

STRICTA criteria

Acupuncture is a procedure that has many variable aspects. In order to encourage researchers to report it in a way that can be reproduced and interpreted, a group of researchers formed a consensus on what criteria need to be reported. These are known as the STRICTA criteria – which stands for STAndards for Reporting Interventions in Controlled Trails of Acupuncture. ¹

Acupuncture in Medicine, in common with an increasing number of other international journals, insists that authors report acupuncture procedures using these criteria. They can be described in the text, or in a table. They should be applied flexibly according to the context, as it will not be necessary to provide all details in all circumstances – for example, not all studies use co-interventions or control groups.

Intervention	Description of Item
1) Acupuncture rationale	1a) Style of acupuncture 1b) Rationale for treatment (e.g. syndrome patterns, segmental levels, trigger points) and individualisation if used 1c) Literature sources to justify rationale
2) Needling details	2a) Points used (uni/bilateral) 2b) Numbers of needles inserted 2c) Depths of insertion (e.g. <i>cun</i> or tissue level) 2d) Responses elicited (e.g. <i>de qi</i> or twitch response) 2e) Needle stimulation (e.g. manual or electrical) 2f) Needle retention time 2g) Needle type (gauge, length, and manufacturer or material)
3) Treatment regimen	3a) Number of treatment sessions 3b) Frequency of treatment
4) Co-interventions	4a) Other interventions (e.g. moxibustion, cupping, herbs, exercises, life-style advice)
5) Practitioner background	5a) Duration of relevant training 5b) Length of clinical experience 5c) Expertise in specific condition
6) Control intervention(s)	6a) Intended effect of control intervention and its appropriateness to research question and, if appropriate, blinding of participants (e.g. active comparison, minimally active penetrating or non-penetrating sham, inert) 6b) Explanations given to patients of treatment and control interventions 6c) Details of control intervention (precise description, as for Item 2 above, and other items if different) 6d) Sources that justify choice of control

Reference list

1. MacPherson H, White A, Cummings M, Jobst K, Rose K, Niemtow R. Standards for reporting interventions in controlled trials of acupuncture: The STRICTA recommendations. Standards for Reporting Interventions in Controlled Trails of Acupuncture. *Acupunct Med* 2002;20(1):22-5