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Acupuncture treatment for temporomandibular joint pain

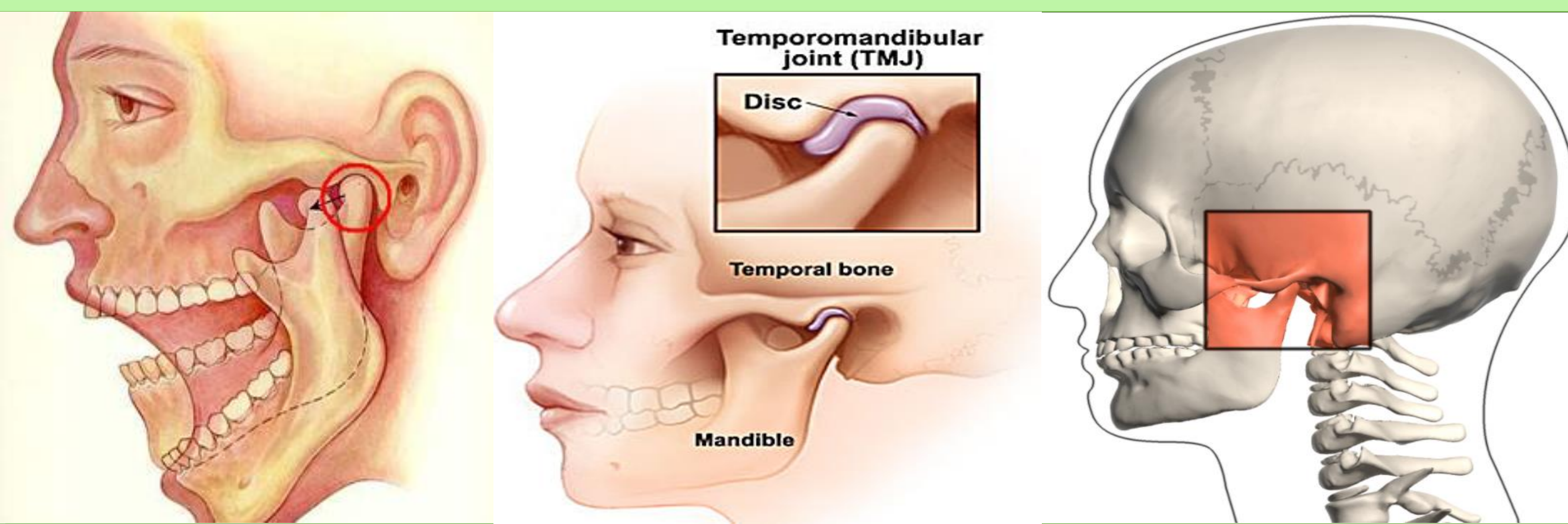
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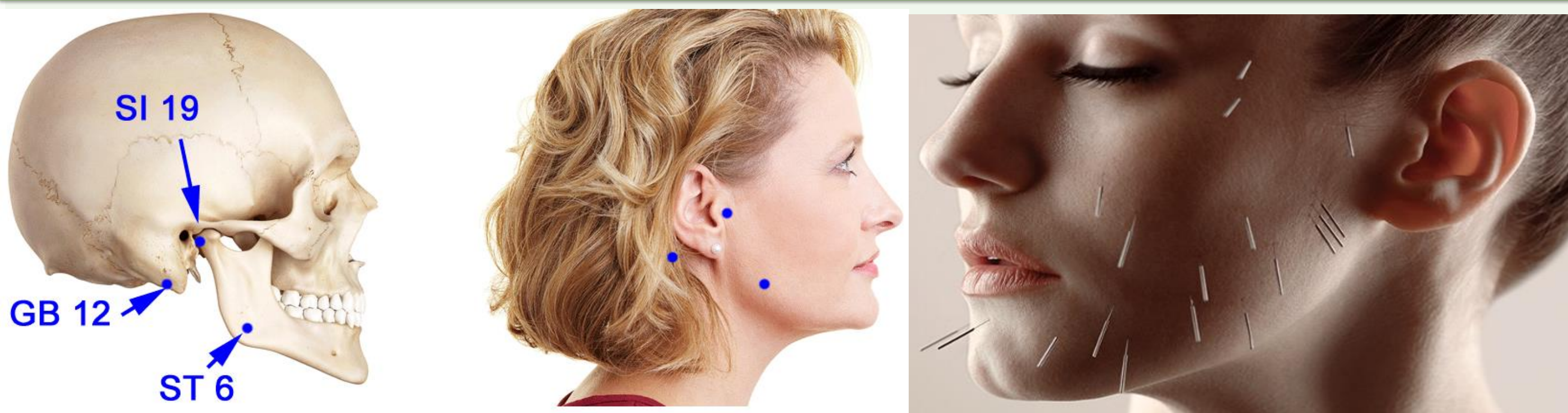
INTRODUCTION

- ❖ Temporomandibular joint dysfunction is an umbrella term covering pain and dysfunction of the muscles of mastication (the muscles that move the jaw) and the temporomandibular joints (the joints which connect the mandible to the skull).
- ❖ The most important feature is pain, followed by restricted mandibular movement and noises from the temporomandibular joints (TMJ) during jaw movement.
- ❖ According to the Traditional Chinese Medicine the disorder might occur due to a deficiency in Qi in the liver meridian and an excess of Qi in the gallbladder meridian.
- ❖ Acupuncture can help minimize TMJ “clicking” by relaxing the lateral pterygoid muscles, and thereby reducing the anterior displacing force on the meniscus of the TMJ

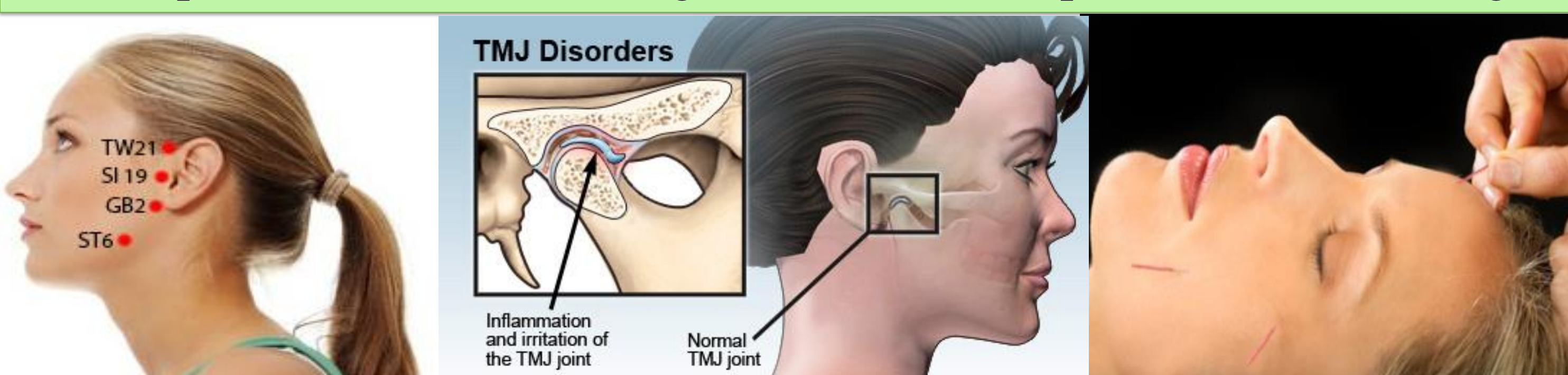


MATERIAL AND METHODS

- ❖ In this research are included 9 patients, 5 female and 4 male, on age from 25 to 66.
- ❖ All are treated with acupuncture for temporomandibular pain.
- ❖ Treatments were made in a clinic for TCM and acupuncture in Skopje, by a doctor specialist in acupuncture.
- ❖ Treatments were indoor, on a room temperature.
- ❖ Patients were treated with normal (cold) fire needle acupuncture on the acupuncture point St7 and Ashi points i.e. trigger points found on palpation on the most painful place around the TMJ.
- ❖ Needles were inserted in the area of the pain, around the ear and the jaw.
- ❖ The duration of the treatment with fire needle is 5-10 minutes.
- ❖ The duration of the treatment with normal (cold) needle is 35-40 minutes.



- ❖ Temporomandibular joint (TMJ) syndrome may be caused by: external injury, external contraction of wind evils, internal damage by the seven affects, habitual bodily vacuity and worms.
- ❖ The pain occurs when there is lack of free flow of Qi and blood caused by external wind cold or wind heat evils invasion.
- ❖ Most cases of TMJ have their root at liver-spleen disharmony.
- ❖ The stomach and intestinal meridians have direct course to the upper and lower gums, so when there is stagnation of Qi (vital energy) in this meridians, it creates heat toxins that cause swelling of the gums.
- ❖ Acupuncture can remove stagnation in order to prevent further damage.



RESULTS

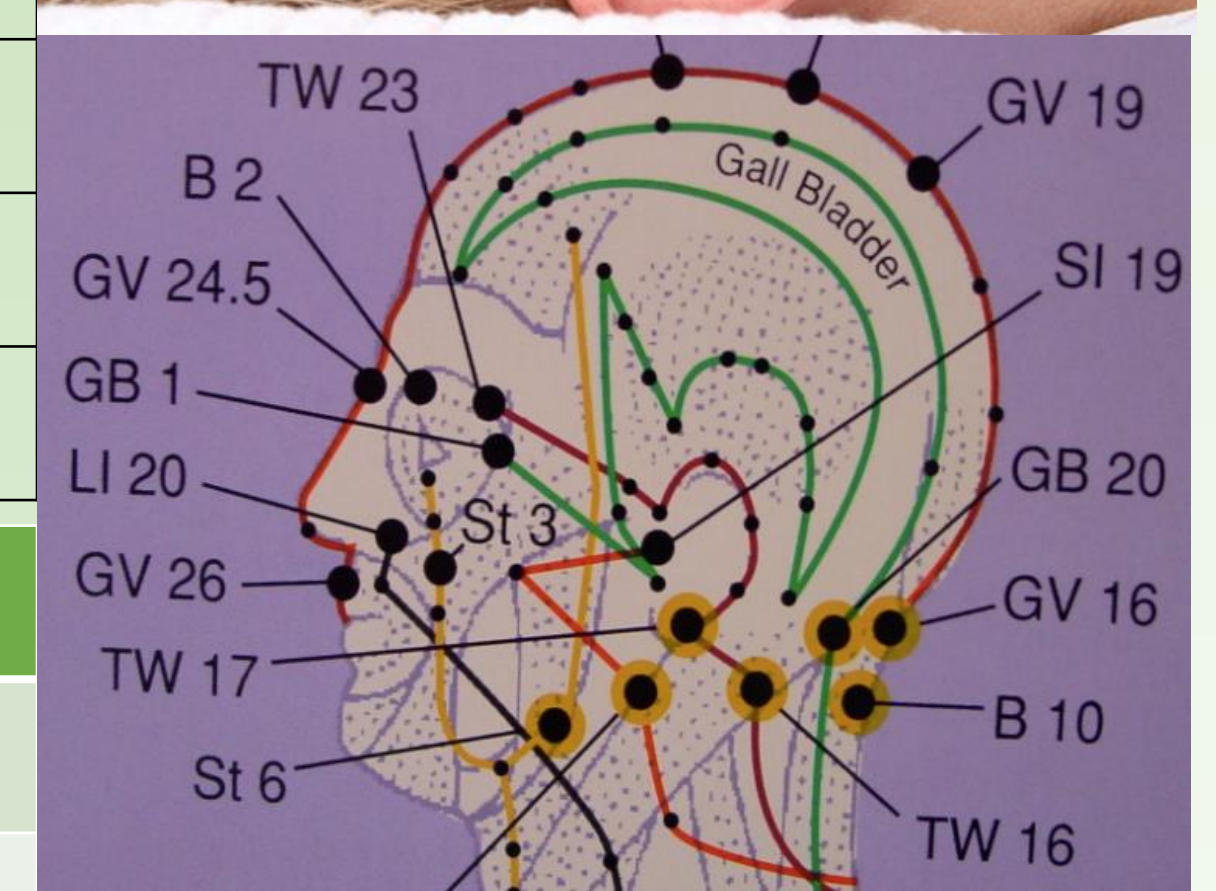
- ❖ Most common age group was from 30 to 40 years old.
- ❖ Most of the treated patients needed 2 treatments to achieve the results.
- ❖ In most of the patients the condition occurred after tooth extraction, in some after giving birth, bruxism, stress and etc.
- ❖ Most common symptoms were pain the TMJ, difficulties when eating, chewing, yawning, swallowing, limited mouth opening, swelling of the cheeks, insomnia and etc.
- ❖ After the treatments, the pain and the other accompanying symptoms that patients complained about before were gone and the normal function of the joint was restored.

Table.1. Number of treatment done

Number of treatments	Number of patients
1	1
2	5
3	/
4	1
5	1
6	1

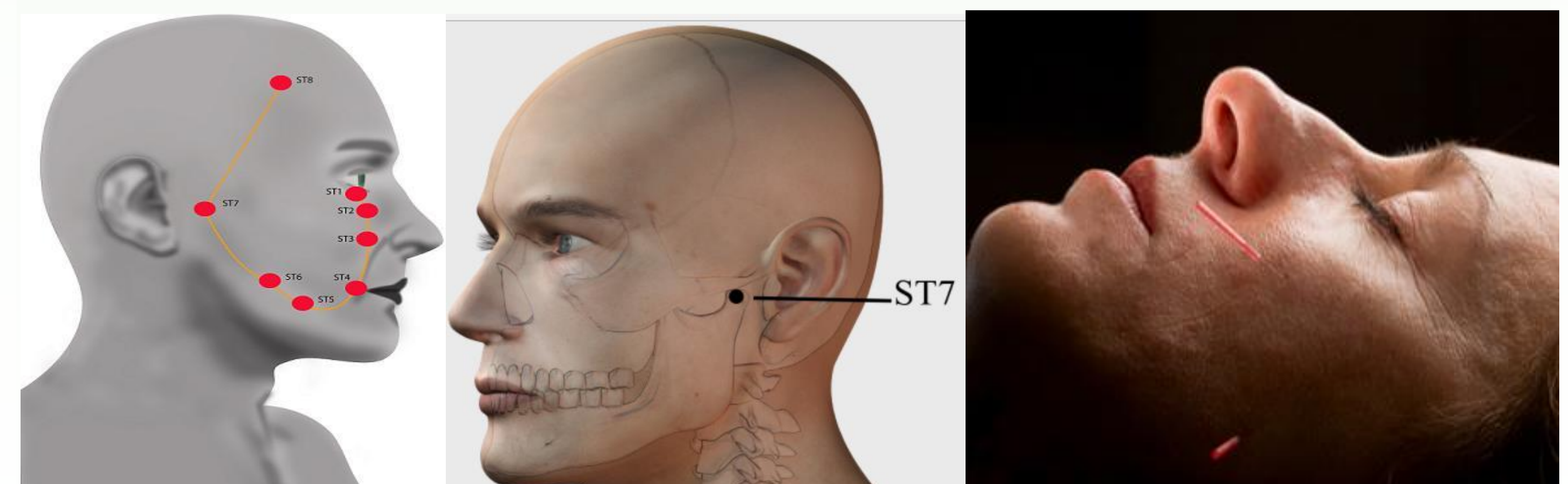
Table.2. Age groups

Age	Number of patients
<30	2
30-40	4
40-50	1
50-60	/
>60	2



DISCUSSION

- ❖ Acupuncture possesses pain-reducing and anti-inflammatory effects. It helps to flush toxins, boost immunity, has ability to elevate the pain threshold, release neurotransmitters in local regions, and modulate pathways in the central nervous system thus yielding analgesic effect.
- ❖ Stimulation of certain acupuncture points can relieve the obstruction of meridians and collaterals, recover the equilibrium of Yin and Yang and physical, emotional and spiritual aspects of the individual, to improve energy flow and energy quality promoting the free flow of Qi and thereby eliminating pain.
- ❖ Acupuncture relieves muscle spasms and decreases pain and swelling, releasing the jaw naturally for the joint to move freely.
- ❖ Additional points help flush toxins, boost immunity, calm the mind and balance the other systems within the body such as digestion and sleep.



CONCLUSION

Acupuncture as part of Traditional Chinese Medicine is used to promote and uphold good oral health and it can give quick and effective pain relief for many dental conditions.