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An assessment of methodological quality of systematic reviews of acupuncture and related therapies for cancer-related pain

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Purpose: The purpose of this study is to summarize and evaluate the methodological quality of systematic reviews and meta-analyses papers on the acupuncture and related therapies for management of cancer-related pain.

Methods: A comprehensive search on multiple databases was performed using Assessing the Methodological Quality of Systematic Reviews (AMSTAR).

Results: Fourteen systematic reviews published between 2005 and 2017 were eligible for inclusion. The consensus across the included reviews was that acupuncture and related therapies alone did not have superior pain-relieving effects as compared with analgesic administration using various validated pain scales. However, as compared with

analgesic administration alone, acupuncture and related therapies plus analgesics resulted in reduced cancer related-pain.

Conclusion: The study findings emphasized that acupuncture and related therapies alone did not have clinically significant effects at cancer-related pain reduction as compared with analgesic administration alone. Clinicians may consider acupuncture and related therapies as adjunctive therapies for cancer-related pain management, in particular, when pain control is unsatisfactory under analgesics alone. Furthermore, the researchers should conduct the SRs and meta-analyses according to the AMSTAR and PRISMA.

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