

Systematic Review: Battlefield Acupuncture for Acute Pain

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INTRO:

- Although acupuncture has been used to treat several types of acute pain, the role of battlefield acupuncture (BFA), a specific auricular acupuncture protocol, for treating acute pain has not been well established.
- The goal of this study is to conduct a systematic review to estimate the efficacy of BFA for treating acute pain and identify areas in need of further research.

METHODS:

- A systematic review of English articles was performed on 07/30/2024 using the following databases: PubMed (2015-2024), Cochrane Controlled Trials Register (2005-2024), and Google Scholar (2004-2024).
- Search terms included BFA and acute pain (“battlefield acupuncture” [All Fields] AND (“acute pain” [MeSH Terms])).
- Eligibility criteria included randomized controlled and uncontrolled clinical trials on the efficacy of BFA for the use and/or appropriateness of use for acute pain.

CONCLUSIONS:

- There is low quality evidence to suggest that BFA is a suitable option for acute pain relief, such as, but not limited to, low back pain, postsurgical pain, and lower extremity pain.
- Higher quality trials are needed for stronger recommendations.



Battlefield Acupuncture (BFA) has been shown to relieve acute pain comparable to standard analgesic care.



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RESULTS:

- 17 studies for BFA for acute pain met our inclusion criteria. 9 clinical trials (n= 889) were found to be eligible after screening title, abstract, and full text for inclusion and exclusion criteria.
- Each trial used BFA as an adjunct therapy with standard analgesic care and each had mixed results on the efficacy for acute pain.
- Some clinical trials demonstrated improvement in post-procedure pain scores for BFA compared to standard conservative treatment for acute pain, however, others found no significant difference.

FIGURES:

