

An Introduction to Ear Acupuncture (Mixed media product) - Common

Auricular and Body Acupuncture as an Analgesic Boon in Post-surgical Chronic pain

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Abstract

Acupuncture has come a long way from being a form of ancient Chinese medicine to a modern form of therapy for innumerable disorders, including chronic pain. Orthopaedic injuries can be associated with chronic pain, especially when associated with neurovascular injury or other complications. Multimodal analgesia along with surgical correction and physiotherapy is the mainstay of treatment for these types of chronic pain. We hereby present a young female patient affected by right sided radial nerve palsy following a fracture of the olecranon and fixed with K-wiring. Her pain did not respond to medical management, but showed dramatic improvement with a series of auricular and body acupuncture sessions, along with other supplementary therapies.

Keywords: Acupuncture; Chronic Pain; Post-surgical; Olecranon fracture; Auriculotherapy; Analgesia

the pain clinic were between 9 and 10. She also had wrist drop, with minimal movements of the right-hand fingers. Movements of the right forearm and arm were also restricted due to the pain. The pain also resulted in night time sleep disturbance and severely limited her activities of daily living. Open reduction and internal fixation with K-wiring was done at the time of fracture under regional anaesthesia, which was uneventful. One month after the above surgery, the patient developed site infection along with pus discharge. A redo surgery was done with implant removal and pus drainage under general anaesthesia. This also did not relieve her of the severe pain. Medical management was given in the form of daily NSAIDs (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory agents), paracetamol and then tramadol (low-potency opioid), as per the WHO (world health organisation) analgesic ladder. When there was no reduction in pain scores, Gabapentin 100mg was added at night time for promoting an undisturbed sleep. In view of the associated nerve injury, tapering doses of steroids (oral Prednisolone) were given for a week to relieve nerve edema. Both these agents resulted in a marginal improvement in pain scores. The patient still had chronic severe pain of the right arm along with movement restriction and hence she was unable to do physiotherapy.

Acupuncture was started when her VAS pain scores were between 8 and 9. The points utilized for the first three acupuncture sittings included: DU 20; LI 15; LI 4; SJ 5; H 7; and P 6. Auriculotherapy was supplemented to acupoint therapy starting with SF 4, 5 and 6, along with Shenmen point. After a period of one week from the day of starting acupuncture and concurrent auriculotherapy, the patient started showing slight improvement in finger movements and there was a reduction in pain VAS scores. At this point, the patient was started on TENS (transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation) therapy. TENS was given at 4 Hertz frequency and 25 milli-amperes current for duration of 30 minutes at a time, daily. After 10 sittings of combined TENS and acupuncture therapy, there was significant improvement in pain scores. This enabled the patient to perform active physiotherapy under the guidance of a trained physiotherapist. There was also improvement in performing activities of daily living and a sense

Introduction

Acupuncture [1] is an ancient Chinese therapy where fine needles are inserted into various points on the body. These acupoints are placed on definite meridians or energy channels on the body surface. Orthopaedic injuries [2] can be very notorious for the development of chronic pain if associated with neurovascular injury or infection or any other complication. In certain instances, chronic pain can be resistant to standard therapy. We hereby present a case of severe, intractable pain in the right arm following radial nerve injury after an elbow fracture. The pain was persistent despite surgical fracture fixation, medical treatment and physiotherapy. At this point, body acupuncture sessions were started followed by auricular acupuncture sessions, which resulted in significant reduction in pain scores.

Case Report

A twenty-seven-year-old, ASA grade 1, female patient presented to our pain clinic with severe, intractable pain of the right arm for three months. She had sustained a fracture of her right olecranon, three months back following a fall at home. The VAS (visual analogue scale) scores at the time of presentation to

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mixed regarding acupuncture benefit in abstinence, guidelines of the American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM). Introduction .. A systematic review of the use of Chinese medicine and acupuncture for the treatment of obesity The evidence on auricular acupuncture is also mixed, with positive 75,73 and .. on feeding-related hypothalamic neuronal activity in normal and obese rats. .. Review history and Supplementary material.

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