Acupressure and Preoperative Parental Anxiety: A Pilot Study
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Abstract Body: Following IRB approval, participants in this randomized, blinded, sham-controlled trial were 61 parents whose children were scheduled to undergo elective surgery. One parent (mother or father) per one child participated in the study. After obtaining the written consent, parents completed a demographic, state and trait anxiety questionnaires and a research assistant obtained the baseline blood pressure and heart rate from the participants. A BIS Quatro monitor was applied to the forehead. Parents were then randomized to two groups based on a computer generated randomization table:
1. **Acupressure Group**: Treated with an acupressure bead covered by an occlusive tape at the Yintang point i.e. the mid point between the two eyebrows.
2. **Sham Group**: Treated with an acupressure bead in a sham point that is defined as an acupuncture point, which has no documented anxiolytic effect. For this study, the sham point was located above the lateral boarder of the left eyebrow. The first author performed the appropriate acupressure with a self-adhesive pressure sticker without the presence of a research assistant. All participants were monitored in the holding room in the presence of his/her family and child. Twenty minutes after the acupressure intervention, a second blood pressure, heart rate and anxiety assessment were obtained.

Introduction: A recent study indicates that acupressure at the Yintang point (midpoint between the eyebrows) results in sedation and decreased anxiety in healthy volunteers in laboratory settings. We therefore designed the following study to determine whether acupressure at Yintang will decrease parental preoperative anxiety.

Results: A total of 61 parents participated in this study. There were no differences in baseline demographic and anxiety data between the acupressure and sham groups. We found that parents in the acupressure group were significantly less anxious at 20 minutes post-intervention as compared to parents in the sham group (38 ± 10 vs. 45 ± 13, p=0.03). We did not find any difference in blood pressure, heart rate, and BIS value.

Discussion: We found parents who received a self-adhesive pressure bead at Yingtang point had less anxiety as compared to those in the Sham group. Further studies are indicated for exploring the mechanism of such an effect on other clinical settings.