

THERAPY I

Traditional Chinese Medicine (Acupuncture)

Objectives:

At the completion of this unit, participants will be able to assess how trustworthy the results of a randomized controlled trial(RCT) are, and how these results might apply to patient care.

At the completion of this unit you will be able to:

1. Assess the risk of bias of a RCT addressing a question of therapy.
2. Interpret the measures of effect of the intervention in terms of magnitude, precision, and patient-importance (e.g. mean, RR, RRR, ARR, NNT, and 95% CI of these measures).
3. Determine the applicability of the results to your patients.
4. Evaluate the trade-offs between benefits and harms of the interventions.

Reference (readings):

Listed chapters (below) in: Guyatt GH, Rennie D, Meade M, Cook DJ. Users' Guides to the Medical Literature: A Manual for Evidence Based Clinical Practice, 3rd Edition, New York, NY: The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc. 2015.

- The Foundations
Chapter 4, P19, What Is the Question?
- Therapy
Chapter 7, p.59, Randomized Trials
Chapter 9, p.87, Does Treatment Lower Risk? Understanding the Results
Chapter 10, p.95, Confidence Intervals: Was the Single Study or Meta-analysis Large Enough?
Chapter 11, p.103, Advanced Topics in the Validity of Therapy Trials
Chapter 12, p.189, Advanced Topics in the Results of Therapy Trials
Chapter 13, p.235, Advanced Topics in Applying the Results of Therapy Trials

Problem Based Educational Strategy:

1. Read the Clinical Scenario
2. Compose a well-built clinical (foreground) question about the clinical problem.

Read the Users' Guides to the Medical Literature reference articles.

3. Read the Users' Guides to the Medical Literature reference articles.
4. Complete the attached Critical appraisal sheet.
5. Decide whether you will recommend acupuncture to Mary.

Scenario:

Mary is a 43 years old women who worked in a grocery store since she graduated from high school. She has never married, has lived a largely isolated life, and has experienced recurrent depression since her first episode at the age 26. Her last episode of depression was four years ago and she was taking fluoxetine to help with the symptoms. The fluoxetine seemed to be working well but she has suffered a lot from the side effects of fluoxetine (nausea and insomnia). Three days ago, you (her psychiatrist) diagnosed another episode of moderate depression (Hamilton Depression Scale, score 20). Mary would like to use an effective treatment with less side effects than fluoxetine. As her psychiatrist, you are aware that counseling, as one of the most adopted psychotherapy approaches, could help her symptoms. But her friend, Mark, suggested that acupuncture might work quickly based on his own experience. Mary wants to know which option is better.

So you searched PubMed and Clinical Queries, using search terms “depression” and “acupuncture” and restricted your search to “therapy”. You identified the following trial which you decided to explore further.

MacPherson H, Richmond S, Bland M, Brealey S, Gabe R, et al. Acupuncture and Counseling for Depression in Primary Care: A Randomized Controlled Trial. *PLoS Med* 2013; 10(9): e1001518. doi:10.1371/journal.pmed.1001518

The abstract indicates it is relevant to Mary, and you decide to critically appraise this paper using the “User’s Guide” for a Therapy paper.

After critically appraising this paper, will you recommend acupuncture to Mary?

Enclosed Materials:

Hugh MacPherson, Stewart Richmond, J Martin Bland, Harriet Lansdown, Ann Hopton, Stephen Morley, Sara Perren, Eldon Spackman, Karen Spilsbury, David Torgerson, Arthur Kang’ombe, Ian Watt. Acupuncture, Counseling, and Usual care for Depression (ACUDep): study protocol for a randomized controlled trial. *Trials* 2012; 13:209

MacPherson H, Richmond S, Bland M, Brealey S, Gabe R, et al. Acupuncture and Counselling for Depression in Primary Care: A Randomised Controlled Trial. *PLoS Med* 2013; 10(9): e1001518. doi:10.1371/journal.pmed.1001518