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Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNA’s) Knowledge and Attitudes Regarding Acupressure as an Adjunct to Postoperative Nausea and Vomiting Prevention

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Introduction
Problem: Postoperative nausea and vomiting (PONV) continues to be a problem for patients despite multimodal pharmacologic treatments available. There is no current research on the knowledge and attitudes of CRNAs regarding the use of acupressure for PONV.

CRNAs and SRNAs are the primary providers of anesthesia care in the United States. They are responsible for the care of patients undergoing surgical procedures. Acupressure is a technique similar to acupuncture, except acupressure uses mechanical or physical pressure instead of needles over specific acupressure points. Acupressure has demonstrated clinical usefulness, yet it is still not widely used in mainstream anesthesia practice.

Objectives: The purpose of this descriptive survey design was to assess current knowledge and attitudes among CRNAs and SRNAs regarding acupressure for PONV treatment. A secondary objective was to develop an educational handout designed to increase the use of acupressure as an adjunct to postoperative nausea and vomiting prevention using the findings from this current study.

Methods: A descriptive, cross-sectional survey design was utilized to assess the current knowledge and attitudes among CRNAs regarding the use of acupressure for PONV treatment. Participants were recruited from the Illinois Association of Nurse Anesthetists (IANA) and SRNAs via email. Participants were blinded to potential study participants. A total of 109 out of 1200 members of the Illinois Association of Nurse Anesthetists were included. We had to eliminate question number seven to maintain the adequacy of the tool to be used to assess the effect of ethnicity on knowledge and attitudes. However, we found gender to be a statistically significant factor for a higher overall knowledge and attitudes on the effectiveness of acupressure, and its potential to improve patient outcome and surgical outcomes. This study found that all study participants including IANA CRNAs and SRNAs have an overall adequate knowledge and positive attitudes on acupressure for PONV management.

Conclusions: Overall, CRNAs have adequate knowledge and positive attitudes regarding use of acupressure for PONV management, but lack knowledge on acupressure effects on patient comfort, efficacy of PONV relief and post-surgical outcomes. Areas of identified deficits were partnered and included increased comfort. Without nausea and vomiting there is also the potential to improve surgical outcomes. A handout was created and incorporated the knowledge and attitude deficits noted above. A systematic review from the Cochrane Library including 59 trials and 7667 participants, authors concluded the effect of P6-acupoint stimulation is recognizable to antiemetics in the prevention of PONV.

Limitations
One limitation of our study is that it only surveyed participants from Illinois. Therefore, our results may not apply to other geographic locations. Also, we did not survey other anesthesia providers such as anesthesiologist or anesthesiologist assistants. A major limitation of our study was that 32% of respondents identified their ethnic origin as white, so we were not able to assess the effect of ethnicity on knowledge and attitudes. However, we found gender as a significant factor which could not be assessed. Further study is needed to assess gender differences in the prevalence and the first step in bringing this therapy into anesthesia practice. Additionally, this study provides preliminary evidence for female gender as a factor for a higher overall knowledge and attitudes on acupuncture among CRNAs and SRNAs.

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