

Table S4 Characteristics of 6 included trials on cupping for acne

Trials	Patients (M/F)		Average age (y)	Diagnostic criteria	Interventions		Duration of treatment	Outcome measure
	Treatment	Control			Cupping treatment	Control		
Huang J 2010 [38]	76 (gender proportion not reported)	50 (gender proportion not reported)	23	Medical textbook published in China: <i>Guiding Principles in Chinese Medicine</i>	Prick 5 back <i>shu</i> acupoints with tri-ensiform needle followed by cupping on same acupoints for 5 to 10 minutes twice weekly, plus herbal decoction 50 ml three times daily, and external facial cream	Herbal decoction 50 ml three times daily plus external facial cream	Not reported	*Cured, markedly effective, ineffective
Liu H 2009 [59]	14/29	39 (gender proportion not reported)	23.8	Medical textbook published in China: <i>Guiding Principles in Chinese Medicine</i>	Flash cupping on lesions until face is flushed, plus routine acupuncture for 30 minutes once daily first 10 days, then once every 2 days for another 10 days	Routine acupuncture for 30 minutes once daily first 10 days, then once every 2 days for another 10 days	30 days	*Cured, markedly effective, ineffective; number of papules, pustules, cysts
Wang Q 2007 [91]	30 (gender proportion not reported)	30 (gender proportion not reported)	Not reported	Medical textbook published in China: <i>Acupuncture and Moxibustion Treatment</i>	Tap 5 back <i>shu</i> acupoints with plum blossomed needle followed by cupping on same acupoints for 5 to 10 minutes once every 3 days, plus moving cupping on back and routine acupuncture for 30 minutes once daily	Routine acupuncture 30 minutes once daily	30 days	*Cured, markedly effective, ineffective
Wu F 2010 [95]	30 (gender proportion not reported)	28 (gender proportion not reported)	Not reported	Not reported	Prick 2 back <i>shu</i> acupoints with tri-ensiform needle followed by cupping on same acupoints for 5 to 10 minutes once every 5 to 7	Tanshinone 1 g, three times daily	30 days	*Cured, markedly effective, ineffective.

	reported)	reported)			days			
Wu Y 2008 [97]	9/21	7/23	25.5	Medical textbook published in China: <i>Dermatology</i>	Prick back <i>ashi</i> acupoints with tri-ensiform needle followed by cupping on same acupoints; cups are retained until 5 to 7 ml blood is let; treat once daily	Tetracycline 0.25 g four times daily, plus 0.2% ketoconazole topical cream once daily	10 days	*Cured, markedly effective, ineffective.
Zhang K 2008 [125]	25/18	28/15	Not reported	Not reported	Prick back <i>ashi</i> acupoints with tri-ensiform needle followed by cupping on same acupoints for 10 to 15 minutes, once every two days	Tetracycline 500 mg, three times daily, plus external cream (name not reported) twice daily	15 days	**Cured, markedly effective, ineffective.

Definition of “cured”, “markedly effective”, “effective”, and “ineffective”:

Cured: Lesions completely or more than 95% cleared, clinical symptoms resolved, only mild pigmentation and scarring remain.

Markedly effective: Lesions cleared more than *70% (**60%), severity of lesions significantly alleviated.

Effective: Lesions cleared *30% to 69% (**20% to 59%), severity of lesions reduced.

Ineffective: Lesions cleared less than *30% (**20%), or lesions worsened.