

## Acupuncture for uncontrolled diabetic gastroparesis - A feasibility study

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**Background:** Available medical treatments for diabetic gastroparesis (DG) are less than satisfactory. Acupuncture treatment has been used for various gastrointestinal conditions with effects noted on gastrointestinal motility.

**Aims:** To compare the degree of symptoms, gastric emptying rate (GER) and glucose control improvement before and after domperidone followed by acupuncture treatment.

**Methods:** Eight patients with long-standing, uncontrolled diabetes mellitus and gastroparesis were enrolled in this pilot, prospective case-crossover study. All patients received domperidone (20 mg QID) for 12 weeks and after a wash-out period of 2-3 weeks, received acupuncture treatments for 16 weeks. All patients completed a demographic questionnaire as well as the Gastroparesis Cardinal Symptom Index (GCSI), Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) and the 36-item short-form (SF-36) at entry and at the end of each treatment period. Gastric emptying rate (GER) measurement, glucose level and HbA1C were performed at entry and at the end of each treatment period as well.

**Results:** Mean age, M/F ratio and mean BMI (kg/m<sup>2</sup>) were  $57.1 \pm 9.9$  yrs, 1/7 and 25.2, respectively. Treatment with domperidone did not improve symptoms, GER or glucose control. Acupuncture treatment was associated with improvement of almost all cardinal symptoms scores of GCSI, SWLS ( $p=0.002$ ) Social Functioning (SF) score ( $p=0.054$ ) but not with GER or glucose control.

**Conclusions:** Acupuncture was associated with improvement in symptoms related to gastroparesis. A larger trial is warranted for the evaluation of acupuncture in patients with diabetic gastroparesis.

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