

## PEER REVIEW HISTORY

BMJ Open publishes all reviews undertaken for accepted manuscripts. Reviewers are asked to complete a checklist review form ([see an example](#)) and are provided with free text boxes to elaborate on their assessment. These free text comments are reproduced below. Some articles will have been accepted based in part or entirely on reviews undertaken for other BMJ Group journals. These will be reproduced where possible.

### ARTICLE DETAILS

<b>TITLE (PROVISIONAL)</b>	Bee Venom Acupuncture for Rheumatoid Arthritis: A Systematic Review Protocol
<b>AUTHORS</b>	Lee, Ju Ah; Son, Mi-Ju; Choi, Jiae; Yun, Kyung-Jin; Jun, Ji Hee; Lee, Myeong Soo

### VERSION 1 - REVIEW

<b>REVIEWER</b>	Bing Zhu Institute of Acupuncutre and Moxibustion, CACMS, China
<b>REVIEW RETURNED</b>	06-Mar-2014

<b>GENERAL COMMENTS</b>	Bee Venom Acupuncture as a complementary therapy has been used for treating disease for decades. This method was mainly used in relieve pain. The corresponding author is expertized in Bee Venom Acupuncture, and has published several articles on this topic, including two reviews. It is of value to finish a systematic review on Bee Venom Acupuncture. Yet only several randomised controlled trials on this topic have been reported. It is suggested that the author submit a systemic review protocol with a topic of 'Bee Venom Acupuncture for the treatment of pain'.
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<b>REVIEWER</b>	Wong, Yiu Ming Hong Kong Physically Handicapped & Able Bodied Association, Hong Kong
<b>REVIEW RETURNED</b>	11-Mar-2014

<b>GENERAL COMMENTS</b>	<p>Contents:</p> <p>The bee venom acupuncture has two components, "biochemical effect" from the bee venom and "mechanical effect" from the needling. As the authors plan to study the "efficacy" of bee venom acupuncture (page 3, line 6; page 4, line 8; page 6, line 20), they should be able to rule out a possibility that the "non-acupoint" bee venom acupuncture being equally effective as the "true-acupoint" bee venom acupuncture; but their criteria excludes the non-acupoint bee venom acupuncture (page 7, lines 18-20), therefore, the author only focus on the "effectiveness" of the bee venom acupuncture rather than "efficacy". The authors may consider a slight change on the manuscript accordingly.</p> <p>Method (page 7, lines 40-49):</p> <p>The authors should be beware that the study design in which conventional therapy with bee venom acupuncture versus conventional therapy is likely generate false positive results (Ernst E, Lee MS. A trial design that generate only "positive" results. J Postgrad Med, 2008, 54: 214-216).</p>
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	<p>Database (page 3, lines 20-24; page 8, lines 38-42):          Acupuncture is a major source of prestige for China, criticism of acupuncture is perceived as criticism of China; thus the Chinese researchers tend to have positive results regarding acupuncture (Vickers A1, Goyal N, Harland R, Rees R. Do certain countries produce only positive results? A systematic review of controlled trials. Control Clin Trials, 1998, 19:159-66). The authors may need to find a way to minimize the impact from questionable databases; as biased data in, biased result out.</p>
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**VERSION 1 – AUTHOR RESPONSE**

Reviewer number: 1

Reviewer Name: Name Bing Zhu

Reviewer's comments:

Comment) Bee Venom Acupuncture as a complementary therapy has been used for treating disease for decades. This method was mainly used in relieve pain. The corresponding author is expertized in Bee Venom Acupuncture, and has published several articles on this topic, including two reviews. It is of value to finish a systematic review on Bee Venom Acupuncture. Yet only several randomised controlled trials on this topic have been reported. It is suggested that the author submit a systemic review protocol with a topic of 'Bee Venom Acupuncture for the treatment of pain'.

◇ Thank you for your great comments. We published the review of 'Bee Venom Acupuncture for Musculoskeletal Pain several years ago. We will try to update it after finishing this review as you suggested.

Reviewer number: 2

Reviewer Name: Wong, Yiu Ming

Reviewer's comments:

Comment 1) The bee venom acupuncture has two components, "biochemical effect" from the bee venom and "mechanical effect" from the needling. As the authors plan to study the "efficacy" of bee venom acupuncture (page 3, line 6; page 4, line 8; page 6, line 20), they should be able to rule out a possibility that the "non-acupoint" bee venom acupuncture being equally effective as the "true-acupoint" bee venom acupuncture; but their criteria excludes the non-acupoint bee venom acupuncture (page 7, lines 18-20), therefore, the author only focus on the "effectiveness" of the bee venom acupuncture rather than "efficacy". The authors may consider a slight change on the manuscript accordingly.

◇ Revised> We have changed the term 'efficacy' to 'effects' over the text because we will also include the placebo controlled-trials.

Comment 2) Method (page 7, lines 40-49)

The authors should be beware that the study design in which conventional therapy with bee venom acupuncture versus conventional therapy is likely generate false positive results (Ernst E, Lee MS. A trial design that generate only "positive" results. J Postgrad Med, 2008, 54: 214-216).

◇ Revised> As one of author in your suggested paper, I'll consider this points in the discussion of full review.

Comment 3) Database (page 3, lines 20-24; page 8, lines 38-42):

Acupuncture is a major source of prestige for China, criticism of acupuncture is perceived as criticism of China; thus the Chinese researchers tend to have positive results regarding acupuncture (Vickers A1, Goyal N, Harland R, Rees R. Do certain countries produce only positive results? A systematic review of controlled trials. Control Clin Trials, 1998, 19:159-66). The authors may need to find a way to minimize the impact from questionable databases; as biased data in, biased result out.

◇ Revised> The commented points will be discuss in full review. However, we will try our best to find the all of the papers related to this topic including grey papers. We will also search wide ranges of DBs and contact the experts in the world.  
Thank you for your valuable comments.