

[Explore \(NY\)](#). 2007 Jan-Feb;3(1):28-36. PMID: 17234566 doi: 10.1016/j.explore.2006.10.003.

The impact of acupuncture and craniosacral therapy interventions on clinical outcomes in adults with asthma.

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Abstract

OBJECTIVE: Synergy has been proposed between modalities operating at different levels of action. Acupuncture and craniosacral therapy are two very different modalities for which synergy has been proposed. This study sought to test for such synergy and to determine if complementary therapies would improve pulmonary function and quality of life for people suffering from asthma, as well as reducing anxiety, depression, and medication usage.

DESIGN: Subjects were randomly assignment to one of five groups: acupuncture, craniosacral therapy, acupuncture and craniosacral, attention control, and waiting list control.

METHODS: Subjects received 12 sessions of equal length with pretreatment and posttreatment assessment of pulmonary function, asthma quality of life, depression, and anxiety. Medication use was also assessed.

RESULTS: Synergy was not demonstrated. When treatment was compared with the control group, statistically treatment was significantly better than the control group in improving asthma quality of life, whereas reducing medication use with pulmonary function test results remained the same. However, the combination of acupuncture and craniosacral treatment was not superior to each therapy alone. In fact, although all active patients received 12 treatment sessions, those who received all treatments from one practitioner had statistically significant reductions in anxiety when compared with those receiving the same number of treatments from multiple practitioners. No effects on depression were found.

CONCLUSIONS: Acupuncture and/or craniosacral therapy are potentially useful adjuncts to the conventional care of adults with asthma, but the combination of the two does not provide additional benefit over each therapy alone.