Complementary and Alternative Medicine in stroke rehabilitation

Overview of systematic reviews

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Background

Recently, there is an ongoing discussion about evidence-based medicine in complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) including oriental medicine. Following the current trend, systematic reviews with the highest quality of evidence are largely published in CAM field.

Objectives

This study aims to investigate the existing evidence of CAM by examining systematic reviews of stroke, which is one of the most important issue in the practice of oriental medicine.

Methods

Inclusion criteria

- CAM treatments on stroke or complication of stroke
- Systematic reviews including systematic search and inclusion/exclusion criteria
- Synthesis of primary studies
- Language: English, Korean, Chinese

Exclusion criteria

- Functional disorders not due to stroke
- Prevention of stroke
- Clinical practice guideline
- CAM treatments as part of variable treatments
- Hard to see CAM treatments: Electronic searches

Data sources and Searches

- Databases: Ovid-Medline, Ovid-EMBASE, Ovid-PsycINFO, Ovid-AMED, Cochrane Library, CRD database, CINAHL
- Search terms: (CAM related terms) AND stroke AND (systematic reviews related terms)

Quality assessment

Assessment of multiple systematic reviews (AMSTAR)¹

- High quality: more than 80 points, calculated in terms of hundred point scale
- Medium quality: 40~80 points
- Low quality: less than 40 points

Results

Finally 29 SRs were included. (fig.1)

Characteristics

Classification

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<th>Published year</th>
<th>No.</th>
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<td>2001~2005</td>
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<td>2006~2011</td>
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Type of journal

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<th>Cochrane Review</th>
<th>non-CAM</th>
<th>CAM related</th>
<th>China</th>
<th>South Korea</th>
<th>Singapore</th>
<th>North America</th>
<th>U.K.</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Study designs of included studies</th>
<th>Interventions</th>
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<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>RCTs + case reports</td>
<td>Herb (including pharmacupuncture)</td>
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<td>Acupuncture/Moxibustion</td>
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<td>Others</td>
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In the most of included studies, the evidence is plagued by important limitations of selected studies such as the poor quality, small size, and lack of data. Also, most studies concluded that a large scale of well designed study is necessary.

Conclusion

Further research using proper methods should be carried out in order to produce high quality of evidence in CAM including oriental medicine. In addition, the result of this study will contribute to set the direction of future research of stroke rehabilitation in the CAM field.

References


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Fig. 1. Study flow diagram