A systematic review of the effectiveness of acupuncture for hemiplegic shoulder pain

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Introduction
Acupuncture has been widely used as treatment for hemiplegic shoulder pain (HSP) which is one of the commonest complications after stroke. A large number of relevant studies have been published but limited reviews were conducted to summarize the effectiveness of acupuncture for HSP. Furthermore, there is no specific treatment guideline of acupuncture for HSP in Hospital Authority. The purpose of this systematic review is to summarize recent evidences, evaluate the effectiveness and formulate an evidenced-based treatment guideline of acupuncture for HSP.

Objectives
1. To summarize recent evidences and evaluate the effectiveness of acupuncture for HSP
2. To formulate an evidence-based treatment guideline of acupuncture for HSP
3. To demonstrate the safety of acupuncture for HSP

Methodology
Ten databases including ScienceDirect, MEDLINE, AMED, CINAHL, three Chinese databases (CNKI, China Academic Journal and WangFang Database) and three Korean medical databases (KoreaMED, Korea Institute of Science Technology Information and The Research Information Service System) were searched in February 2014. All randomized controlled trials demonstrating effects of acupuncture for HSP were included.

Result
Total 277 studies were identified and 9 studies fulfilled the inclusion criteria. All included studies were conducted in China and reported positive results of acupuncture treatment. According to the results of this review, the treatment guideline...
of acupuncture for HSP is shown below: 1. Acupoints used frequently: SI 9, SI 10, SI 11, SI 15, LI 4, LI 11, LI 14, LI 15, SJ 5 and SJ 14. 2. To achieve the analgesic effect of acupuncture, “De-Qi” which is a sense of numbness, heaviness or soreness at the insertion point of needles, had to be induced during the treatment. 3. Electric stimulation with low frequency (2 to 15Hz) and high intensity (5 to 8 times of the sensory threshold) applied to acupoints could enhance the analgesic effect of acupuncture. 4. Treatment duration: 20 to 40 minutes/ session, 1 to 2 sessions/ day, total 18 to 60 sessions/ patient. Total 987 patients were included, 539 of them received acupuncture therapy. No severe adverse events were observed in this review. The methodological quality of the selected studies was assessed by using the Jadad score and the studies were scored between 1 and 4 points. Conclusion: This systematic review provides evidence to support the effectiveness and safety of acupuncture as treatment for HSP.