



Acupuncture treatment in patient with hyperthyroidism

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Abstract

Hyperthyroidism is one of the most common thyroid disorders and the most common cause of hyperthyroidism, as the thyroid secretes excessive amount of the hormone thyroxine. In these patients, serum TSH is below the lower limit (often unmeasurable), and the free T4 and/or free T3 are elevated. Hyperthyroidism mostly occurs around the age of 30-40 and most of the patients are women. The treated patient is 34 year old woman, diagnosed with hyperthyroidism for 9 years. The patient was taking Tirozol for 8 years and Propranolol for 1 year. The doctors have suggested complete removal of the thyroid gland. Since the patient started with the acupuncture treatments, 20 treatments have been made in a period of 8 months and the results are showing normalized TSH levels, reduced structure of the lobes and the medicament therapy has been stopped. Acupuncture points used in the treatment are: DU14 (DaZhui), DU20 (BaiHui), LI4 (HeGu), ST9 (RenYing), GB20 (FengChi), BL15 (XinShu), BL20 (PiShu), BL23 (ShenShu), DU4 (MingMen), RN4 (QuanYuan), RN6 (QiHai), SP9 (YinLingQuan), SP6 (SanYinJiao), KI3 (TaiXi), ST36 (ZuSanLi), LR2 (TaiChong) and Ashi points located on the neck (front and back). The patient will continue with the treatments until the condition is totally stabilized and the condition will be followed-

up in the coming period. Acupuncture as part of the Traditional Chinese Medicine can give very satisfying and long-term positive results in the treatment of hyperthyroidism.

Keywords : traditional Chinese medicine, acupuncture, hyperthyroidism, treatment

Introduction

Hyperthyroidism is one of the most common thyroid disorders and the most common cause of hyperthyroidism, as the thyroid secretes excessive amount of the hormone thyroxine. In these patients, serum TSH is below the lower limit (often unmeasurable), and the free T4 and/or free T3 are elevated. Hyperthyroidism mostly occurs around the age of 30-40 and most of the patients are women. Most common symptoms that occur are: loss of body weight despite the increased appetite, increased blood pressure, excessive sweating, enhanced sensitivity to warm, diarrhea, muscle weakness, tremors, goiter, swollen eyeballs, changes in menstrual cycle and etc. [1]

Hyperthyroidism can be overt or subclinical. Overt hyperthyroidism is characterized by low serum TSH concentrations and raised serum concentrations of T3 and T4. Subclinical hyperthyroidism is characterized by low serum TSH and normal serum T3 and T4 concentrations. [2]

Thyroid hormones are essential for the function of every cell in the human body. Thyroid regulates the blood pressure, heart rate, metabolism, body temperature, the rate of the chemical reactions and many other. In Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) everything is seen as Yin and Yang imbalance. Everything that exists has both Yin and Yang aspects. When the Yin and Yang are in balance, the body is in balance and harmony too, but if they're not, then illnesses appear. [3]

According to the Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) hyperthyroidism occurs due to three different imbalances in the body or patterns of disharmony:

1. Liver Fire Rising - Associated to speeding up of all body functions because of continuous stimulation of excess thyroid hormone produced by the over-active thyroid.
2. Qi and Yin Deficiencies – It is related to weakness and fatigue often associated with prolonged over stimulation.
3. Phlegm Stagnation - Physically is represented with enlarged thyroid gland.

TCM treatments are individualized, the practitioner treats the person as a whole. It is not the disease that is treated but the patterns of disharmony made up of certain symptoms and signs. Treatments are focused on both the cause and the symptoms.

TCM methods used for the treatment of hyperthyroidism may include: herbal treatment, acupuncture and lifestyle and diet changes. Herbal treatment and acupuncture can be a very effective treatment in balancing disharmonies in the body and helping in the correction of hormone imbalances. [4]

Case Report

The treated patient is a 34-year-old woman, diagnosed with hyperthyroidism for 9 years. The patient was taking Tirozol for 8 years and Propranolol for 1 year. After the patient's condition could not be improved, the doctors have suggested complete removal of the thyroid gland. The patient decided to start with acupuncture treatments, instead of doing the surgery. The patient had increased anti-bodies, dilated blood vessels, heart palpitations, fatigue, hair loss, weak nails and other typical symptoms which can be also presented in hypothyroidism.

Since the patient started with the acupuncture treatments, 20 treatments have been made in a period of 8 months and the results are showing improvement in the TSH levels, reduced structure of the lobes and the medicament therapy has been stopped. The patient stated that she feels better and is in great health condition.

Acupuncture points used in the treatment are: DU14 (DaZhui), DU20 (BaiHui), LI4 (HeGu), ST9 (RenYing), GB20 (FengChi), BL15 (XinShu), BL20 (PiShu), BL23 (ShenShu), DU4 (MingMen), RN4 (QuanYuan), RN6 (QiHai), SP9 (YinLingQuan), SP6 (SanYinJiao), KI3 (TaiXi), ST36 (ZuSanLi), LR2 (TaiChong) and Ashi points located on the neck (front and back).

In the treatment were used fine sterile disposable needles with dimensions 0.25x25mm manufactured by Wuijiang City Medical & Health Material Co., LTD. Treatments are made in a clinic for acupuncture and TCM in Skopje, Macedonia by a doctor specialist in acupuncture. Treatments are made indoors, at room temperature, with a duration of 30-45 minutes.

On table 1 are shown the results from the decrease in size of thyroid lobes.

Table.1. Results from UV scan on thyroid lobes

<u>Before treatment</u>
Left lobus – 19.4mm x 27.7mm
Right lobus – 25mm x 36.4mm
Isthmus – 7.7mm
<u>After 20 treatments</u>
Left lobus – 18.5mm x 25.1mm
Right lobus – 20.3mm x 36.2mm
Isthmus – 6.4mm

On table 2 are shown the results from the improvement of the thyroid hormones.

Table 2. Hormones levels before and after 20 treatments

	TSH (0.4-4.0 uIU/ml)	ft4 (0.89-1.76 ng/dL)	ft3 (1.50-4.10 pm/mL)
Before treatment	<0.004	1.45	4.53
After 20 treatments	0.018	1.57	3.69

In the Western medicine stress is considered as one of the possible causes for hyperthyroidism. From Chinese point of view stress causes imbalances in the Liver. Therefore, the main problem is considered to rise from the Liver. Liver blockage can be caused by anger, too much spicy food which makes the Liver hot and makes the Heat to rise, phlegm accumulation which causes blockages in the throat and causes goiter and other. Also, some doctors think that hyperthyroidism starts with an excess Fire syndrome which later crosses to Yin-deficiency Fire. Most of the hyperthyroidism symptoms are characteristic for Yin deficiency syndrome (hyperactivity, heart palpitation, heightened appetite, etc). [1] [5]

If the hyperthyroidism occurs due to sudden psychic trauma or long-term depression, the liver cannot regulate properly the flow of the blood and vital energy, the Qi is stagnated and fails to transport the fluids. Then the fluids are accumulated and transformed into phlegm which then obstruct the Qi in the neck and gradually induce goiter.

The main goal of the treatment is to replenish the vital energy and the Yang energy, increase the Yin energy, calm down the excessive heat, removing the heat from the organs, especially

the Liver, nourish the affected organs, soften the thyroid masses, restore the Qi energy, balance the hormones, improve the immune system and other. [5]

The thyroid problems treatment is usually very slow and long-term, which takes a lot of patience and persistence. The condition gets better gradually and after the normalization is achieved, usually all the hormonal medications are stopped and there's no relapse of the condition.

Conclusion

The patient will continue with the treatments until the condition is totally stabilized and the condition will be followed-up in the coming period. Acupuncture as part of the Traditional Chinese Medicine can give very satisfying and long-term positive results in the treatment of hyperthyroidism.

References

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