76 Cases of Hypomenorrhea Treated by Acupuncture to Regulate the Menstrual Cycle

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Between August 2006 to September 2008, the author treated 76 cases of hypomenorrhea by using acupuncture to regulate the menstrual cycle, and achieved good therapeutic results as reported in the following:

CLINICAL MATERIALS

General Data
All 152 cases in this series were outpatients from the Henan Provincial TCM Hospital. They were randomly divided into the following two groups. In the treatment group of 76 cases, the age range was from 18 to 43 years, with the duration of illness from 3 to 25 months; and 52 cases were married and 24 unmarried. In the control group of 76 cases, the age range was from 19 to 44 years, with the duration of illness from 3 to 26 months; and 53 cases were married and 23 cases unmarried. The data was comparable between the two groups with no significant difference in age, duration and condition of illness ($P>0.05$).

Criteria for Diagnosis
The diagnostic criteria of hypomenorrhea were made according to the Diagnosis and Therapeutic Effects of Traditional Chinese Medicine and the Gynecology of Traditional Chinese Medicine.\(^1,2\) The patients may have basically normal menstrual cycles, but with less menstrual amount (<30 ml), or with a shortened menstrual cycle.

Criteria for Exclusion
1) Pregnancy with menstruation; 2) hypomenorrhea caused by oral medication; 3) congenital abnormalities of genitalia; 4) hypomenorrhea due to tumors, tuberculosis and other systematic diseases; 5) psychois or mental illness; 6) hyperprolactinemia and polycystic ovary syndrome; and 7) hyperthyroidism.

METHODS
For the Treatment Group
During post menstruation (follicular phase), the treatment principle was to benefit the kidneys, nourish blood and reinforce deficiency. The points used were Guanyuan (CV 4), Shenshu (BL 23), Taixi (KI 3), Pishu (BL 20), and Geshu (BL 17). Acupuncture treatment was given once a day for 5 consecutive days, with the needles retained for 30 minutes each time. During intermenstrual period (ovulatory phase), the treatment principle was to warm the kidney $yang$ and strengthen vitality. The points used were Guanyuan (CV 4), Qihai (CV 6), and Sanyijiao (SP 6), with a moxibustion box put on the lower abdomen. The treatment was given once a day for 5 consecutive days, with the needles retained for 30 minutes each time. During premenstruation (luteal phase), the treatment principle was to warm the kidney $yang$ and conduct blood to go downward. The points used were Guanyuan (CV 4), Shenshu (BL 23), Taixi (KI 3), Qihai (CV 6), and Yinbai (SP 1). The treatment was given once a day for 5 consecutive days, with the needles retained for 30 minutes each time. During menstrual period (endometrium shedding period), the treatment principle was to regulate liver $qi$ and activate blood. The points used were Zhongji (CV 3), Diji (SP 8), and Xuehai (SP 10). The treatment was given once a day for 3 consecutive days, with the needles retained for 30 minutes each time.
For the Control Group

The points used were Zhongji (CV 3), Zigong (EX-CA1), and Sanyijiao (SP 6). Acupuncture treatment was given once a day for 15 consecutive days, starting from the 5th day of menstruation, with the needles retained for 30 minutes each time. 15 sessions of treatment constituted one therapeutic course during a one-month period.

RESULTS

Criteria for Therapeutic Effects

Cured: Normal menstrual amount was maintained over 3 months. Improved: Menstrual amount was increased or normal menstrual amount was maintained within 3 months. Failed: no obvious improvement in the menstrual cycle and amount.

Therapeutic Results

Of the 76 cases in the treatment group, 63 cases (82.9%) were cured, 9 cases (11.8%) improved, and 4 cases (5.3%) failed, with a total effective rate of 94.7%. Of the 76 cases in the control group, 49 cases (64.5%) were cured, 16 cases (21.1%) improved, and 11 cases (14.4%) failed, with a total effective rate of 85.6%. The therapeutic effects in the treatment group was remarkably better than that in the control group (P<0.05).

COMMENTS

During post menstruation with blood deficiency, the treatment principle was to benefit the kidneys, nourish blood and reinforce deficiency. Guanyuan (CV 4), Shenshu (BL 23), Taixi (KI 3), Pishu (BL 20) and Geshu (BL 17) are used to tonify the kidney qi and essence, nourish the Ren and Chong Channels, restore yin and ascend yang, which offer the fundamental substances for menstruation. During the intermenstrual period, the treatment principle is to warm kidney yang and strengthen vitality. Guanyuan (CV 4), Qihai (CV 6) and Sanyijiao (SP 6) are used with moxibustion on Guanyuan (CV 4) and Qihai (CV 6), which can tonify kidney yang to promote inter-transforming of yin and yang. During premenstruation, needling Guanyuan (CV 4), Shenshu (BL 23), Taixi (KI 3), Qihai (CV 6) and Yinbai (SP 1) can warm kidney yang and conduct bloodflow downward. During the menstrual phase, the treatment principle is to regulate liver qi and activate blood, and needling Zhongji (CV 3), Diji (SP 8) and Xuehai (SP 10) can promote circulation and activation of blood. According to the changes of kidney qi, and qi and blood in different phases of the menstrual cycle, the acupuncture therapy adopted in the present study fully shows the concept of wholism of traditional Chinese medicine, which may increase the ability of body autoregulation, thus yielding good therapeutic results effects and low recurrence rates.

REFERENCES


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