

Acupuncture Treatment in Allergies

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Abstract

An allergy is a condition caused when the immune system responds to a foreign substances or allergens that are not typically harmful for the human body. Allergens may be certain foods, trees, herbs, pollen or pets. The immune system function is to keep the organism healthy by fighting and attacking harmful pathogens and anything that could put the body in danger. According to Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) the allergy is a chronic problem of the digestive system with a deficiency in the Yin energy, thus all patients with allergy have constipation. In the research are included 60 patients, 26 male and 24 female, on age from 6 to 78 years old. All patients were treated with acupuncture for different kinds of allergies mostly presented with skin and nasal symptoms. Treatments were done in a clinic for TCM and acupuncture in Skopje, Macedonia, with duration of 30-45 minutes. Acupoints used in the treatment are: DU20 (BaiHui), EX-HN1 (SiShenCong), CV22 (TianTu), LI20 (Ying Xiang), BL1 (JingMing), RN4 (GuanYuan), ST25 (TianShu), LI4 (HeGu), ST36 (ZuSanLi), SP6 (SanYinJiao), LV3 (Tai Chong), BL18 (Ganshu) and BL20 (PiShu). Most common age group is from 20 to 30. Most of the patients have done 4 to 6 treatments. 13 patients have dropped out of the treatment after the first treatment. The treatment in the other 47 patients was with positive effect. All other patients had improvement in the condition, reduced symptoms, decreased skin inflammation, improved breathing, decreased itchiness of the eyes, nose and skin and other symptoms.

Keywords– acupuncture, traditional Chinese medicine, allergies, treatment

Introduction

An allergy is a condition caused when the immune system responds to a foreign substances or allergens that are not typically harmful for the human body. Allergens may be certain foods, trees, herbs, pollen or pets. The immune system function is to keep the organism healthy by fighting and attacking harmful pathogens and anything that could put the body in danger. The allergy response may be inflammation, swelling, sneezing, nausea, itchy eyes, runny nose and other symptoms.

Seasonal allergies are the most common and they mimic those symptoms of a cold and include runny nose, congestion, coughing and swollen, itchy and watery eyes.

In skin allergies are included: eczema, sore throat, rash, swollen eyes, hives, itching, burning and other.

Food allergies usually trigger nausea, swelling, fatigue, hives and more. Beside food, other common allergens are: plants (grass, weed, trees), mold, insects (bees), drugs (penicillin), latex and other.

The treatment for allergy usually includes taking antihistamines or corticosteroids or immunotherapy. [1] Allergy medicines are only for temporary relief of the symptoms, but for long-term results, prevention is the cure. The best way to cure allergies is to focus on strengthening the Qi energy and supporting the organs that are most insufficient in energy. Allergies should not be accepted as being part of a normal condition, because in fact, they are a symptom from a deeper imbalance that is present in the body and may later lead to even more uncomfortable and possibly life-threatening conditions. [2]

Allergies may be related to energy deficiency in several organs – Stomach, Kidney, Lung or Liver. When the allergy is mainly due to one organ, the patient will show more symptoms related to that specific organ. Nose and throat and symptoms like sneezing and coughing in TCM are related to the Lung, thus meaning poor Lung function. If there is a poor of deficient energy in the Liver, there are going to be symptoms like itchiness and redness in the eyes. [2]

Acupuncture as part of the Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) is used as a treatment for allergy for a very long time. Many researches indicate that acupuncture may help in relieving allergy symptoms, eczema, itchy eyes, sneezing and other. [3] [4] [5] Acupuncture can effectively inhibit an over-active immune system and has anti-inflammatory effects on the body. [6]

Material and methods

In the research are included 60 patients, 26 male and 24 female, on age from 6 to 78 years old. All patients were admitted to the clinic because of allergy symptoms. All patients were treated with acupuncture for different kinds of allergies mostly presented with skin and nasal symptoms. Patient data was taken from the patient's archive treated at the clinic for allergies for a period of 10 years (2008-2018)

In the research are included children, patients older than 60 years, patients who were taking tablets, creams or other forms of medication for allergy, patients who dropped out of treatment after one treatment and patients who completed treatment.

In the research were not included pregnant women, mentally unstable patients, alcoholics and patients with weak constitution.

Treatments were done in a clinic for Traditional Chinese Medicine and acupuncture in Skopje, Macedonia, by a doctor specialist in acupuncture. Treatments were with duration of 30-45 minutes, indoor, on a room temperature. Acupoints used in the treatment are: DU20 (BaiHui), EX-HN1 (SiShenCong), CV22 (TianTu), LI20 (Ying Xiang), BL1 (JingMing), RN4 (GuanYuan), ST25 (TianShu), LI4 (HeGu), ST36 (ZuSanLi), SP6 (SanYinJiao), LV3 (Tai Chong), BL18 (Ganshu) and BL20 (PiShu).

All patient data were analyzed in detail and presented in tables in the paper. Age groups, number of treatments, duration of the condition, symptoms and which patients were on medication or similar therapy were analyzed and discussed.

Results and discussion

Of the treated patients, 26 were male and 24 female. Most common age group is from 20 to 30 years. Age groups are shown on table 1.

Table 1. Age groups

Age groups	Number of patients
<20	9
20-30	17
30-40	14
40-50	11
>50	9

Most of the patients = 17 have done 4 to 6 treatments. 13 patients have dropped out of the treatment after the first treatment. The treatment in the other 47 patients was with positive effect. On table 2 are shown the number of treatments made.

Table 2. Number of treatments

Number of treatments	Number of patients
1-3	14 (not including 13 who dropped the treatment)
4-6	16
7-9	7
10, >10	10

All other patients had improvement in the condition, reduced symptoms, decreased skin inflammation, improved breathing, decreased itchiness of the eyes, nose and skin and other symptoms.

According to the duration of the allergy, most patients – 33 had the disease for more than 1 year i.e. chronic allergy.

29 of the patients were taking medication therapy with antihistamines, vitamins or skin creams.

In most patients (24) were present symptoms of allergic rhinitis like sneezing, nasal congestion and itching. 14 patients had skin allergy, 5 had food allergy, 16 had pollen allergy and 6 dust allergy.

Allergic rhinitis can also cause insomnia, decreased focus and concentration, irritability, fatigue and may impact the quality of life, reduces work productivity and cause high risk of developing asthma. Acupuncture as a treatment for allergic rhinitis has been proven to have both long-term

and short-benefits, either used alone or combined with other Western medicine or other treatments such as moxibustion and herbal medicine. [7]

In patients with allergy it is very common to see improvement in their condition even after the first treatment. Chronic allergies for example might need two sessions per week for a six weeks period. [3] Some patients come back for treatment once or twice a year for a booster. [8]

According to TCM the allergy is a chronic problem of the digestive system with a deficiency in the Yin energy, thus all patients with allergy have constipation. Using the acupuncture points located on the meridians of Large Intestine, Stomach, Liver and Spleen can smooth the flow of Qi in the meridians and clear the obstructions from the nasal orifices.

Acupuncture as a treatment for allergies can be very beneficial by promoting Qi and blood circulation to the head, stabilizing the mind and spirit, dispersing obstructions from the meridians, activating local Qi and blood circulation, removing local obstructions which affect the meridians, strengthening the internal organs related to the condition, relieving nasal congestion and improving the quality of life. [7] [9] [10]

Conclusion

Acupuncture in patients with allergies helps reduce the symptoms for a short time, reduces sneezing, itching of the eyes and nose, irritation, inflammation and decreases the use of antihistamines.

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