Clinical Effects of Acupuncture Combined with Nimodipine for Treatment of Vascular Dementia in 30 Cases

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Objective: To study the therapeutic effects of acupuncture combined with nimodipine for vascular dementia.

Methods: Acupuncture was applied at Baihui (GV 20), Shenshu (BL 23), Geshu (BL 17), and the points selected according to the midnight-noon, ebb-flow eight methods of the intelligent turtle, combined with the drug nimodipine. The treatment was continued for 8 consecutive weeks.

Results: Of the 30 cases treated, 6 cases were cured, 21 cases improved, and 3 cases failed, with a total effective rate of 90%.

Conclusion: Acupuncture at Baihui (GV 20), Shenshu (BL 23), Geshu (BL 17), and the points selected according to the midnight-noon, ebb-flow eight methods of the intelligent turtle combined with the drug nimodipine can yield definite therapeutic effects for vascular dementia.

Key words: vascular dementia; acupuncture; nimodipine

The authors used acupuncture combined with the drug nimodipine for treatment of vascular dementia in 30 cases, and obtained satisfactory effects as reported in the following.

CLINICAL MATERIALS

The 30 cases in this series were in- and outpatients from the Department of Internal Neurology and the Department of Acupuncture of the First Affiliated Hospital of Guiyang College of TCM. Among them, 17 cases were male and 13 cases female; 25 cases had history of cerebral infarction, and 5 cases had history of cerebral hemorrhage. The age range was from 40–75 years (mean 61.5), with the duration of the illness from 1 month–10 years (mean 3.8 years). All cases met the following criteria: 1) having the symptoms of dementia; 2) having a Hasegawa dementia scale (HDS) score <24;¹ 3) showing acute onset or with a step-progressive duration of the illness; 4) having definite signs of dementia within the nervous system; 5) having a Hachinski ischemia score >7;² 6) having a noticeable cerebrovascular pathologic changes detected by CT or MRI; and 7) dementia due to other causative factors was excluded.

METHODS

Acupuncture combined with the drug nimodipine was adopted for the treatment. The points used were Baihui (GV 20), Shenshu (BL 23), Geshu (BL 17), and the points selected according to the midnight-noon, ebb-flow eight methods of the intelligent turtle. The twirling reinforcing method was applied for Baihui (GV 20) and Shenshu (BL 23); and the even method was used for Geshu (BL 17) and for the opening points selected by the midnight-noon, ebb-flow eight methods of intelligent turtle. For each point, the needle was retained for 30 minutes, during which the needle was manipulated once till the arrival of qi. The acupuncture was given once daily with at 2-day intervals for a week. Nimodipine was orally taken 30mg each time, 3 times daily. The treatment was continued for 8 consecutive weeks.
Criteria for Therapeutic Effects
Cured: The main symptoms basically disappeared. The patient was clear-minded and able to give correct answers to questions, and had quick responses and the ability to manage daily life and take part in ordinary social activities. Improved: The main symptoms were alleviated, or partially disappeared. The patient could basically manage daily life and give basically correct answers to questions, but had a slow response time and still had partial disturbance in intelligence and personality. Failed: No improvement in the main symptoms, or with aggravation of the condition. The patient was unable to manage daily life and could not give correct answers to questions.

RESULTS
Of the 30 cases treated, 6 cases were cured, 21 cases improved, and 3 cases failed. The total effective rate was 90%.

DISCUSSION
Kidney-deficiency is the key causative factor for vascular dementia, and deficiency of the sea of marrow due to kidney-deficiency is the main pathology of dementia. Clinical researches have proved that among the patients with apoplectic dementia, over 80% may have kidney-deficiency, manifested by the symptoms due to kidney-deficiency and interior obstruction of phlegm and blood stasis. So, the point prescription for acupuncture should be made according to the principle of nourishing the kidneys and supplementing the marrow, promoting resuscitation and mental clearness, and removing phlegm and blood stasis. This method of treatment for vascular dementia has shown a quite good prospect of TCM, with better therapeutic effects as compared with Western medicine.

Baihui (GV 20) belongs to the Du Channel, and it has the effect of dredging the Du Channel and promoting resuscitation. It has been reported that needling at Baihui (GV 20) can improve memory of both human beings and animals. Shenshu (BL 23) and Geshu (BL 17) belong to the Bladder Channel. Shenshu (BL 23) can be used for nourishing the kidney, replenishing the marrow and benefitting the brain. Geshu (BL 17) can give the effect of promoting blood circulation and removing blood stasis. And selection of points according to the midnight-noon, ebb-flow eight methods of the intelligent turtle can help to activate channel-qi of the regular channels, promote the connection between channels and the brain, so as to arouse the essential-qi and potential power of the brain, and achieve the purpose of promoting resuscitation and improving intelligence. Therefore, in this group of points, Baihui (GV 20) is used for dredging the Du Channel and promoting resuscitation; Shenshu (BL 23) for nourishing the kidneys, replenishing the marrow and benefitting the brain; Geshu (BL 17) for promoting blood circulation and removing blood stasis; and the points selected according to the midnight-noon, ebb-flow eight methods of the intelligent turtle for enhancing the effects of promoting resuscitation and mental clearness, and benefitting intelligence.

In the present study, the authors adopted the combined use of acupuncture and the drug nimodipine to obtain the joint effects of nourishing the kidneys and replenishing the marrow, resuscitating the brain to promote mental clearness, and promoting blood circulation and removing blood stasis. By doing so, the authors tried to raise the life quality of the patients and enhance their ability in social activities, and have them make a get gradual recovery. The results showed that acupuncture at Baihui (GV 20), Shenshu (BL 23), Geshu (BL 17), and the points selected according to the midnight-noon, ebb-flow eight methods of the intelligent turtle can give definite therapeutic effects for vascular dementia. It is worth popularizing clinically for its convenient and safe application.
REFERENCES


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