

Fire Needle Acupuncture For Shoulder Pain

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Abstract: *The pain in the shoulder is a very unpleasant pain that limits the movement in the shoulder. This pain is characteristic for people after 40 years of age, but the reasons can be of different nature. Although patients sometimes think the pain will resolve with rest, if they wait too long it may result with the syndrome ‘frozen shoulder’. The Traditional Chinese Medicine sees the shoulder pain as a Bi syndrome caused by invasion of external pathogenic factors such as cold, wind, dampness and phlegm, which obstruct the channels and collaterals and disturb the flow of the Qi and blood. In this research are included 23 patients, 14 male and 9 female, on age from 19 to 77, all with symptoms of shoulder pain. All patients were treated with fire needle acupuncture, with duration of the treatment of maximum 10 minutes. All the symptoms that patients complained about before were gone after certain number of treatments.*

Keywords: *acupuncture, pain, shoulder, traditional Chinese medicine, treatment*

I. Introduction

The shoulder is a very flexible joint with a large range of movement. Such mobile joint is more susceptible to injuries. The pain in the shoulder can be present due to bursitis, tendonitis, shoulder joint instability, fractures, luxation, ‘frozen shoulder’, arthritis, osteoporosis and etc. ‘Frozen shoulder’ is in fact a synonym for shoulder pain that led to restricted range of motion. [1] The pain can be located on the front, back or top of the shoulder and can worsen during activities which include using the arm. If the pain gets worse it will affect the range of movement, including pulling the arm back, lifting the arm forward, combing, dressing or shaving. The Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) is used very often in the treatment of shoulder pain. The Traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) philosophy is different than the Western and gives other opinions and reasons for this condition. In the terms of TCM, the shoulder pain occurs due to the stagnation of Qi and blood circulation, attack of the external pathogens as cold, wind, phlegm and dampness which can block the meridians and lead to limitations in the movement of the shoulder. It is also classified in ‘Bi syndrome’. If the shoulder is attacked by cold or wind, it leads to stagnation in the channels around the shoulder and results in pain in the muscles around. In this case the tongue is covered with white coating, the pulse is superficial and acupuncture with cupping is suggested. Also the shoulder is connected to the internal organs through the channels and pain sometimes can occur due to some problems or weakness in the internal organs including the lungs, the liver, the gall bladder and the small intestine. [2, 3] Fire needle acupuncture is a technique that involves quick insertion of a fire heated needle into the painful area on the shoulder. It is used due to reduce the pain, to regulate the blood and body function, to dispel the cold, to harmonize and balance the Qi and blood circulation in the body.

II. Material and methods

In this article are included 23 patients, 14 male and 9 female, on age from 19 to 77, all with symptoms of pain in the shoulder. All the patients had fire needles acupuncture treatment on the same points, with duration of maximum 10 minutes, on a room temperature. The treatments were done in a clinic for Traditional Chinese Medicine and acupuncture in Skopje by a doctor specialist in acupuncture. In all patients was applied acupuncture treatment with fire needles on the acupuncture points St15 (Wuyi), Lu2 (YunMan) and Lu3 (TianFu). In one acupoint were made five punctures with the needle. For the fire needle acupuncture was used one point sharp-headed fire needle made of tungsten steel. The fire needle, heated by ethanol lamp was quickly inserted five times – once in the center of the point and four times around the center but in the same area of the meridian. The needle was inserted immediately and removed instantly with no retention. After the acupuncture was done fire cupping with round glass cups inserted on each of the points. Cups were heated with ethanol lamp and placed on the point, causing partial vacuum sucking the skin into the glass. Patients have done one treatment once a week, with series of ten treatments and pause of one month afterwards.

III. Results

Of the treated patients, 14 were male, 9 were female and from there we can say male patients are more prevalent. Patients were on age from 19 to 77, but the most common age group was from 50 to 60 years of age. The results from the age groups are shown on Table 1. There was one patient in the group of less than 20 years

of age, one patient in the age group from 20 to 30, 5 patients in the 30-40 years age group, 6 in the 40-50, 7 in 50-60, no patients in the age group of 60-70 years and 3 patients in the group of more than 70 years old patients.

Table2. Age groups

Age	Number of patients
<20	1
20-30	1
30-40	5
40-50	6
50-60	7
60-70	/
>70	3

All the treated patients had same acupuncture treatment on same points with certain number of treatments. The number is different for all patients and it depends on the severity of the condition, the length, the pain level, some other symptoms, the working place and etc. On Table 2 are shown the results from the made treatments. 15 patients have made less than 5 treatments, 3 patients made from 5 to 10 treatments and only 2 patients made more than 10 treatments. In a conditions like shoulder pain fire needle therapy has faster and better effect than the normal acupuncture treatment with needles for single use. With the fire needles the pus (the exudate), which is harmful for the body, is removed physically and thus the treatment gives faster results.

Table1. Number of treatments

Number of treatments	Number of patients
<5	18
5-10	3
>5	2

The pain in the shoulder was the most common symptom and it was present in all patients. Other symptoms were tingling in the hands and fingers, limited motion, numbness, insomnia, high blood pressure, spreading of the pain from the shoulder to the neck, head, scapula, back and chest. The causes for the shoulder pain were different, as like: fracture, peri-arthritis or frozen shoulder, osteoporosis, bursitis, working position, overuse of the joint, inflammation, old injuries and etc. The duration of the pain was also different in all patients, some had pain for one or two years, some for 10 or 20 days. Mostly of the patients complained about limitation in the movement, inability to lift weight, inability and painful external rotation of the shoulder and extreme pain during movement. However, in the end the acupuncture treatment was effective for all patients. All the symptoms that patients have complained about before were gone in the end of the treatments.

Lu2 (Yunmen) is an acupuncture point located on the Lung meridian on the upper lateral chest, above the acromioclavicular joint. Needles shouldn't be punctured deep so to avoid puncturing the lungs. The insertion of the needle is recommended to be no more than 0,5 to 0,8 cun lateral. The point is treated for Lung Qi deficiency, shoulder pain and tension, injuries, frozen shoulder and etc. Its purpose is to disperse and move the Qi energy in the Lungs, to clean the external factors like cold, heat, damp or wind, to remove the pain and balance and harmonize the energy.

Lu3 (TianFu) is located on the Lung meridian, four fingers under the anterior axillary fold, on the radial side of m.biceps brachii, It's used for pain in the shoulder and its action is to regulate the Qi flow and descend the Lung Qi energy.

St15 (Wuyi) is located on the Liver meridian in the second intercostal space. It's used for Liver Qi stagnation, muscular dystrophy, pain, heaviness or itching of the whole body. Its action is to strengthen and descend the Qi, regulate the flow of the energy and keep the balance.

IV. Conclusion

Fire needle acupuncture as a treatment for shoulder pain is a very effective treatment and gives excellent results with a very few treatments for a very short time in our practice so far.

References

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