

Additional file 1. PubMed search strategy

#1 “randomized controlled trial” [pt] OR “controlled clinical trial” [pt] OR “randomized” [ti, ab] OR “trial” [ti, ab] OR “groups” [ti, ab];

#2 clinical trials as topic [mesh: noexp];

#3 #1 OR #2;

#4 “acupotomy” [ti, ab] OR “needle scalpel” [ti, ab] OR “needle knife” [ti, ab] OR “acupotomy” [ti, ab] OR “miniscalpel acupuncture” [ti, ab] OR “miniscalpel needle” [ti, ab] OR “stiletto needle” [ti, ab] OR “Xiaozhendao” [ti, ab];

#5 “Osteoarthritis, Knee” [Mesh] OR “Knee Osteoarthritides” [ti, ab] OR “Knee Osteoarthritis” [ti, ab] OR “Osteoarthritides, Knee” [ti, ab] OR “Osteoarthritis Of Knee” [ti, ab] OR “Knee, Osteoarthritis Of” [ti, ab] OR “Knees, Osteoarthritis Of” [ti, ab];

#6 “Ultrasonography” [Mesh] OR “Ultrasonics” [ti, ab] OR “ultrasonography*” [ti, ab] OR “ultrasonic*” [ti, ab] OR “ultrasound*” [ti, ab] OR “ultrasound-guided” [ti, ab];

#7 #3 AND #4 AND #5 AND #6;

The same search items will be used to search all electronic databases.