39 2.625 9.44 10.27	Total 46 25 40 30	Weight 24.8% 23.9% 18.4% 16.5%	Mean difference IV. Random, 95% Cl 6.45 [4.58, 8.32] 9.75 [7.53, 11.97] 14.28 [10.12, 18.44] 4.32 [-0.52, 9.16]	Mean difference IV. Random, 95% Cl
Study or subgroup 6.2.1 Acupuncture plus CCB vs. CCB Luo H 2015 Shen ZK 2007 Zhang YB 2011 Zhang YL 2005 Subtotal (95% CI)	Exp <u>Mean</u> 19.28 18 20.76 12.44	erimen SD 4.64 5.025 10.67 10.79	tal <u>Total</u> 44 25 50 45 164	Mean 12.83 8.25 6.48 8.12	Control SD 4.39 2.625 9.44 10.27	Total 46 25 40 30 141	Weight 24.8% 23.9% 18.4% 16.5% 83.7%	Mean difference IV. Random, 95% Cl 6.45 [4.58, 8.32] 9.75 [7.53, 11.97] 14.28 [10.12, 18.44] 4.32 [-0.52, 9.16] 8.69 [5.32, 12.07]	Mean difference IV. Random, 95% Cl
Study or subgroup 6.2.1 Acupuncture plus CCB vs. CCB Luo H 2015 Shen ZK 2007 Zhang YB 2011 Zhang YL 2005 Subtotal (95% CI) Heterogeneity: Tau ² =9.04; Chi ² =15.91, df= Test for overall effect: Z=05.05 (P<0.00001	Exp <u>Mean</u> 19.28 18 20.76 12.44 3 (P=0.00')	erimen <u>SD</u> 4.64 5.025 10.67 10.79 1); l ² =81 ⁰	tal <u>Total</u> 44 25 50 45 164 %	Mean 12.83 8.25 6.48 8.12	Control SD 4.39 2.625 9.44 10.27	Total 46 25 40 30 141	Weight 24.8% 23.9% 18.4% 16.5% 83.7%	Mean difference IV. Random, 95% Cl 6.45 [4.58, 8.32] 9.75 [7.53, 11.97] 14.28 [10.12, 18.44] 4.32 [-0.52, 9.16] 8.69 [5.32, 12.07]	Mean difference IV. Random, 95% Cl
Study or subgroup 6.2.1 Acupuncture plus CCB vs. CCB 6.2.1 Acupuncture plus CCB vs. CCB 1.00 H 2015 Shen ZK 2007 Zhang YB 2011 Zhang YB 2011 Zhang YB 2011 Exercise of the state of the	Exp Mean 19.28 18 20.76 12.44 3 (P=0.00 [°])	berimen SD 4.64 5.025 10.67 10.79 1); I ² =81 ⁶	tal <u>Total</u> 44 25 50 45 164 %	Mean 12.83 8.25 6.48 8.12	Control SD 4.39 2.625 9.44 10.27	Total 46 25 40 30 141	Weight 24.8% 23.9% 18.4% 16.5% 83.7%	Mean difference IV. Random, 95% Cl 6.45 [4.58, 8.32] 9.75 [7.53, 11.97] 14.28 [10.12, 18.44] 4.32 [-0.52, 9.16] 8.69 [5.32, 12.07]	Mean difference IV. Random, 95% Cl
Study or subgroup 6.2.1 Acupuncture plus CCB vs. CCB Luo H 2015 Shen ZK 2007 Zhang YB 2011 Zhang YL 2005 Subtotal (95% CI) Heterogeneity: Tau ² =9.04; Chi ² =15.91, df= Test for overall effect: Z=05.05 (P<0.00001	Exp Mean 19.28 18 20.76 12.44 3 (P=0.00') 12.71	erimen <u>SD</u> 4.64 5.025 10.67 10.79 1); I ² =81 ⁰ 9.04	tal <u>Total</u> 44 25 50 45 164 %	Mean 12.83 8.25 6.48 8.12 9.4	Control SD 4.39 2.625 9.44 10.27 10.34	Total 46 25 40 30 141 30	Weight 24.8% 23.9% 18.4% 16.5% 83.7%	Mean difference IV. Random, 95% Cl 6.45 [4.58, 8.32] 9.75 [7.53, 11.97] 14.28 [10.12, 18.44] 4.32 [-0.52, 9.16] 8.69 [5.32, 12.07] 3.31 [-1.60, 8.22]	Mean difference IV. Random, 95% CI
Study or subgroup 6.2.1 Acupuncture plus CCB vs. CCB Luo H 2015 Shen ZK 2007 Zhang YE 2011 Zhang YL 2005 Subtotal (95% CI) Heterogeneity: Tau ² =9.04; Chi ² =15.91, df= Test for overall effect: Z=05.05 (P<0.00001	Exp Mean 19.28 18 20.76 12.44 3 (P=0.00) 12.71	eerimen <u>SD</u> 4.64 5.025 10.67 10.79 1); I ² =81 ⁰ 9.04	tal <u>Total</u> 44 25 50 45 164 % 30 30 30	Mean 12.83 8.25 6.48 8.12 9.4	Control 5D 4.39 2.625 9.44 10.27 10.34	Total 46 25 40 30 141 30 30 30 30	Weight 24.8% 23.9% 18.4% 16.5% 83.7% 16.3%	Mean difference IV. Random, 95% Cl 6.45 [4.58, 8.32] 9.75 [7.53, 11.97] 14.28 [10.12, 18.44] 4.32 [-0.52, 9.16] 8.69 [5.32, 12.07] 3.31 [-1.60, 8.22] 3.31 [-1.60, 8.22]	Mean difference IV. Random, 95% CI
Study or subgroup 6.2.1 Acupuncture plus CCB vs. CCB Luo H 2015 Shen ZK 2007 Zhang YB 2011 Zhang YL 2005 Subtotal (95% CI) Heterogeneity: Tau ² =9.04; Chi ² =15.91, df= Test for overall effect: Z=05.05 (P<0.00001 6.2.2 Acupuncture plus ACEI vs. ACEI Huang F 2007 Subtotal (95% CI) Heterogeneity: Not applicable Test for overall effect: Z=1.32 (P=0.19)	Exp Mean 19.28 18 20.76 12.44 3 (P=0.00)	verimen SD 4.64 5.025 10.67 10.79 10.79 9.04	tal <u>Total</u> 44 25 50 45 164 % 30 30 30	Mean 12.83 8.25 6.48 8.12 9.4	Control SD 4.39 2.625 9.44 10.27 10.34	Total 46 25 40 30 141 30 30 30 30 30	Weight 24.8% 23.9% 18.4% 16.5% 83.7% 16.3% 16.3%	Mean difference IV. Random, 95% Cl 6.45 [4.58, 8.32] 9.75 [7.53, 11.97] 14.28 [10.12, 18.44] 4.32 [-0.52, 9.16] 8.69 [5.32, 12.07] 3.31 [-1.60, 8.22] 3.31 [-1.60, 8.22]	Mean difference IV. Random, 95% CI
Study or subgroup 6.2.1 Acupuncture plus CCB vs. CCB Luo H 2015 Shen ZK 2007 Zhang YB 2011 Zhang YB 2011 Zhang YB 2011 Zhang YB 2011 Event Start (95% CI) Heterogeneity: Tau ² =9.04; Chi ² =15.91, df= Test for overall effect: Z=05.05 (P<0.00001	Exp <u>Mean</u> 19.28 18 20.76 12.44 3 (P=0.00 [°])	eerimen <u>SD</u> 4.64 5.025 10.67 10.79 1); I ² =81 ⁴ 9.04	tal <u>Total</u> 44 25 50 45 164 % 30 30 30	Mean 12.83 8.25 6.48 8.12 9,4	Control SD 4.39 2.625 9.44 10.27 10.34	Total 46 25 40 30 141 30 30 30 30 30	Weight 24.8% 23.9% 18.4% 16.5% 83.7% 16.3% 16.3% 16.3%	Mean difference IV. Random, 95% CI 6.45 [4.58, 8.32] 9.75 [7.53, 11.97] 14.28 [10.12, 18.44] 4.32 [-0.52, 9.16] 8.69 [5.32, 12.07] 3.31 [-1.60, 8.22] 3.31 [-1.60, 8.22] 7.82 [4.67, 10.96]	Mean difference IV. Random, 95% CI

Figure 7. Subgroup analyses of (A) SBP and (B) DBP magnitude changes in patients that underwent therapy with acupuncture plus anti-hypertensive drugs or anti-hypertensive drugs alone.

pressure [37]. SBP changes were greater in the combined therapy than with lotensin alone [SBP: MD=9.12 mmHg (95% CI: 3.96 to 14.28)]. However, DBP changes were similar in treatment groups [DBP: MD=4.46 mmHg (95% CI: -0.25 to 9.17)].

Subgroup analysis

Clinical heterogeneity is attributed in part to the use of different classes of anti-hypertensive drugs; drugs used included CCB, β -receptor antagonists, ACEI, and ARB. To control for this heterogeneity, we performed subgroup analyses of blood pressure for different classes of anti-hypertensive drugs. Pooled data indicated that DBP changes are similar in acupuncture and anti-hypertensive drug treatments (Figures 6, 7). One study [22] showed that acupuncture lowered SBP better than ARB [SBP: MD=11.15 mmHg (95% CI: 3.68 to 18.62]. Pooled result from 4 studies [31,33,44,45] showed that SBP and DBP changes were also higher in the acupuncture plus CCB treatment than with CCB treatment alone [SBP: MD=10.83 mmHg (95% Cl: 3.38 to 18.27), l²=95%; DBP: MD=8.69 mmHg (95% Cl: 5.32 to 12.07), *l*²=81%].

Sensitivity analysis for the primary outcomes

We did a sensitivity analysis for SBP and DBP and efficacy rate by omitting studies one at a time. Meta-analysis results for

Table 5. Sensitivity analysis – systolic pressure.

		95% Confidence interval (CI)					
Study omitted	Estimate	Lower CI limit	Upper CI limit				
Acupuncture vs. medication							
Chen BG 2006	1.92	-1.41	5.25				
Chen NY 2010	0.27	-1.79	2.33				
Chen YF 2000	1.90	-0.93	4.72				
Tian L 2008	2.15	-0.97	5.27				
Wu YR 2011	0.84	-1.88	3.55				
Xie B 2014	1.13	-1.83	4.10				
Xing H 2016	1.43	-1.59	4.45				
Zhang Y 2012	1.94	-1.23	5.10				
Acupuncture vs. sham	acupuncture	•					
Choi WJ 2015	-2.13	-7.63	3.36				
Kim HM 2012	5.05	1.76	8.33				
Zheng Y 2016	1.53	-7.03	10.09				
Acupuncture plus lifes	style <i>vs</i> . lifest	tyle					
Sun J 2009	12.09	9.14	15.04				
WU XM 2015	10.01	2.77	17.25				
Zhao DJ 2003	8.58	4.32	12.83				
Acupuncture plus anti	hypertensive	e vs. antihype	rtensive				
Huang F 2007	10.83	3.38	18.27				
Luo H 2015	11.36	5.20	17.53				
Shen ZK 2007	7.20	4.19	10.22				
Zhang YB 2011	9.23	0.99	17.47				
Zhang YL 2005	10.24	2.56	17.91				
Acupuncture plus antihypertensive <i>vs.</i> sham acupuncture plus antihypertensive							
Flachskampf FA 2007	10.80	6.41	15.19				
Yin C 2013	7.00	2.88	11.12				
Electroacupuncture vs	Electroacupuncture vs. antihypertensive						
Ma ZY 2011	2.97	-4.51	10.46				
Wan WJ 2009	2.92	-4.67	10.53				
Yang DH 2010	-0.81	-4.61	2.99				

Table 6. Sensitivity analysis – diastolic pressure.

		95% Confidence interval (CI)				
Study omitted	Estimate	Lower Cl limit	Upper Cl limit			
Acupuncture vs. medie	cation					
Chen BG 2006	2.21	-1.25	5.67			
Chen NY 2010	1.83	-1.07	4.72			
Chen YF 2000	2.80	0.14	5.46			
Tian L 2008	2.53	-0.53	5.59			
Wu YR 2011	2.36	-0.61	5.32			
Xie B 2014	0.61	-0.95	2.16			
Xing H 2016	1.75	-1.05	4.55			
Zhang Y 2012	2.40	-0.85	5.65			
Acupuncture vs. sham	acupuncture	2				
Choi WJ 2015	-1.79	-5.48	1.91			
Kim HM 2012	-0.44	-5.44	4.57			
Zheng Y 2016	0.70	-1.70	3.10			
Acupuncture plus lifes	style <i>vs</i> . lifes	tyle				
Sun J 2009	7.67	2.65	12.69			
WU XM 2015	3.66	0.15	7.18			
Zhao DJ 2003	6.01	-2.55	14.58			
Acupuncture plus anti	hypertensive	e vs. antihype	rtensive			
Huang F 2007	8.69	5.32	12.07			
Luo H 2015	8.16	3.78	12.54			
Shen ZK 2007	7.18	2.93	11.44			
Zhang YB 2011	6.57	3.87	9.28			
Zhang YL 2005	8.51	4.99	12.03			
Acupuncture plus antihypertensive vs. sham acupuncture plus antihypertensive						
Flachskampf FA 2007	5.80	2.77	8.83			
Yin C 2013	3.00	-0.18	6.18			
Electroacupuncture vs	. antihyperte	nsive				
Ma ZY 2011	-1.86	-7.14	3.41			
Wan WJ 2009	-1.07	-3.55	1.42			
Yang DH 2010	-2.72	-5.13	-0.31			

Table 7. Sensitivity analysis – efficacy rate.

		95% Confidence interval (CI)				
Study omitted	Estimate	Lower CI limit	Upper CI limit			
Acupuncture vs. antihypertensive						
Chen BG 2006	1.12	0.97	1.30			
Chen NY 2010	1.14	0.96	1.34			
Chen Q 2011	1.12	0.97	1.28			
Chen YF 2000	1.19	1.06	1.35			
Tian L 2008	1.17	1.01	1.36			
Wu YR 2011	1.11	0.96	1.28			
Xie B 2014	1.17	0.99	1.37			
Xing H 2016	1.14	1.00	1.31			
Zhang ZH 2004	1.13	0.97	1.30			
Acupuncture plus life	emodification	vs. lifemodific	ation			
Su J 2009	1.29	1.04	1.61			
Wu XM 2015	1.14	0.97	1.35			
Acupuncture plus an	tihypertensive	<i>vs</i> . antihype	rtensive			
Chen J 2010	1.17	1.08	1.27			
Cui JK 2013	1.18	1.08	1.28			
Huang F 2007	1.19	1.09	1.29			
Luo H 2015	1.16	1.06	1.27			
Shen ZK 2007	1.18	1.08	1.29			
Zhang YB 2011	1.17	1.07	1.27			
Zhang YL 2005	1.17	1.07	1.27			
Electroacupuncture vs. antihypertensive						
Ma ZY 2011	0.95	0.67	1.34			
Wan WJ 2009	0.93	0.71	1.22			

reduced data were similar to the original results (Tables 5–7), suggesting that the pooled data results are robust.

Safety evaluation

Nine of the included studies reported adverse events during the trial [22,25–27,29,30,38,40,41]. No study reported subject dropouts due to adverse events. In 4 studies [22,26,40,41], adverse events such as headache, syncope, dizziness, pain, cough, and bleeding were reported in the treatment group. The adverse effects of headache, dizziness, cough, and hypotension were reported in the control group [22,26,40,41]. The incidence of the adverse events was similar for both groups of patients [RR=0.48 (95% CI: 0.14 to 1.61), l^2 =52%].

Publication bias

A funnel plot analysis revealed strong asymmetry (Figure 8), suggesting potential publication bias, probably due to the small sample sizes of the included studies.

Discussion

This systematic review of 28 RCTs and 2 quasi-RCTs showed that acupuncture plus anti-hypertensive drug treatment was better than anti-hypertensive drugs alone or sham acupuncture plus anti-hypertensive drugs, based on change in SBP and DBP. These results suggest that acupuncture enhances the beneficial effects of anti-hypertensive drugs.

DBP changes were greater in patients treated with acupuncture than in untreated patients. Moreover, SBP changes were greater in patients treated with electro-acupuncture plus Lotensin than in Lotensin alone. However, since only 1 study was available to assess both of these comparisons [30], these findings are preliminary and need further evidence.

Our findings also show that lowering of blood pressure is similar in treatments with acupuncture alone and with anti-hypertensive drugs alone. Blood pressure changes are similar for sham acupuncture and acupuncture treatments. Moreover, pooled data from 3 studies showed that blood pressure changes are similar for treatments with electro-acupuncture and anti-hypertensive drugs alone [32,36,42]. These results showed that acupuncture therapy alone was not sufficient for treating hypertension. However, there is significant heterogeneity among the studies; therefore, the quality of the results is low.

Subgroup analysis for different classes of anti-hypertensive drugs reveals that SBP changes are greater for acupuncture treatment than treatment with ARB and β -receptor antagonists. No significant differences are present in DBP changes between acupuncture and the different classes of anti-hypertensive drugs. However, the subgroup analysis reveals that acupuncture combined with CCB was more effective than CCB alone. These results are inconsistent and the data are insufficient to draw any conclusions.

We found that the reporting quality of the included studies was very low, especially for the Chinese journals. STRICTA statement analysis shows that the reporting quality of English journals is better than in Chinese journals. CONSORT statement



Figure 8. Funnel plot of (A) SBP, (B) DBP, and (C) efficacy rate in all trials.

analysis found no difference between the 2 groups overall, but the English journals had better reporting of the methodological section of the CONSORT statement (sequence generation, allocation, blinding, baseline data, and harms/adverse effects) than Chinese journals. Failure to report details of design methodology is a potential source of increased heterogeneity in the included studies. Therefore, these issues affected the analyses of acupuncture therapy for hypertension.

We also collected the published systematic reviews on the topic (Tables 8, 9). Compared with these systematic reviews, the current systematic review updates the latest evidence, and provides subgroup analysis based on the different classes of anti-hypertensive drugs, which generates most of the clinical heterogeneity. Nonetheless, several limitations to our metaanalysis exist. First, substantial heterogeneity exists among the included studies. In clinics, the methods of acupuncture and selection of the acu-points may vary because the treatment is based on the syndrome differentiation of Traditional Chinese Medicine, which leads to heterogeneity. Moreover, reporting quality of the included studies is low, especially in the methodology section of the study design, which can also be a source for heterogeneity. Second, a lack of translators meant we could only include Chinese and English studies, which leads to a selection bias. Third, sample sizes of the included studies, especially in Chinese trials, are small and the wide confidence intervals indicate high variability.

Author/year **Clinical characteristics** No. of trials Search date Subgroup analysis Language **Primary outcomes** Zhang et al., Chinese AC vs. medication; AC vs. 11 October SBP and DBP change Mainly based 2013 SA; AC plus medication vs. 2012 magnitude/adverse on different medication effect interventions Guo W et al., Chinese AC plus medication vs. 10 SBP and DBP after Not performed May 31. 2013 medication 2012 intervention/efficacy rate/adverse effect Lee H et al., AC plus medication vs. SA June, 2007 SBP and DBP change English 11 Not performed 2009 plus medication; AC vs. (3 in metamagnitude/adverse SA; AC plus medication analysis) effect vs. medication: AC vs. medication SBP and DBP change Mainly based Li DZ et al.. English AC vs. SA; AC plus 4 November. on different 2014 medication vs. SA plus 2012 magnitude/adverse medication effect interventions AC vs. SA; AC plus SBP and DBP change Mainly based Wang J et al., English 35 January, medication vs. medication; on different 2013 (24 in meta-2013 magnitude/adverse AC vs. medication; AC analysis) effect interventions plus medication vs. SA plus medication; AC plus lifestyle modification vs. lifestyle modification Zhang YJ Chinese AC vs. medication; AC plus 13 July, 2013 SBP and DBP after Not performed et al., 2013 medication vs. medication intervention/efficacy rate/adverse effect Zhao XF English AC plus medication 23 April 13, SBP and DBP Mainly based et al., 2015 vs. medication; AC vs. 2014 change magnitude/ on different medication; AC plus SBP and DBP after interventions medication vs. SA plus intervention/efficacy medication; AC plus rate/adverse effect/ lifestyle modification vs. lifestyle modification The current AC vs. medication; AC vs. April 30, SBP and DBP change Mainly based on English 31 magnitude/efficacy different classes of review SA; AC vs. no-treatment; 2017 AC plus medication vs. rate/adverse effect antihypertensive medication; AC plus drugs medication vs. SA plus medication

Table 8. List and details of reviews (including this review) analyzing acupuncture therapy for hypertension.

AC – acupuncture; SA – sham acupuncture.

Therefore, the precise effects of acupuncture therapy for treating hypertension remain uncertain given the high overall risk of bias in our included studies. Thus, well-designed and largesized RCTs are needed.

Conclusions

In conclusion, this review provides evidence that acupuncture enhances the therapeutic effects of anti-hypertensive drugs. However, the benefits and the safety of acupuncture therapy

		No. of trials	Outcomes*,**			
Author/year	Comparison		Blood pressure after intervention	Blood pressure change magnitude	Efficacy rate	
Guo et al., 2013	AC plus medication <i>vs</i> . medication	4	SBP: -8.35 (-10.89, -5.81) DBP: -5.25 (-11.19,69)	Not reported	OR: 5.23 (3.24, 8.44)	
Lee H et al., 2009	AC vs. SA	3	Not reported	SBP: -5 (-12, 1) DBP: -3 (-6, 0)	Not reported	
Lee H et al., 2009	AC plus medication <i>vs</i> . SA plus medication	2	Not reported	SBP: -8 (-10, -5) DBP: -4 (-6, -2)	Not reported	
Li DZ et al., 2014	AC vs. SA	2	Not reported	SBP: 1.33 (-0.25, 5.16) DBP: -0.18 (-3.98, 3.62)	Not reported	
Li DZ et al., 2014	AC plus medication <i>vs</i> . SA plus medication	2	Not reported	SBP: -8.58 (-10.13, -7.13) DBP: -2.82 (-5.22, -0.43)	Not reported	
Wang J et al., 2013	AC vs. medication	11	Not reported	SBP: -0.77 (-3.89, 2.35) DBP: 0. 1 (-1.6, 1.79)	Not reported	
Wang J et al. 2013	AC plus medication vs. medication	7	Not reported	SBP: -10.2 (-14, -6.4) DBP: -4.34 (-6.79, -1.9)	Not reported	
Wang J et al. 2013	AC vs. SA	3	Not reported	SBP: 0.26 (-2.4, 2.91) DBP: -1.04 (-2.56, 0.47)	Not reported	
Wang J et al., 2013	AC plus medication <i>vs</i> . SA plus medication	2	Not reported	SBP: -7.74 (-10.43, -4.51) DBP: -4.22 (-6.26, -2.18)	Not reported	
Wang J et al., 2013	AC plus lifestyle modification <i>vs.</i> lifestyle modification	1	Not reported	SBP: -13.5 (-15.06, -11.94) DBP: -5.25 (-6.01, -4.49)	Not reported	
Zhang YJ et al., 2013	AC vs. medication	7	SBP: -3.26 (-7.98, 1.46) DBP: -2.17 (-5.02, 0.68)	Not reported	OR: 0.95 (0.45,2)	
Zhang YJ et al., 2013	AC plus medication <i>vs</i> . medication	4	SBP: -9.5 (-13.66, -5.34) DBP: -0.16 (-2.52, 2.19)	Not reported	OR: 5.13 (2.6,10.11)	
Zhao XF et al., 2015	AC vs. medication	7	SBP: -0.56 (-3.02, 1.89) DBP: -1.01 (-2.26, 0.24)	Not reported	OR: 1.14 (0.7, 1.85)	
Zhao XF et al., 2015	AC plus medication <i>vs</i> . medication	3	SBP: -9.04 (-20.11,2.02) DBP: -2.87 (-8.45, 2.72)	Not reported	OR: 4.19 (1.65, 10.67)	
Zhao XF et al., 2015	AC plus lifestyle modification vs. lifestyle modification	1	SBP: -10.53 (-27.52, 6.46) DBP: -7.52 (-15.06, 0.02)	Not reported	Not reported	
Zhao XF et al., 2015	AC <i>vs.</i> SA	2	Not reported	SBP: 0.3 (-0.27, 0.88) DBP: -1.4 (-2.37, -0.44)	Not reported	
Zhao XF et al., 2015	AC plus medication <i>vs</i> . SA plus medication	2	Not reported	SBP: -7.47 (-10.43, -4.51) DBP: -4.22 (-6.26, -2.18)	Not reported	

Table 9. Main findings of previous reviews that analyzed acupuncture therapy outcomes in hypertension patients.

AC – acupuncture; SA – sham acupuncture; No. – number. * Effect size was presented with mean difference (MD, 95% confidence interval [lower limit, upper limit]) in continuous variables or risk ratio or odds ratio (RR or OR, 95% confidence interval [lower limit, upper limit]) in dichotomous variables; ** Lower is better for continuous variables.

for treating hypertension are still unclear because of methodology flaws and low reporting quality of published studies. High-quality RCTs with larger sample sizes are required to better assess the outcomes of acupuncture therapy as treatment for hypertension.

Conflicts of interest

None.

Supplementary Files

Supplementary Table 1. PRISMA statement.

Section/topic	#	Checklist item	Reported on page #
TITLE			
Title	1	Identify the report as a systematic review, meta-analysis, or both	1
ABSTRACT			
Structured summary	2	Provide a structured summary including, as applicable: background; objectives; data sources; study eligibility criteria, participants, and interventions; study appraisal and synthesis methods; results; limitations; conclusions and implications of key findings; systematic review registration number	2
INTRODUCTION			
Rationale	3	Describe the rationale for the review in the context of what is already known	3
Objectives	4	Provide an explicit statement of questions being addressed with reference to participants, interventions, comparisons, outcomes, and study design (PICOS	4
METHODS			
Protocol and registration	5	Indicate if a review protocol exists, if and where it can be accessed (e.g., Web address), and, if available, provide registration information including registration number	3
Eligibility criteria	6	Specify study characteristics (e.g., PICOS, length of follow-up) and report characteristics (e.g., years considered, language, publication status) used as criteria for eligibility, giving rationale	4
Information sources	7	Describe all information sources (e.g., databases with dates of coverage, contact with study authors to identify additional studies) in the search and date last searched.	3–4
Search	8	Present full electronic search strategy for at least one database, including any limits used, such that it could be repeated	3–4
Study selection	9	State the process for selecting studies (i.e., screening, eligibility, included in systematic review, and, if applicable, included in the meta-analysis)	5
Data collection process	10	Describe method of data extraction from reports (e.g., piloted forms, independently, in duplicate) and any processes for obtaining and confirming data from investigators	5
Data items	11	List and define all variables for which data were sought (e.g., PICOS, funding sources) and any assumptions and simplifications made	5
Risk of bias in individual studies	12	Describe methods used for assessing risk of bias of individual studies (including specification of whether this was done at the study or outcome level), and how this information is to be used in any data synthesis.	5
Summary measures	13	State the principal summary measures (e.g., risk ratio, difference in means)	6
Synthesis of results	14	Describe the methods of handling data and combining results of studies, if done, including measures of consistency (e.g., 12) for each meta-analysis	6
Risk of bias across studies	15	Specify any assessment of risk of bias that may affect the cumulative evidence (e.g., publication bias, selective reporting within studies)	5–6

Section/topic	#	Checklist item	Reported on page #
Additional analyses	16	Describe methods of additional analyses (e.g., sensitivity or subgroup analyses, meta-regression), if done, indicating which were pre-specified	6
RESULTS			
Study selection	17	Give numbers of studies screened, assessed for eligibility, and included in the review, with reasons for exclusions at each stage, ideally with a flow diagram	6–7
Study characteristics	18	For each study, present characteristics for which data were extracted (e.g., study size, PICOS, follow-up period) and provide the citations	7
Risk of bias within studies	19	Present data on risk of bias of each study and, if available, any outcome level assessment (see item 12)	8
Results of individual studies	20	For all outcomes considered (benefits or harms), present, for each study: (a) simple summary data for each intervention group (b) effect estimates and confidence intervals, ideally with a forest plot	8–9
Synthesis of results	21	Present results of each meta-analysis done, including confidence intervals and measures of consistency	8–9
Risk of bias across studies	22	Present results of any assessment of risk of bias across studies (see Item 15	8
Additional analysis	23	Give results of additional analyses, if done (e.g., sensitivity or subgroup analyses, meta-regression [see Item 16])	10
DISCUSSION			
Summary of evidence	24	Summarize the main findings including the strength of evidence for each main outcome; consider their relevance to key groups (e.g., healthcare providers, users, and policy makers)	11–12
Limitations	25	Discuss limitations at study and outcome level (e.g., risk of bias), and at review-level (e.g., incomplete retrieval of identified research, reporting bias)	12–13
Conclusions	26	Provide a general interpretation of the results in the context of other evidence, and implications for future research	13
FUNDING			
Funding	27	Describe sources of funding for the systematic review and other support (e.g., supply of data); role of funders for the systematic review	1

 $SD_{change} = \sqrt{SD1^2 + SD2^2 - 2 \times (corr \times SD1 \times SD2)}$

SD_{change}: Standard deviation of change-from-baseline SD1: Standard deviation of baseline SD2: Standard deviation of final Corr: correlation coefficient

According to the Cochrane Handbook for Systematic Reviews of Interventions (Version 5.10). We input the value Corr as 0.4.

Supplemenatry Figure 1. The formula for calculating the missing changefrom-baseline standard deviation.

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