

The Association between Acupuncture Treatment and a Decreased Risk of Irritable Bowel Syndrome in Patients with Depression

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Abstract : Background: Major depression is a common illness that affects millions of people globally. It is the leading cause of disability and is projected to become the number one cause of the global burden of disease by 2030. Many of those who suffer from depression also suffer from Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS). Acupuncture has been shown to help depression. The aim of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of acupuncture in reducing the risk of IBS in patients with depression. Methods: We enrolled patients diagnosed with depression through the Taiwanese National Health Insurance Research Database (NHIRD). Propensity score matching was used to match equal numbers (n=32971) of the acupuncture cohort and no-acupuncture cohort based on characteristics including sex, age, baseline comorbidity, and medication. The Cox regression model was used to compare the hazard ratios (HRs) of IBS in the two cohorts. Results: The basic characteristics of the two groups were similar. The cumulative incidence of IBS was significantly lower in the acupuncture cohort than in the no-acupuncture cohort (Log-rank test, $p < 0.001$). Conclusion: The results provided real-world evidence that acupuncture may have a beneficial effect on IBS risk reduction in patients with depression.

Keywords : acupuncture, depression, irritable bowel syndrome, national health insurance research database, real-world evidence

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