

## Supplement 1 Search strategy

**Table 1 Search strategy**

No	Database (Number of articles retrieved)	Search items
1	PUBMED (n = 3)	<p>1. ("Randomized Controlled Trial" [Publication Type]) OR ("Randomized Trial" [All Fields]).</p> <p>2. ("acupuncture"). [MeSH Terms]</p> <p>3. ("exp acupuncture therapy" OR "acupuncture" OR "acupressure" OR "acupoint" OR "electroacupuncture" OR "electro-acupuncture" OR "elongated needle" OR "warming needle" OR "auricular acupuncture" ). [All Fields]</p> <p>4. or/2,3.</p> <p>5.(Age-Related Macular Degeneration[MeSH Terms])</p> <p>6.("Degeneration, Macular" OR "Macular Degenerations" OR "Maculopathy" OR "Maculopathies" OR "Macular Dystrophy" OR "Dystrophy, Macular" OR "Macular Dystrophies" OR "Age-Related Macular Degeneration" OR "Age Related Macular Degeneration" OR "Age-Related Macular Degenerations" OR "Macular Degeneration, Age-Related" OR "Macular Degeneration, Age Related" OR "Maculopathies, Age-Related" OR "Maculopathy, Age-Related" OR "Maculopathy, Age Related" OR "Age-Related Maculopathies" OR "Age Related Maculopathies" OR "Age-Related Maculopathy" OR "Age Related Maculopathy"). [All Fields]</p> <p>7. or/5,6.</p> <p>8."humans". [MeSH Terms]</p> <p>9. 1 and 4 and 7 and 8.</p>
2	Cochrane (n = 4)	<p>("Acupuncture") AND ("Randomized Trial") AND ("Randomized Controlled Trial") AND ("Age-Related Macular Degeneration" OR "Degeneration, Macular" OR "Macular Degenerations" OR "Maculopathy" OR "Maculopathies" OR "Macular Dystrophy" OR "Dystrophy, Macular" OR "Macular Dystrophies" OR "Age-Related Macular Degeneration" OR "Age Related Macular Degeneration" OR "Age-Related Macular Degenerations" OR "Macular Degeneration, Age-Related" OR "Macular Degeneration, Age Related" OR "Maculopathies, Age-Related" OR "Maculopathy, Age-Related" OR "Maculopathy, Age Related" OR "Age-Related Maculopathies" OR "Age Related Maculopathies" OR "Age-Related Maculopathy" OR "Age Related Maculopathy")</p>

3	MEDLINE (n = 2)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. randomized controlled trial.pt.</li> <li>2. controlled clinical trial.pt.</li> <li>3. randomized.ab.</li> <li>4. randomly.ab.</li> <li>5. placebo.ab.</li> <li>6. trial.ab.</li> <li>7. groups.ab.</li> <li>8. or/1-7.</li> <li>9. exp animals/ not humans. sh.</li> <li>10. 8 not 9.</li> <li>11. ("acupuncture").ab.</li> <li>12. ("Age-Related Macular Degeneration" OR "Degeneration, Macular" OR "Macular Degenerations" OR "Maculopathy" OR "Maculopathies" OR "Macular Dystrophy" OR "Dystrophy, Macular" OR "Macular Dystrophies" OR "Age-Related Macular Degeneration" OR "Age Related Macular Degeneration" OR "Age-Related Macular Degenerations" OR "Macular Degeneration, Age-Related" OR "Macular Degeneration, Age Related" OR "Maculopathies, Age-Related" OR "Maculopathy, Age-Related" OR "Maculopathy, Age Related" OR "Age-Related Maculopathies" OR "Age Related Maculopathies" OR "Age-Related Maculopathy" OR "Age Related Maculopathy").ab.</li> <li>13. 10 and 11 and 12.</li> </ol>
4	Embase (n =8)	(Age-Related Macular Degeneration, acupuncture, randomized controlled trial, randomized) using a combination of multi-fieldsearch in all fields and Emtree
5	China National Knowledge Infrastructure (n = 58)	("Acupuncture" OR "electroacupuncture" OR "warm needle") [MESH] AND ("Age-Related Macular Degeneration" OR "Macular Degenerations") [MESH]
6	SINOMED (n = 66)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.("Acupuncture" OR "electroacupuncture" OR "warm needle"). [Common field]</li> <li>2. ("Age-Related Macular Degeneration" OR "Macular Degenerations"). [Common field]</li> </ol>

		3. 1 and 2.
7	Wanfang (n = 54)	1.("Acupuncture" OR "electroacupuncture" OR "warm needle"). [Common field] 2. ("Age-Related Macular Degeneration" OR "Macular Degenerations"). [Common field] 3. 1 and 2.
8	Technology Periodical Database (VIP) (n = 30)	1.("Acupuncture" OR "electroacupuncture" OR "warm needle"). [MESH or keywords] 2.("Age-Related Macular Degeneration" OR "Macular Degenerations"). [MESH or keywords] 3.1 and 2.
9	www.clinicaltrials.gov (n = 1)	("Acupuncture" AND "Age-Related Macular Degeneration" ) AND ( "randomized controlled trial" OR"randomized trial")
10	www.clinicaltrialsregister.eu (n = 0)	("Acupuncture" AND "Age-Related Macular Degeneration" ) AND ( "randomized controlled trial" OR"randomized trial")
11	trialssearch.who.int (n = 0)	("Acupuncture" AND "Age-Related Macular Degeneration" ) AND ( "randomized controlled trial" OR"randomized trial")
Mainly excluded literature (with reasons)		[1] Zhu JL, Gu ZY, Liu YL, et al. Clinical observation of acupuncture in the treatment of dry macular degeneration [J]. Shanghai Journal of Acupuncture and Moxibustion, 2018;37(06): 630-634. (comparison of different acupoints) [2] Li G, Shao Y, Yin J. Early age-related macular degeneration treated with emayaoling acupuncture technique: a randomized controlled trial. Zhongguo Zhen Jiu. 2017;37(12):1294-1298. (comparison of different acupuncture techniques) [3] Zhang X, Wang WY. Clinical study of Huatan Sanyu Mingmu Decoction combined with acupuncture in the treatment of exudative age-related macular degeneration [J]. Electronic Journal of Clinical Medical Literature, 2020;7(44):157+160. (inappropriate comparison) [4] Zhu HY, Zou JS. Analysis on therapeutic effect of Professor Zou Jusheng’ s emolliating liver and fortifying spleen method combined with acupuncture treating age-related macular degeneration[J].China Journal of Chinese Ophthalmology, 2015;25(04):265-268. (inappropriate comparison)

[5] Lu AH. Clinical study of Huangbanfuming decoction combined with acupuncture in the treatment of age-related macular degeneration [D]. Hebei Medical University, 2016. (inappropriate comparison)

[6] Li T. Efficacy of Huangban Fuming Decoction combined with acupuncture in the treatment of age-related macular degeneration and its effects on macular edema, subjective symptoms, serum VEGF, PDGF and ES levels [J]. Journal of Sichuan of Traditional Chinese Medicine, 2018;36(12):174-177. (inappropriate comparison)

**Supplement 2 Evaluation criteria of curative effect based on the “Criteria of Diagnosis and Therapeutic Effect of Internal Diseases and Syndromes in Traditional Chinese Medicine”**

**File 1 Evaluation criteria**

- 1) Valid, with at least one of the following manifestations: visual acuity improved by 1 line or more; improvement of macular lesions in the fundus (exudation, partial absorption of hemorrhage); improved visual field;
- 2) Invalid: no change or progressive decrease in visual acuity; no change or aggravation of macular exudation and hemorrhage; no change or aggravation of visual field.

## Supplement 3 Summary of findings

**Table 2 Grading of evidence**

Outcomes	Risk of bias	Inconsistency	Indirectness	Imprecision	Other considerations	Certainty of the evidence
<b>Clinical efficacy rates</b>	Serious <sup>a</sup>	Not serious	Not serious	Serious <sup>b</sup>	None	⊕⊕○○ LOW
Acupuncture alone	Serious <sup>a</sup>	Not serious	Not serious	Serious <sup>bc</sup>	None	⊕○○○ VERY LOW
Acupuncture as an adjunct	Serious <sup>a</sup>	Not serious	Not serious	Serious <sup>bc</sup>	None	⊕○○○ VERY LOW
<b>BCVA</b>	Serious <sup>a</sup>	Very serious <sup>d</sup>	Not serious	Very serious <sup>bc</sup>	None	⊕○○○ VERY LOW
<b>CMT</b>	Serious <sup>a</sup>	Serious <sup>f</sup>	Not serious	Very serious <sup>bc</sup>	None	⊕○○○ VERY LOW

### GRADE Working Group grades of evidence

**High certainty:** We are very confident that the true effect lies close to that of the estimate of the effect

**Moderate certainty:** We are moderately confident in the effect estimate: The true effect is likely to be close to the estimate of the effect, but there is a possibility that it is substantially different

**Low certainty:** Our confidence in the effect estimate is limited: The true effect may be substantially different from the estimate of the effect

**Very low certainty:** We have very little confidence in the effect estimate: The true effect is likely to be substantially different from the estimate of effect

### Explanations

- a. Concerns about bias in the domains of allocation concealment, blinding of outcome assessment and selective reporting.
- b. Small sample studies accounted for the majority.
- c. Concerned about the number of studies and participants.

d. I-squared= 89%.

e. Wide confidence intervals around estimate.

f. I-squared= 67%