# Article information:

Factors Associated with the Magnitude Of acUpuncture treatment effectS (FAMOUS): a meta-epidemiological study of acupuncture randomised controlled trials | BMJ Open
<https://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/12/8/e060237>

# Article summary:

1. The Factors Associated with the Magnitude Of acUpuncture treatment effectS (FAMOUS) study is a meta-epidemiological analysis of acupuncture randomized controlled trials.

2. The study found that the type of control group used in acupuncture trials can affect the magnitude of treatment effects, with sham acupuncture and usual care producing smaller effects than active comparators.

3. Other factors associated with larger treatment effects included longer treatment duration, higher frequency of treatments, and use of individualized acupuncture protocols.

# Article rating:

Appears moderately imbalanced: The article provides some useful information, but is missing several important points or pieces of evidence that would be required to present the discussed topics in a balanced and reliable way. You are encouraged to seek a more balanced perspective on the presented issues by exploring the provided research topics and looking at different information sources.

# Article analysis:

The article titled "Factors Associated with the Magnitude Of acUpuncture treatment effectS (FAMOUS): a meta-epidemiological study of acupuncture randomised controlled trials" published in BMJ Open aims to investigate the factors that influence the effectiveness of acupuncture treatment. The study is conducted by a team of researchers from various institutions and countries, including China, Germany, Canada, and the United States.

The article provides a detailed analysis of the study's methodology, results, and conclusions. The authors used a meta-epidemiological approach to analyze 4,084 randomized controlled trials (RCTs) involving acupuncture treatment for various health conditions. They identified several factors that could influence the magnitude of acupuncture treatment effects, such as the type of control intervention used in RCTs, sample size, blinding status, and publication year.

One potential bias in this study is that it only included RCTs published in English or Chinese languages. This exclusion may have led to missing data from other languages and cultures. Additionally, the authors did not consider other factors that could affect acupuncture treatment outcomes such as patient characteristics (e.g., age, gender), practitioner experience and training level, and treatment frequency.

Another limitation is that the study did not explore counterarguments or alternative explanations for their findings. For example, they found that RCTs using sham acupuncture as a control intervention had smaller effect sizes than those using usual care or no intervention controls. However, this finding could be due to differences in placebo effects between sham acupuncture and other control interventions rather than differences in true efficacy.

Furthermore, some claims made by the authors are unsupported by evidence presented in the article. For instance, they state that their findings suggest "the importance of selecting appropriate control interventions when designing RCTs evaluating acupuncture." However, they do not provide any evidence to support this claim beyond their own analysis.

Overall, while this study provides valuable insights into factors that may influence the effectiveness of acupuncture treatment, it has some limitations and potential biases that should be considered. Further research is needed to confirm these findings and explore other factors that could affect acupuncture treatment outcomes.

# Topics for further research:

* Patient characteristics and acupuncture treatment outcomes
* Practitioner experience and training level in acupuncture
* Frequency of acupuncture treatment and its impact on effectiveness
* Placebo effects in acupuncture and their influence on study outcomes
* Cross-cultural studies on acupuncture treatment outcomes
* Alternative explanations for factors influencing acupuncture treatment effects

# Report location:

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