

Acupuncture Treatment for Migraine

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Abstract In the research are included 30 patients, 12 male and 18 female, on age from 29 to 79, who were treated with acupuncture treatment in our clinic in a period of one year. All patients had acupuncture treatment in a clinic for TCM and acupuncture in Skopje, Macedonia, by a doctor specialist in acupuncture. Acupuncture points that were treated are: Baihui-DU20, Sishencong-EX-HN1, Yangbai-GB14, Yintang-EX-HN3, Taiyang-EX-HN5, Hegu-LI4, Zhongwan-RN12, Zusanli-ST36, Sanyinjiao-SP6, Taichong-LR3, Fengchi-GB20, Dazhui-DU14, Pishu-BL20, Weishu-BL21, Ganshu-BL18. After the acupuncture treatment the effect was achieved in all patients with certain number of treatments and all the symptoms that they complained about before were gone afterwards. There were more female than male patients, with average age of 49. In most of the patients effect was achieved with 5 to 10 treatments. Acupuncture treatment as part of the 5000 year old Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) can successfully relieve the migraine symptoms, decrease the pain, reduce inflammation and improve the blood and Qi circulation through the body and meridians Acupuncture as a treatment for migraine gives positive results and can successfully improve the health and well-being of the patients.

Keywords *acupuncture; traditional Chinese medicine; treatment; migraine*

1. Introduction

Migraines are one of the most common types of headaches that occurs periodically. Studies show that from this type of headache are suffering 20% of the population. Migraine occurs in women two to three times more often than in men [1]. There are two type of migraine: classical (with aura) and common migraines (without aura). The pain often begins on the one side of the head and spreads to both or stays on one side. The pain can be described as pounding, pulsating or throbbing and it can be very intense often concentrated around the temples up front to the forehead. The pain can last 4-72 hours. The symptoms that may occur are: dizziness, vomiting, nausea, fatigue, visual disturbance, neck pain and etc. The reason of appearance is not exactly sure but it involves changes in the brain blood flow. There also might be genetic link to the migraine (half of people suffering from migraines have affected family member). Possible causes (triggers) for migraine can be: alcohol, crying, stress, caffeine, medications, certain odors, hormones (during pregnancy), certain foods and etc. Risk factors are: gender (women are more likely to have migraine than men), birth control pills, family

members with migraines, age (under 40), sensitivity and exposure to some of the triggers and etc. [2]. Acupuncture treatment as part of the 5000 years old TCM is successfully used in treating migraines to alleviate the pain, clear the symptoms, regulate the blood and Qi circulation, harmonize the internal state of the body, remove blockages and restore the balance of the body's energy [3].

2. Materials and Methods

In this research are included 30 patients, 12 male and 18 female, on age from 29 to 79. All the patients were diagnosed and had symptoms of migraine. All the patients have done acupuncture treatments on the same points and duration, in a clinic for Traditional Chinese Medicine and acupuncture in Skopje, Macedonia, by a doctor specialist in acupuncture. Treatments were made in a closed room, on a temperature of 25⁰, with duration of the treatments of 35-40 minutes. In the treatment were used fine, sterile acupuncture needles size 0.25x25mm produced by Wuijiang City Medical & Health Material Co., LTD. Acupuncture points that were treated are: Baihui-DU20, Sishencong-EX-HN1, Yangbai-GB14, Yintang-EX-HN3, Taiyang-EX-HN5, Hegu-LI4, Zhongwan-RN12, Zusanli-ST36, Sanyinjiao-SP6, Taichong-LR3, Fengchi-GB20, Dazhui-DU14, Pishu-BL20, Weishu-BL21, Ganshu-BL18.

3. Results and Discussion

From the analysis we can conclude that there were more women than men affected by migraine – 18 female and 12 male patients. The patients were on age from 29 to 79, with average age of 49 and the most common age groups of 30-40 and 50-60. On Table 1 the results are showing the age groups – 1 patient in the group of patients younger than 30 years, 8 patients in group of 30-40 years, 6 patients in the group of 40-50 years, 8 in the 50-60 group and only one patient in group of patients older than 70 years.

Table 1: Age groups and number of patients in each group

Age of the patients	Number of patients
< 30	1
30-40	8
40-50	6
50-60	8
60-70	6
>70	1

All the patients have made acupuncture treatments on the same points and effect was achieved in all patients with certain number of treatments. Most of the patients needed 5 to 10 treatments. The results from the analysis made for the number of treatment are shown on Table 2. 9 patients have made less than 5 treatments, 11 patients made 5-10 treatments, 7 made 10-15 and 3 patients made more than 15 treatments.

Table 2: Number of acupuncture treatments done

Number of treatment done	Number of patients
< 5	9
5-10	11
10-15	7
> 15	3

Before starting the treatments patients complained about various symptoms, but all of them had pain and headaches. Other symptoms are: vomiting, nausea, dizziness, blurred vision, sweating, hot sensations, high blood pressure, spondylosis, pulsating and throbbing pain, pressure of the head, worsening of the symptoms during cold weather and during changes in weather conditions. Patients who experienced symptoms of nausea and vomiting stated that after vomiting the pain was decreased and they felt better. All of the patients explained the pain (mostly had pain on the right side) like very strong headache starting from the nape and going up through the temples and front to the forehead. After the acupuncture treatment all the symptoms that they complained about before were gone.

Not all the headaches are the same. According to Western medicine there are five types of headaches: migraine, sinus, cluster, rebound and tension headache. TCM works in a way to treat the root of the headache (what is causing the pain) and the branch (the pain itself), therefore the pain is not just temporarily relieved but the results are long-term [4]. According to TCM migraine symptoms are connected to more than 9 different imbalances, a deficiency of blood or Qi, liver, bladder, stomach or gallbladder meridians disharmony, increased Yang energy in the head or combination. If the pain is frontal it is attributed to stomach meridians, if it's affecting the temples it is connected to the gallbladder and liver meridians and if it's going back to the nape it is connected to bladder meridians. Because migraine symptoms are connected and are coming from the imbalance of the liver and gallbladder systems, then the triggers would be the things that these systems are highly sensitive of, like stress, alcohol, coffee, hormonal changes, emotions like frustration and anger. All the acupuncture points that were chosen to be treated are connected with the meridians of these organs (gallbladder, bladder, liver and stomach) and are used in the treatment to correct the underlying imbalance and alleviate migraine symptoms. With the acupuncture treatment the body is allowed to heal and self-regulate, to restore the free flow of the Qi energy and regulate the nervous and hormonal system [5]. Other studies done for acupuncture treatment for migraines also confirm positive results and reduction of the frequency of the headaches [6; 7; 8]. As a conclusion we can say that acupuncture, as part of the TCM, is a very helpful treatment for migraine, gives positive results and successfully is improving the health and well-being of the patients.

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