

Review

Clinical research progress of acupuncture after pulse diagnosis

切脉针灸的临床研究进展

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ABSTRACT

Acupuncture after pulse diagnosis has good efficacy in treatment of cancer, pain, etc., and has advantages when compared with conventional acupuncture according to analysis of the its origin, clinical application, mechanism research, etc.. However, this therapy has not been applied widely clinically due to the lack of large-scale clinical randomized controlled trials, large sample and long-term efficacy observation, and in-depth mechanism research. In the future, large sample and long-term efficacy study should be conducted in order to determine the efficacy of acupuncture after pulse diagnosis, further illuminate its mechanism, and promote its clinical application.

KEY WORDS: pulse diagnosis; acupuncture and moxibustion; review

OVERVIEW OF ACUPUNCTURE AFTER PULSE DIAGNOSIS

Definition

Acupuncture after pulse diagnosis is a kind of acupuncture method for reinforcing deficiency and reducing excess, supplementing *qi* and nourishing blood, regulating *qi* movement, and recovering *yin-yang* balance by pulse differentiation diagnosis after comprehending the changes of *zang-fu* organs, *yin-yang*, *qi* and blood. Firstly, syndrome is conducted through pulse diagnosis, *cùnkǒu* (at the wrist) is taken as the main pulse, which is combined with *rén yíng* (at the neck), *tàixī* (at the medial malleolus) pulse and *chōngyáng* (at the dorsum of foot) pulse. The amplitude of pulsation of *cùnkǒu* pulse and *rén yíng* pulse is compared (the patients with large amplitude of pulsation of *rén yíng* pulse are diagnosed with *yang* exuberance, and the ones with small amplitude of pulsation of *rén yíng* pulse are diagnosed with *yin* exuberance). Secondly, acupuncture therapy is conducted, special needling instruments (gold needles are selected for reinforcing method, and silver needles

are selected for reducing method) are selected, and acupoints are selected based on deficiency or excess of *zang-fu* organs, meridians and collaterals.

Origin

Acupuncture after pulse diagnosis is a modern acupuncture therapy inherited and created originally by professor YU Yun according to the theory of acupuncture in *Nèijīng* (《内经》 *The Inner Classic*). As the creator of acupuncture after pulse diagnosis, professor YU Yun obtained significant achievements in treatment of nasopharynx cancer, lung cancer, liver cancer, etc. and kawasaki disease, psoriasis, and other difficult miscellaneous diseases through years of research. It is written in *Lingshū* (《灵枢》 *The Miraculous Pivot*) “Before needling, pulse diagnosis should be conducted first”, which indicated that pulse diagnosis should be conducted before acupuncture. Also in *The Miraculous Pivot*, “Meridians usually cannot be seen, and the condition of deficiency and excess is known from radial pulse”, which indicated that pulse diagnosis is very important for correct performance of acupuncture. Mr. LU Shou-

yan^[1] believed that pulse diagnosis is one of the significant evidences in determination of reinforcing or reducing method, deep or shallow needling, and use of moxibustion. Pulse diagnosis is one of the important contents of pattern differentiation and treatment, which is directly related with the improvement of acupuncture effect. Pulse diagnosis must be conducted firstly in clinical treatment in order to know the condition of deficiency and excess of *zang-fu* organs, meridians and collaterals, and *qi* and blood, so as to guide acupuncture therapy, which has specific advantages when compared with conventional acupuncture.

CLINICAL APPLICATION OF ACUPUNCTURE AFTER PULSE DIAGNOSIS

Treatment of cancer and pain

At the beginning, professor YU Yun applied acupuncture after pulse diagnosis in treatment of advanced cancer. Through acupuncture after pulse diagnosis, he regulated the lesions of *zang-fu* organs, reinforced healthy *qi*, invigorated blood and dissolved stasis, eliminated symptoms and removed concretions, unblocked *qi* and blood, so that the tumor was and controlled and shrunk. From 1966 to the end of 1978, professor YU Yun^[2] treated 1 569 patients with various kinds of advanced cancer by applying acupuncture after pulse diagnosis, most of which could not accept operation, radiotherapy or chemotherapy, or were the ones in whom western medicine therapy was not effective, including esophagus cancer, liver cancer, lung cancer, gallbladder cancer, gastric cancer, pancreatic cancer, colon cancer, rectal cancer, bladder cancer, metastatic mucinous adenocarcinoma, ovarian cancer, thyroid cancer, etc.. The pain was relieved, the life was prolonged, and the symptoms were remitted in more than 80% of the patients. Since 1974, the tumors were controlled and shrunk in 50% of the patients, and disappeared in 75 patients, who have regained their health.

Forty-eight nasopharynx cancer patients after radiotherapy were randomly divided into treatment group and control group by CHEN^[3], with 24 patients in each group. Acupuncture after pulse diagnosis combined with oral medication of traditional Chinese medicine decoction were adopted in treatment group, and only oral medication of traditional Chinese medicine decoction was adopted in control group. Acupoints selection was based on the comparison of amplitude of pulsation of *cùnkǒu* pulse and *rénýíng* pulse. For the patients with small amplitude of

pulsation of *rénýíng* pulse, gold needles were applied to reinforce deficiency at scalp and facial acupoints, and silver needles were applied to reduce excess at scalp and facial acupoints for the patients with large amplitude of pulsation of *rénýíng* pulse. Main acupoints selected: *Rénýíng* (人迎 ST 9), *Fútū* (扶突 LI 18), *Jiānjīng* (肩井 GB 21), *Xiàguān* (下关 ST 7), *Jiáchē* (颊车 ST 6), *Tīnggōng* (听宫 SI 19), *Yìfēng* (翳风 TE 17), *Yíngxiāng* (迎香 LI 20), *Cuánzhú* (攒竹 BL 2), outer *Jīnjīn* (金津 EX-HN 12) and *Yùyè* (玉液 EX-HN 13). The improvement of quality of life of patients was compared in the two groups before and after treatment, and it was indicated that acupuncture after pulse diagnosis combined with oral medication of traditional Chinese medicine decoction were superior to simplex oral medication of traditional Chinese medicine decoction in terms of the improvement of quality of life of nasopharynx cancer patients after radiotherapy, especially in terms of various kinds of complications after radiotherapy, such as nasal congestion and runny nose, tinnitus, deglutition cough, dizziness, headache, etc. It was also found from the study that as a holistic therapy, acupuncture after pulse diagnosis could not only improve the postradiotherapy complications of nasopharynx cancer, but also adjust patients' spirit and mental state. *Qi* constraint was improved by acupuncture, and patients' fear, anxiety, tension, and other unhealthy emotions were also remitted.

Peng et al^[4] applied acupuncture after pulse diagnosis in the rehabilitation therapy of nasopharynx cancer after radiotherapy and chemotherapy, and obtained significant efficacy. They believed that acupuncture after pulse diagnosis can improve the quality of life of patients. Acupuncture after pulse diagnosis can unblock the meridians and collaterals, regulate *qi* and blood, regulate and harmonize *zang-fu* organs, and balance *yin-yang*, so as to enhance the immunity and cancer-fighting ability of patients, and effectively control the metastasis and relapse of cancer.

Treatment of diseases of respiratory system

Fifty-seven patients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease during acute exacerbation were randomly divided into treatment group (29 patients) and control group (28 patients) by CHEN^[5]. Acupuncture after pulse diagnosis was applied additionally based on conventional therapy for once every other day, and the needle was retained for 40 min at each time. Acupoints selection: reinforcing (gold needles) or reducing method (silver needles): *Bǎihuì* (百会 GV 20) and *Sishéncōng* (四神聪 EX-HN 1), ST 9, LI 18, TE 17 and GB 21 were selected,

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