



RESEARCH ARTICLE

ACUPUNCTURE TREATMENT IN TRIGEMINAL NEURALGIA

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ABSTRACT

Trigeminal neuralgia is a chronic condition involving a trigeminal nerve disorder. Trigeminal neuralgia causes intense facial pain, around the eyes, lips, nose and ears and most often in the area of lower face and jaw. The most common causes for trigeminal neuralgia are applied pressure by blood vessels to the root of the trigeminal nerve and exposure to wind. By the terms of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) trigeminal neuralgia can be caused by: wind-cold invasion, liver/stomach fire and yin deficiency. The main TCM treatment for trigeminal neuralgia is acupuncture. In the study are included 14 patients, 7 male and 7 female, on age from 24 to 93, all treated for trigeminal neuralgia with fire-needle acupuncture. Treatments are done on the Ashi i.e. trigger points on the most affected areas on the face. Most usually treated points are BL2 (Cuanzhu), LI20 (Yiangxiang) and ST8 (Touwei). In all treated patients is achieved positive effect with total pain relief and removing the symptoms. Most patients have done 1-5 treatments. Most common age group is >60 years. Most affected is the right side of the face in the patients. As a treatment for trigeminal neuralgia, the acupuncture can give very positive and satisfying results, thereby reducing the pain in the face, ears, head, jaw and eyes, loosening the muscles, facilitating the movements in the joints, the speaking and chewing the food.

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INTRODUCTION

Trigeminal neuralgia is a chronic condition involving a trigeminal nerve disorder. There are two divided trigeminal nerves running on both sides of the face and each nerve has three branches to the chin, forehead and midface. Trigeminal neuralgia causes intense facial pain, around the eyes, lips, nose and ears and most often in the area of lower face and jaw. The pain is usually very severe and occurs on one side of the face. The pain is not constant, it comes and goes for days or weeks in cycles, but in some cases can be present all the time. Over time the pain gradually increase and it often becomes resistant to medications. Then the condition becomes chronic and can also cause some other problems like insomnia, anxiety and depression. The pain can be triggered by speaking, eating, drinking, brushing teeth, touching, shaving and etc.

Symptoms that may occur are: pain on one or both sides of the face, spasms, cluster attacks, sudden attack of pain triggered by speaking, chewing or brushing teeth, pain in the forehead, jaw,

lips, eyes, gums, teeth and cheek, numbness in the face, severe episodes of pain like electric shocks and other. [1] [2] [3]

The most common causes for trigeminal neuralgia are applied pressure by blood vessels to the root of the trigeminal nerve and exposure to wind. The pain usually starts as very sharp, burning and stabbing facial pain. By the terms of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) trigeminal neuralgia can be caused by: wind-cold invasion, liver/stomach fire and yin deficiency. [4]

The treatment options from Western medicine for trigeminal neuralgia involve prescribed medications and surgery. [1] The main TCM treatment for trigeminal neuralgia is acupuncture. Acupuncture induces analgesic effect which helps to alleviate various pain conditions and especially helps in the control of chronic pain. [3]

CASE REPORT

In the study are included 14 patients, 7 male and 7 female, on age from 24 to 93, all treated for trigeminal neuralgia with fire-needle acupuncture in a clinic for Traditional Chinese Medicine

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and acupuncture in Skopje, North Macedonia. Treatments are done by a doctor specialist in acupuncture with duration of 5-10 minutes. Treatments are done on Ashi i.e. trigger points on the most affected areas on the face. Ashi points are individual for every patient. Most usually treated points are: BL2 (Cuanzhu), LI20 (Yiangxiang) and ST8 (Touwei).

Symptoms that were present in the patients are: pain around the jaw, teeth, eyes, mouth, ears, forehead, pain on one or both sides of the face, pain while eating and speaking, insomnia and other typical symptoms for trigeminal neuralgia.

10 patients were taking medications prescribed by doctor – Tegretol, Vitamin B6, Neuroforte, Pregabalin, Amylase, Stugeron and other pain medication. After the specific number of treatments patients were no longer taking medications.

Most affected was the right side of the face in the patients. 8 patients had pain on the right side, 2 on left side and 4 patients on both sides of the face.

According to the duration of the condition, in most patients the pain was present for more than 2 years.

According to the age, most common age group is >60 years. On the table 1 are shown the age groups.

Table 1 Age groups

Age groups	Number of patients
20-30	2
30-40	2
40-50	1
50-60	4
>60	5

In all treated patients is achieved positive effect with total pain relief and removing the symptoms. Most patients have done 1-5 treatments. On the table 2 are shown the results from the number of treatments made.

Table 2 Number of treatments

Number of treatments	Number of patients
1-5	7
6-10	5
>10	2

From a TCM point of view, pain occurs when there is blockage in the meridians. The affected meridian in trigeminal neuralgia is stomach meridian which is distributed around the jaw, the teeth and the eyes.

With the acupuncture treatment the energy flow can be improved, the normal body balance can be restored, pain and other symptoms can be relieved and other. [4]

CONCLUSION

As a treatment for trigeminal neuralgia, the acupuncture can give very positive and satisfying results, thereby reducing the pain in the face, ears, head, jaw and eyes, loosening the muscles, facilitating the movements in the joints, the speaking and chewing the food.

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