Acupressure for Seasonal Allergic Rhinitis - a randomized controlled exploratory trial

Summary:
Background: Seasonal Allergic Rhinitis (SAR) is a widespread disease with a prevalence of 20% in industrialized nations. In previous studies acupuncture was proved as effective and safe treatment option for patients with SAR. To date, there are no studies on feasibility and effects of self-administered body-acupressure as a self-ministered-tool in SAR patients.
Objectives: The aim of this study is to evaluate the effects of self-administered body acupressure plus rescue medication compared to rescue medication alone on disease related quality of life and intake of disease-specific medication in patients with SAR.
Design: Two-armed, mono-center randomized controlled exploratory trial. In addition, focus-groups are planned within a qualitative study part.
Participants: 40 to 60 participants aged 18-45 with diagnosed SAR (since more than two 2 years) on grasses and birch pollen will be included in the study.
Intervention: After randomization, participants of the acupressure group receive an acupressure training; they are instructed to practice standardized self-acupressure on a daily basis during the intervention-period of 4 weeks. In addition, participants of this group can use anti-allergic rescue medication (Antihistamines, Cortisone) if needed. Patients of the control group are instructed to use only anti-allergic rescue medication for the period of 8 weeks. After week 8, participants of this group can also participate in an acupressure-training.
Outcome parameters: The following outcome parameters will be assessed at baseline and after 4 and 8 weeks: Rhinitis Quality of Life Questionnaire (RQLQ), health related quality of life (SF-36), questionnaire on autonomous function (THKF), days of incapacity to work related to SAR, Rescue Medication Score (RMS), VAS Symptom Score nasal and non-nasal symptoms, disease-specific direct and indirect costs during the study-period as well as adverse events. Acupressure frequency will be assessed by patients’ diaries.
Perspective: The results of this trial will provide first information on the effects of self-administered body acupressure in SAR patients and will be used as basis for further confirmatory studies.

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