

Rashoud A, Abboud RJ, Wang W, and et al. Efficacy of low-level laser therapy applied at acupuncture points in knee osteoarthritis: a randomized double-blind comparative trial. *Physiotherapy* 2014; 100: 242–248.

Reviewer: Linda Metzger 7-15-15

Design: Randomized Clinical Trial

Objective: To evaluate the efficacy of low-level laser therapy (LLLT) applied to acupuncture points on the knee joint in combination with exercise and advice in patients with knee osteoarthritis.

Summary of Results:

- Main outcomes were a visual analogue scale (VAS) and the Saudi Knee Function Scale (SKFS) at baseline, the fifth treatment session, the last treatment session, 6 weeks post intervention and 6 months post intervention.
- The results demonstrate that short-term application of LLLT to specific acupuncture points in association with exercise and advice is effective in reducing pain and improving function in patients with knee osteoarthritis.

Reasons not to Cite as Evidence:

- It is unclear how many treatment sessions and how many total weeks of LLLT were administered in this study.
- The Saudi Knee Function Scale (SKFS) was used to assess patient function. It is not known if this scale is reliable and appropriately validated to measure function.
- This trial was not registered prospectively and is therefore subject to reporting bias.
- Sample size is rather small with only 49 total participants.
- The study used non-parametric tests to analyze the data and reported median differences which are difficult to interpret.
- The study was conducted in Saudi Arabia that has a very different cultural demographic that puts into question the external validity of the study.

Assessment: Inadequate for evidence of the effect of low-level laser therapy (LLLT) applied to acupuncture points on the knee joint in combination with exercise to improve function or reduce pain in patients with knee osteoarthritis.