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ACUPUNCTURE – MYSTERY OR REALITY?

A SUCCESSFUL CASE SUGGESTING ITS WIDER USE FOR NEUROGENIC BLADDER

Hypothesis / aims of study

Acupuncture remains a mystery. The Myth is that if the mechanism is unknown, even facts should not be believed. The ancient explanation by Traditional Chinese Medicine like Yin and Yang, or Meridian can only cause further confusion.

A hypothesis of acupuncture in relieving pain through the Gate Theory was introduced by Melzack and Wall (1). The Gate is controlled by the Reticular Formation (RF) that plays pivotal role in micturition (2). At its core is the brain stem RF (Periaqueductal Grey and Barrington Nucleus). At the 42nd ISCoS Meeting in 2003, Craggs presented acupuncture as a mode of neuro-modulation. Successful case should be assessed and reported.

Study design, materials and methods

A case report

Results

A 35 year old female suffered from complete retention of urine after disc prolapses of L4/5 and L5/S1 in August 2002. Emergency discectomies were performed. No voiding appeared. Suprapubic catheterisation was introduced. Urodynamic studies 3 months later recorded an acontractile bladder.

No specific treatment was prescribed and complete retention persisted until 4 months after the surgery when acupuncture started. Four days later, voluntary voiding through the urethra appeared with a residual of 700ml. Micturition diary was started. Three months after the commencement of acupuncture, or 7 months after the onset, the volume of voluntary voiding began to overtake the residual volume. Another 2 weeks later, the volume of voluntary voiding reached 400ml whilst residual urine was reduced to 200ml. The bladder was stabilised at this level for two weeks and the suprapubic catheter was removed and never reinserted. For 9½ years since acupuncture, the bladder capacity remains at 400ml, whilst the residual between 100 and 200ml. No systemic infection of the urinary tract was reported.

Interpretation of results

The results were satisfactory and attributed to acupuncture via the RF.

Concluding message

Acupuncture could be more widely used to test its efficacy for neurogenic bladder.

References

1. Melzack R, Wall PD. Pain mechanisms: a new theory. Science 1965; 150: 971-9
2. Wang D. Reticular Formation and spinal cord injury. Spinal Cord 2009; 47: 204-12

Disclosures

Funding: No funding or grant has been received **Clinical Trial:** No **Subjects:** HUMAN **Ethics not Req'd:** Acupuncture has been practiced in UK for decades. **Helsinki:** Yes **Informed Consent:** Yes