Adjunctive acupuncture may speed relief from pain of renal colic

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For acute renal colic, acupuncture as an adjunct to intramuscular

injection of diclofenac sodium may accelerate pain relief, according to a study published online Aug. 9 in *JAMA Network Open*.

Jian-Feng Tu, Ph.D., from Beijing University of Chinese Medicine, and colleagues conducted a randomized controlled trial in an emergency department in China between March and September 2020 involving patients with acute renal colic (visual analog scale score ≥4) due to urolithiasis. Eighty patients received an intramuscular injection of diclofenac sodium followed by 30 minutes of acupuncture or sham acupuncture (40 patients in each group).

The researchers found that at 10 minutes, the response rate, defined as the proportion of participants whose visual analog scale score decreased by at least 50 percent from baseline, was 77.5 and 10.0 percent in the acupuncture and sham acupuncture groups, respectively. At zero, five, 15, 20, and 30 minutes, the response rates of acupuncture were significantly higher, while at 45 and 60 minutes, there was no significant difference. The rescue analgesia rate did not differ significantly between the groups. During the trial, no adverse events occurred.

"The results may have implications for the initial management of renal colic in emergency departments," the authors write. "Adjunctive acupuncture could offer fast and substantial relief from renal colic presentations in the emergency setting."

More information: Jian-Feng Tu et al, Effect of Adjunctive Acupuncture on Pain Relief Among Emergency Department Patients With Acute Renal Colic Due to Urolithiasis, *JAMA Network Open* (2022). DOI: 10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2022.25735