Section 3 | Acupuncture |

03-1 Cupping therapy – Something between acupuncture and moxibustion

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Introduction: As a child, I was repeatedly subjected to a cupping therapy and perhaps with good results, because I live for today. As a young doctor I used cupping in the 80-th century. Today in my country is relatively rarely used by qualified medical personnel, although still officially approved for the treatment, and also quite widely practiced outside of official medicine.

The aim of the study was to analyze the medical literature cupping therapy.


Results: After entering the phrase “cupping therapy” obtained information about more than 800 publications and 10 clinical trials. It seems much more probably located in the journals outside these databases of literature, including unreviewed, books and websites.

Cupping are a medical device used in physical medicine for hundreds, perhaps even thousands of years quite different indications and in different modifications. On the one hand it can be considered as related acupressure, in a sense acupuncture, because the pressure changes affect the skin and subcutaneous tissue, the other as a form of heat treatment, and thus akin to moxibustion. The scope of the described indications for cupping therapy is quite broad and includes fibromyalgia, neuralgia, Persistent non-specific low back pain, neck pain, mechanical/motor problems with neck and trunk, osteoarthritis, carpal tunnel syndrome, facial paresis, but also insomnia, asthma, cough, bronchitis, dyslipidemia, laryngitis, erysipelas, hypertension and pneumothorax and.. constipation.

Unfortunately the available data do not allow for strong recommendations of their use, but can be considered as a method of supplementing or even basic for patients with contraindications to other forms of treatment (medication or operating). However, further research to these recommendations could be verified.

Cupping is also not free from the risk of complications, especially dermatological and hematology. The biggest risk, however, is probably omission or delay the necessary diagnosis and/or therapy, such as surgery, when cupping lead to a subjective improvement, but it can not cure serious diseases such as cancer.

Conclusion: Available data do not allow for strong support of cupping therapy, but may be considered as a complementary method or even basic for patients with contraindications to other forms of treatment (medication or operating). However, further research to verify these recommendations must be done.

Keywords: Cupping therapy, Clinical trials, Complementary medicine