

Supplementary Table 2. Mild/Moderate adverse events in acupuncture studies for pregnant women

Author (year) Country	Condition/mean gestational weeks	Acupuncture group (A) and control group (C)	How AE data were collected	Details of AEs	Incidence per group	Severity [†]	Association with acupuncture [‡]	Practitioner
RCTs/quasi-RCTs								
Vas (2013) ¹ Spain	Fetal malposition/ A: 34.0 C1: 33.0 C2: 34.0	A: Moxa plus usual care C1: Sham moxa plus usual care C2: Usual care	(Presumably) Participant/obstetrician reported	Maternal: Burn during combustion of the moxa Dizziness Gastrointestinal disturbances (heartburn, nausea and vomiting) Mild hypertensive disorders Oligohydramnios Abdominal pain	(Probably A or C1) 1/3730 A 2/1865; C1 2/1865 8/NA 7/NA 2/NA C1 1/1865	Mild	Possible	Family member
Guerreiro da Silva (2012) ² Brazil	Tension-type headache/ A: 19.8 C: 19.4	A: MA plus usual care C: Usual care	(Presumably) participant reported	Maternal: Ecchymosis at needling points	A 2/200	Mild	Certain	Acupuncturist
Manber (2010) ³ United States	Depression/ A: 19.8 C1: 21.3 C2: 21.1	A: MA C1: Sham MA C2: Prenatal massage	Participant/practitioner reported	Maternal: Transient discomfort at needling points Local bleeding Tiredness Irritability or agitation Sleep disturbance Headache Nausea Worsened symptom Transient discomfort related with massage	A 14/456; C1 7/407 A 1/456 A 10/456; C1 9/407; C2 4/NA A 2/456; C1 2/407 A 1/456; C1 2/407 A 3/456; C1 1/407 A 2/456 A 1/456; C1 1/407 C2 5/NA	Mild Mild Mild Mild Mild Mild	Certain Certain Possible Possible Possible Possible	Acupuncturist
Guerreiro da Silva (2009) ⁴ Brazil	Dyspepsia/ A: 20.5 C: 21.3	A: MA C: No MA	(Presumably) participant reported	Maternal: Ecchymosis at needling points	A 1/201	Mild	Certain	Acupuncturist
Wang (2009) ⁵ United States	Low back and pelvic pain/ A: 30 C1: 29 C2: 29	A: AA plus PRLP self-care [§] C1: Sham AA plus PRLP self-care C2: PRLP self-care	(Presumably) Participant reported	Maternal: Transient ear tenderness resolved spontaneously Bed rest after the study period	A 1/112; C1 3/104 A 1/112; C1 1/104; C2 1/NA	Mild Mild	Certain Possible	Acupuncturist

Elden (2008) ⁶ Sweden	Pelvic girdle pain/ A: 22.4 C: 23.6	A: MA plus usual care C: Sham MA plus usual care	Participant reported	Maternal: Fainting Slight bleeding Haematoma Needle pain Drowsiness	A 5/672; C 4/624 A 35/672; C 34/624 A 17/672; C 17/624 A 12/672; C 13/624 A 3/672; C 2/624	Moderate Mild Mild Mild Mild	Probable Certain Certain Certain Possible	Midwife
Guerreiro da Silva (2007) ⁷ Brazil	Emotional complaints**/ A: 19.9 C: 21.0	A: MA plus counseling with or without phytomedicine C: Counselling with or without phytomedicine	(Presumably) participant/obstetrician reported	Maternal: Ecchymosis at needling points	A 4/253	Mild	Certain	Acupuncturist
Guerreiro da Silva (2005) ⁸ Brazil	Insomnia/ A: 20.6 C: 22.2	A: MA plus sleep hygiene C: Sleep hygiene**	(Presumably) participant reported	Maternal: Ecchymosis at needling points	A 1/125	Mild	Certain	Acupuncturist
Elden (2005) ⁹⁻¹⁰ Sweden	Pelvic girdle pain/ A: 24.4 C1: 24.4 C2: 24.4	A: MA plus usual care C1: Usual care C2: Usual care plus stabilizing exercise	(Presumably) Participant/obstetrician reported	Maternal: Needle pain Worsened symptom Unpleasant with treatment Drowsiness Feeling energised Headache plus severe drowsiness Headache only Rash at needling points Nausea Feeling faint Sweating Dizziness Thoracic pain Low back pain Discomfort because of rubbing from pelvic belt Uterine contraction Premature bleeding	A 23/1380 A 15/1380; C1 2/NA; C2 2/NA A 5/1380 A 12/1380 A 1/1380 A 1/1380 A 2/1380 A 4/1380 A 4/1380 A 4/1380 A 4/1380 A 4/1380 C2 1/NA C2 17/NA C1 5/NA C1 1/NA; C2 1/NA C2 1/NA	Mild Mild Mild Mild Mild Mild Mild Mild Mild Mild Mild Mild Mild Mild Mild Mild Mild Mild	Certain Possible Probable Possible Possible Possible Possible Possible Possible Possible Possible Possible Possible Possible Possible Possible Possible Possible Possible Possible	Acupuncturist
Du (2005) ¹¹ China	Fetal malposition/ 24-28	A: Moxa plus knee-chest position C: Knee-chest position	(Presumably) Participant/obstetrician reported	Maternal: Abdominal pain	C 5/NA			NR
Cardini (2005) ¹² Italy	Breech presentation/ 32.4-33.4	A: Moxa C: No moxa	(Presumably) Participant/obstetrician reported	Maternal: Unpleasant odour with or without nausea and throat problems Abdominal pain because of contractions	A 14/1085 A 11/1085	Mild Mild	Certain Possible	Participant

					Other less frequently problems	A 2/1085	UA	UA	
Guerreiro da Silva (2004) ¹³ Brazil	Low back pain/ A: 19.9 C: 21.0	A: MA plus medication ^{††} C: Medication	(Presumably) participant/obstetrician reported		Maternal: Small bruise or ecchymosis Pain	A 5/270 A 1/270	Mild Mild	Certain UA	Acupuncturist
Kvorning (2004) ¹⁴ Sweden	Low back and pelvic pain/ A: 30 C: 30	A: MA C: No MA	Participant/midwife reported		Maternal: Local pain Heat or sweating Local haematoma Tiredness Nausea Weakness	A 6/222 A 5/222 A 2/222 A 2/222 A 2/222 A 1/222	Mild Mild Mild Mild Mild Mild	UA Possible Certain Possible Possible Possible	NR
Smith (2002) ¹⁵⁻¹⁶ Australia	Nausea and vomiting/ 8.5	A1: Traditional MA plus usual care A2: PC6 MA plus usual care C1: Sham MA plus usual care C2: Usual care	Participant reported / collected from case notes		Fetal: Birth weight small for gestational age	A1 8/668; A2 5/672; C1 7/668; C2 7/NA	Mild	Unlikely	Acupuncturist
Knight (2001) ¹⁷ UK	Nausea and vomiting/ A: 7.8 C: 8.0	A: MA C: Sham MA	Participant reported		Maternal: Tiredness Sleep disturbance Heaviness of arms More energy Altered taste Bruise Pressure in nose Headache Increased vomiting Flatulence Vivid dreams Feeling of coldness	A 2/103; C 2/100 A 2/103 A 2/103 A 1/103 A 1/103; C 2/100 A 1/103 A 1/103 A 1/103 C 1/100 C 1/100 C 1/100 C 1/100	Mild Mild Mild Mild Mild Mild Mild Mild	Possible Possible Possible Possible Possible Certain Possible Possible	Acupuncturist
Wedenberg (2000) ¹⁸ Sweden	Low back and pelvic pain/ A: 24.2 C: 24.2	A: AA with or without MA C: Physiotherapy	Participant reported		Maternal: Small subcutaneous haematomas in the ear Uterine contraction Preeclampsia	A 2/300 C 3/192 C 1/192	Mild	Certain	NR
Cardini (1998) ¹⁹ China	Fetal malposition/ 33	A: Moxa C: Usual care	(Presumably) participant/obstetrician reported		Maternal: Braxton Hicks contraction Breech engagement Sense of tenderness and pressure in the epigastric region Epigastric crushing (one of the hypochondria)	A 1/1779 A 1/1779 NR NR	Mild Mild	Possible Possible	Participant

CCTs

Liang (2004) ²⁰ China	Fetal malposition/ ≥ 28	A: Moxa C: Knee-chest position	(Presumably) participant reported	Maternal: Dizziness Chest discomfort Nausea	C 74/3416 C 74/3416 C 74/3416				NR
Cardini (1993) ²¹ Italy	Fetal malposition/ 32-33	A: Moxa C: No moxa	(Presumably) obstetrician reported	Fetal: Multiple twists (2-3) of the umbilical cord around the neck/shoulder during labour	A 4/25 ^{§§} / A 3/25 ^{§§}	Mild	Unlikely		Participant

Case series

De Jonge-Vors (2011) ²² UK	Back pain, sciatica, rib flare, SPD/>28	A: MA	(Presumably) participant reported	Maternal: Over exerted Worsened condition	3/43 ^{§§} 3/43 ^{§§}	Mild Mild	Possible Possible		Midwife
Kvorning (2001) ²³ Sweden	Low back and pelvic pain/2 nd and 3 rd trimesters	A: MA	Midwife collected data from a case book	Maternal: Transient premature labour Dizziness Tiredness Local subcutaneous bleeding Local pain Local anaesthesia Uterine contraction Nausea Thirst Discomfort at needling points Sweating Accentuated pain Sadness Verified sudden transient fall in blood pressure during stimulation	1/167 ^{§§} 9/167 ^{§§} 7/167 ^{§§} 3/167 ^{§§} 5/167 ^{§§} 2/167 ^{§§} 2/167 ^{§§} 1/167 ^{§§} 1/167 ^{§§} 1/167 ^{§§} 1/167 ^{§§} 1/167 ^{§§} 1/167 ^{§§} 1/167 ^{§§} 1/167 ^{§§}	Mild Mild Mild Mild Mild Mild Mild Mild Mild Mild Mild Mild Mild Mild Moderate	Possible Possible Possible Certain UA Possible Possible Possible Possible Certain Possible Possible Possible Possible Probable		Midwife

Case reports

Ahn (2011) ²⁴ South Korea	External epicondylitis/25	MA plus BVP	(Presumably) patient/practitioner reported	Maternal: Mild oedema Itching	1/5 2/5	Mild Mild	Unlikely Unlikely		NR
Bourne (2007) ²⁵ UK	Pelvic girdle pain/25	MA	(Presumably) patient/practitioner reported	Maternal: Slightly bleeding from BL27	1/4	Mild	Certain		NR
Cummings (2003) ²⁶ UK	Low back pain/early pregnancy	MA plus EA	Patient/practitioner reported	Maternal: Tattooing of the skin at needling points Shooting sensation with intense paresthesia down the lateral side of the left leg to the foot by needling	1/18 1/18	Mild Mild	Certain Certain		NR

*The incidence was calculated as the number of AEs per number of acupuncture sessions. When the information was not

available, the number of participants replaced the number of acupuncture sessions.

[†]Severity of the AEs was assessed using the National Cancer Institute Common Terminology Criteria for Adverse Events (CTCAE) scale v4.0¹⁴; mild, moderate, severe, life-threatening, and death.

[‡]Association with acupuncture was evaluated using the WHO-UMC Causality categories¹⁵; certain, probable/likely, possible, unlikely, conditional/unclassified, and unassessable/unclassifiable.

[§]Rest as desired, taking acetaminophen 650 mg every six hours if needed, and/or applying topical warm and cold compresses.

^{**}Nervousness, irritability, weepiness, affective lability, poor concentration and mild anxiety and depression.

^{††}Fixed routine, bath before bed, no working late, use of relaxation techniques, and routine posture for sleep.

^{‡‡}Paracetamol 500 mg and hyoscine 10 mg.

^{§§}The number of participants replaced the number of acupuncture sessions because information was not available.

AA, auricular acupuncture; AE, adverse event; BVP, bee venom pharmacopuncture; CCT, controlled clinical trial; EA, electroacupuncture; MA, manual acupuncture; Moxa, moxibustion; NA, not applicable; NR, not reported; PRLP, pregnancy-related low back and posterior pelvic pain; RCT, randomised controlled trial; SPD, symphysis pubis dysfunction; UA, unassessable due to lack of information.

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