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General Ophthalmology

Ophtalmologie générale : évaluation de l'acupuncture

1. Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis

1.1. Bautista-Hernández 2026 (Inflammation-related ocular degenerations)

Bautista-Hernández MA, Torres-Rosas R, Argueta-Figueroa L, Moreno-Rodríguez A, Pérez-Cervera Y, Acevedo-Mascarúa AE, Martínez-Martínez EA. Acupuncture in the treatment of inflammation-related ocular degenerations: a systematic review. Front Med (Lausanne). 2026;13:1749297. https://doi.org/10.3389/fmed.2026.1749297

Background	Inflammation-related ocular degenerations include dry eye syndrome, diabetic retinopathy, age-related macular degeneration, and glaucoma. Until now, there are no efficient protocols for treating inflammation-related ocular degenerations. On the other hand, acupuncture therapy modulates the inflammatory and oxidative stress responses in several inflammatory diseases and has been proposed as an emerging therapy for the potential treatment of ocular pathologies.
Objective	This work aimed to conduct a comprehensive systematic review to address the efficacy of acupuncture therapy for Inflammation-related ocular degenerations.
Methods	The designs of the included studies were clinical trials and observational studies, whereas case series, in vivo, and in vitro studies were excluded. The search was performed in five databases. Relevant data from all included studies were recorded, the outcomes analyzed were intraocular pressure and visual acuity for glaucoma; score of symptoms, pain, tear-film breakup time, and mm of Schirmer test for dry eye syndrome; visual acuity, retinal structure or disease progression for diabetic retinopathy; and finally visual acuity and scores of symptoms for age-related macular degeneration. Risk of bias (using the RoB 2 tool) and quality (using the Grading of Recommendations Assessment, Development, and Evaluation [GRADE] tool) assessments were conducted.
Results	The included studies showed heterogeneity, risk of bias, inconsistency, and very low certainty of evidence.
Conclusion	There is no conclusive evidence to support that acupuncture is an effective therapy in patients with inflammation-related ocular degeneration disease.

1.2. Chen 2025 (degenerative eye diseases)

Chen KY, Chan HC, Chan CM. Is acupuncture a viable therapeutic strategy for degenerative eye diseases? A systematic review and meta-analysis. Complement Ther Med. 2025 Aug 22;103235. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ctim.2025.103235

Background	Degenerative ocular diseases, including glaucoma, age-related macular degeneration (AMD), optic atrophy, and retinitis pigmentosa (RP), are major causes of irreversible vision loss. Acupuncture, a traditional Chinese therapy, has shown promise in improving visual function through neuroprotective and vascular mechanisms.
Methods	A systematic review and meta-analysis were conducted using PubMed, Embase, Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, and Cochrane Library. Randomized controlled trials, cohort studies, and observational studies evaluating acupuncture or electroacupuncture for degenerative ocular diseases were included. Risk of bias was assessed using RoB 2.0 for RCTs and ROBINS-I for non-randomized studies. Meta-analyses and narrative syntheses were performed using RevMan and rbiostatistics.
Results	A total of 3,362 records were identified, with 21 studies meeting inclusion criteria. Acupuncture was associated with improvements in visual acuity-related outcomes, ocular blood flow, and intraocular pressure across conditions. Meta-analysis showed a significant improvement in total effective rate favoring acupuncture (OR = 3.52, 95% CI 2.18–5.68, $p < 0.00001$), with consistent benefits across RP, AMD, and optic atrophy. However, pooled analyses showed no statistically significant improvement in visual acuity (MD = −0.03, $p = 0.50$) or intraocular pressure (MD = −0.86 mmHg, $p = 0.11$). Comparisons with sham acupuncture demonstrated non-significant trends. Overall findings were heterogeneous.
Conclusion	Acupuncture may offer potential benefits for degenerative eye diseases, particularly in improving clinical response rates. However, its effects on visual acuity and intraocular pressure remain inconclusive, highlighting the need for larger, well-designed studies.

1.3. Welte 2017

Welte AK, Hahn U, Büssing A, Krummenauer F. [Systematic Review of the Application of Complementary and Alternative Medicine and their Potential Therapeutic Benefits in the Treatment of Ophthalmology Patients]. Klin Monbl Augenheilkd. 2017;234(5):686-696. [99927].

Purpose	A systematic review was carried out of the reported therapeutic effects of complementary and alternative medicine methods as supplementary or primary treatments for patients suffering from glaucoma, cataract or age-related macular degeneration (AMD).
Material and Methods	For the years 1990 to 2013, the following databases were screened for reports of the application of complementary and alternative treatments: PubMed, Cochrane Library, EMBASE, CAMbase and AMED. Both randomised and prospective non-randomised patient trials were included in the review; results were evaluated in the following classes: “phytotherapy”, “acupuncture/acupressure”, “biofeedback” and “other alternative treatments”. The studies were evaluated by measures of clinical effect, statistical significance (p value and/or confidence interval) and the underlying trial design.
Results	30 clinical trials were included, including 13 on glaucoma, 5 on cataract and 12 on AMD patients. These trials were based on patient numbers of 6-332, 27-157 and 6-328 patients, respectively. Phytotherapy was applied in 14 trials, including 6 on glaucoma patients (all 6 with a controlled design, and 3 of which reporting statistically significant results); 5 trials were on cataract patients (3 with a controlled design and 2 with a significant result) and 3 on AMD patients (only 1 with a controlled design, with a significant result). **Acupuncture/acupressure was investigated in 9 trials, 5 on glaucoma patients (3 with a controlled design, 1 with a significant result); no acupuncture/acupressure trial was found in cataract patients, but 4 trials in AMD patients (none with a controlled design)**. Biofeedback was studied in 4 trials, all on AMD patients (only one with a controlled design, without statistically significant findings).

Conclusion	Despite its rigorous inclusion criteria, this review identified several clinical trials on complementary and alternative medicine in ophthalmological patients. Phytotherapeutic methods gave significant results in half of the reported controlled trials, whereas **there were few significant benefits with acupuncture or acupressure**.

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Last update: **12 Apr 2026 08:42**