Fig. 2. Rheumatoid arthritis.

A: A section through the ankle joint of a patient with rheumatoid arthritis.

B: Schematic representation of (A): The region of the synovial lining that erosides into the bone (known as the pannus) contains macrophages, fibroblasts and osteoclasts, which contribute to the cartilage and bone destruction. The sublining region of the rheumatoid joint is replete with blood vessels, which are important for delivering inflammatory cells, such as monocytes and lymphocytes, to the joint. 6

Though the anti-nociceptive effect of BVT is not well understood, α2-adrenergic receptor modulation in the central nervous system has been revealed as one possible mechanism. Acupuncture at sites proximal to joints affected with RA seems to produce better analgesia to sites more distally.

There are still many concerns regarding the dose, mode of delivery, and side effects which need to be elucidated before BVT becomes widely used in the clinical setting. However, the data from recent studies have shown that BVT has the potential to be used as an alternative therapy to control inflammation and pain associated with RA.

References


