

TREATMENT OF CERVICAL SPONDYLOSIS WITH ACUPUNCTURE



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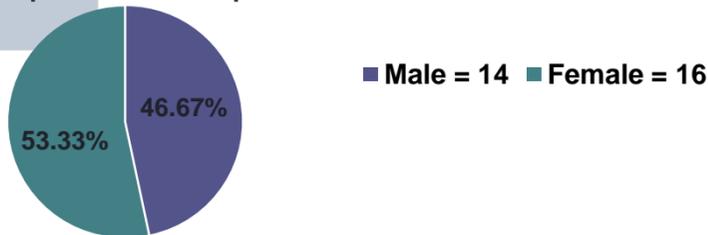


Background - The most common cause of pain and limited mobility of the neck are degenerative changes of hard and soft spinal tissues under the common name-spondylosis. Cervical spondylosis is among the most common diseases that occur with aging. As the disc changes, the intervertebral space narrows and reactive hypertrophic process occurs on the edges of the vertebral bodies with formation of bone growths called osteophytes. Acupuncture is a major part of the Traditional Chinese Medicine, aimed to treat the symptoms and reasons for the condition, considering both mental and physical individual's health and diet, environment and lifestyle. Acupuncture is a treatment where thin sterile needles are inserted into the skin in order to achieve appropriate balance in the body. According to traditional Chinese philosophy, human health depends on the state of energy or Qi, which moves in certain meridians where needles are inserted in specific points, in order to correct the flow of Qi energy, which, if insufficient, unbalanced or interrupted, can cause disease. Acupuncture is used very often as a treatment for cervical spondylosis and is completely safe, having no side effects whatsoever. Treated acupoints are located in the neck and head. With their stimulation the symptoms alleviate, the blockages in the meridians are eliminated and the flow of Qi energy is improved.

Purpose - The main purpose of this research is to present the results as evidence of the efficacy and safety of acupuncture treatment in cervical spondylosis.

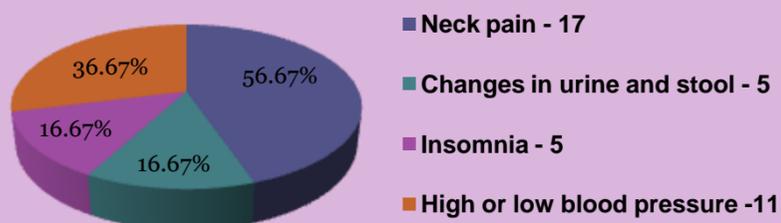
Methods - The research was done in 'Tong Da Tang' Clinic for Traditional Chinese Medicine and Acupuncture in Skopje including 30 patients (both male and female) who were diagnosed with cervical spondylosis in the past year. All patients had acupuncture on the following acupoints (all located on the neck and head): Du16 (Fengfu), Du20 (Baihui), Du21 (Qinding), SJ16 (Tiannyou), Bl10 (Tianzhu), SI15 (Jianzhongshu), SI14 (Jianwaishu). Acupuncture was done by Prof. Zhu Jihe, MD, PhD, TCM specialist. 0.25x25mm dimension sterile needles were used, made by Wuijuiang City Medical Health Material Co., ltd. The treatment was done in a closed room on the temperature of 25 degrees Celsius, with duration of 35-40 minutes.

Graph 1 - Gender of patients



Results and discussion – All the data from the patients was analyzed, such as gender, age, number of treatments needed to achieve effect on symptoms that occurred. 30 patients (aged 35 to 82) were analyzed, with the average estimated age of 60 yrs. 16 females (53,33%) and 14 males (46,64%) were included and although without significant difference, it shows the empiria that women are more likely to suffer from cervical spondylosis than men, shown on graph 1.

Graph 2 - % of patients with different symptoms



Graph 2 presents the most common symptoms. 17 of the patients reported having pain in the neck, 5 patients had frequent urination or diarrhea, 5 had insomnia and 11 had blood pressure problems (high or low). Neck pain is a typical symptom that occurs in cervical spondylosis and frequent urination, inability to control the sphincters and diarrhea are signs for cervical myelopathy. There is also a link between cervical myelopathy and elevated blood pressure, called cervicogenic hypertension.



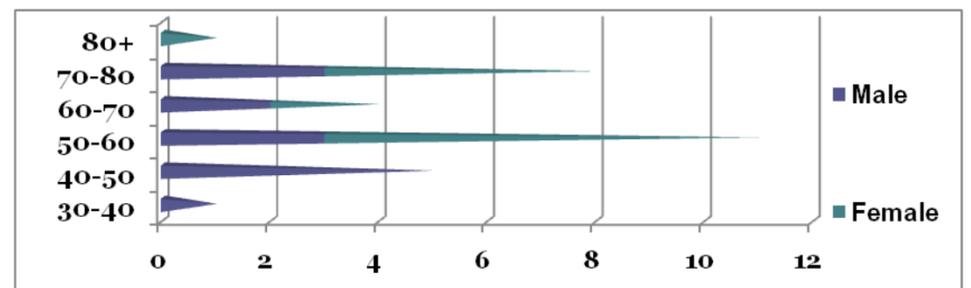
Other common symptoms that occur are pain, numbness, tingling in the hands i.e. irradiation to the left, right or both sides of the upper limbs. In the analyzed patients, same % had irradiation to the left, right or both sides, shown on graph 3.

Graph 3 - % of patients with irradiation down the left, right or both limbs



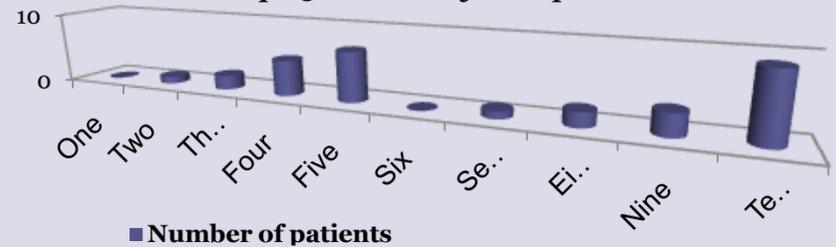
Unilateral pain in the neck, shoulder and arm may occur in the cervical radiculopathy syndrome. There may be postural asymmetry during flexion of the head to avoid putting pressure on the nerve root, limitation of motion in the neck, stiffness, decreased reflexes in the biceps and supinator mm (C5-C6) or arms (C7). Involvement of both limbs usually indicates presence of cervical myelopathy resulting in weakness, tingling and numbness of the hands and fingers, bad posture and postural balance of the body, painful and stiffed neck. Patients explain this pain as needles-pinning or burning sensation in hands and fingers.

Graph 4 - Age and number of patients included in each age group



Males' age is 35-77, whereas females'-from 51-82. The average age for men is 55 and for women-64. The graph 4 shows the age and gender of the patients who were represented at a certain age. Only one man was in the age group of 30-40 yrs, 4 men in 40-50 group, in 50-60 yrs - 3 men and 8 women, in 60-70 yrs - 2 men and 2 women, in 70-80 yrs - 3 men and 5 women and over 80 years only one woman. According to these data the most represented age group is 50-60 years.

Graph 5- Number of therapies done



Graph 5 shows the number of treatments needed to achieve the final effect in each patient. This number is different, individual and depends on gender, age, working status, duration of disease, type of syndrome, type of symptoms, when they appeared, etc. On average, 8 therapies were needed to achieve treatment efficiency.

Conclusion - The analysis shows that women suffer from cervical spondylosis more than men, with most common age group of 50-60 yrs. The most common symptom is neck pain, whereas headache and dizziness may be the first signs / symptoms of cervical spondylosis. Men are affected earlier, by the age of 50 and women by the age of 60. Acupuncture stimulates the body's natural ability to heal itself and improve the physical and emotional well-being. When performed by a professionally trained person with clean, sterile equipment and disposable needles, acupuncture is generally safe and very effective treatment.

Key words: Acupuncture treatment, acupoints, cervical spondylosis, symptoms

Photos by B. Arsovska