

Smoking Cessation: A Paradise for an Alternative to Evidence-based Medicine?

To the Editor:

Tahiri et al¹ concluded that acupuncture and hypnosis may help people quit smoking. They used the Cochrane assessment tool to assess the quality of included randomized controlled trials for their meta-analysis, but their conclusion differs from 2 recent Cochrane systematic reviews: "There is no consistent evidence that acupuncture (and the related intervention acupressure, laser therapy, or electrostimulation) and hypnotherapy are effective for smoking cessation."^{2,3}

These Cochrane systematic reviews included 44 studies, whereas Tahiri et al¹ included only 10 studies in their meta-analysis, with a mean of 108 patients per study (median, 90). The sample size of their largest study included is 258.⁴ Smoking abstinence after acupuncture was 55% in cases versus 4% in controls, the largest effect observed in the meta-analysis. The study by Kerr et al⁴ was published in *The Journal of Chinese Medicine*, which has no impact factor and is not referenced in MEDLINE. I was unable to find any reference of the 3

authors concerning acupuncture or a clinical trial in MEDLINE. Note that the first author of the article,⁴ Catherine M. Kerr from Middlesex, United Kingdom, must not be confused with Catherine E. Kerr, who published reviews of several well-designed randomized trials that ruled out an effect of alternative medicine on smoking cessation when she was at Harvard Medical School.

Alain Braillon, MD, PhD^a

Edzard Ernst, MD, PhD^b

^aPublic Health
Amiens, France

^bComplementary Medicine
Peninsula Medical School
Exeter, United Kingdom

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