

Hepatitis B Treatment with Acupuncture and Herbal Medicine

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Abstract

Hepatitis B is liver inflammation caused by the hepatitis B virus (HBV). HBV infection causes an acute illness that may end up in curing the patient or becoming a chronic illness that progresses to serious liver damage. The treated patient is a 33 year old woman, diagnosed with multiple conditions, but the main treatment was made to correct the hepatitis B infection and the secondary complications – ascites, liver cirrhosis, thrombocytosis, splenomegaly and hepatic vein thrombosis (Budd-Chiari Syndrome). The patient was also diagnosed with primary hypothyroidism. Beside the prescribed medications and hormone therapy, the patient was treated with acupuncture and herbal treatment. In the herbal treatment were used two funguses in capsules - Cordyceps sinensis 1.5g per day and Ganoderma lucidum 3g per day. In the acupuncture treatment were used the points located on the meridians of Spleen, Liver, Stomach, Dumai and Renmai. The patient has made 10 acupuncture treatments, once weekly in a period of three months, combined with herbal treatment. After the treatment the patient felt better, the accompanied symptoms were gone and the blood test results were significantly improved. The patient is in good health condition now, however the herbal treatment will continue for prevention and future follow-up will be done in this case.

Keywords: Traditional Chinese Medicine, Acupuncture, Herbs, Treatment, Hepatitis B

Introduction

Hepatitis B is liver inflammation caused by the hepatitis B virus (HBV). HBV infection causes an acute illness that may end up in curing the patient or becoming a chronic illness that progresses to serious liver damage. [WHO, 2009] In about 2-6% of the adults the infection can become chronic and lead to liver cancer. The hepatitis B can be transferred through semen, blood and other body fluids or through a shared needle or puncture in the skin. The infection cannot be spread through water, food, coughing, sneezing or kissing. Symptoms that may be present are: fatigue, fever, joint pain, vomiting, nausea, loss of appetite, abdominal pain and etc. Patients with fulminant hepatitis have symptoms like: ascites, insomnia, hepatic encephalopathy, coagulopathy and etc. Acute symptoms appear 2-3 month after the exposure to the HBV and may last up to 6 months. The chronic symptoms may appear in episodes with persistent fatigue, abdominal pain and pain in the joints. When examining a patient with hepatitis B virus the following findings may be present: splenomegaly, hepatomegaly, ascites, gynecomastia, abdominal collateral veins and etc. The Western medicine as a treatment option suggests the antiviral medications for chronic hepatitis and for the acute hepatitis there's no specific treatment [Davis K, 2017] [Pyrsoopoulos TN, 2017]

Acupuncture and herbal treatment as part of the Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) are used to treat liver diseases for a very long time. In the TCM are used thousands of variety of herbs in the treatment of liver diseases. [Highleyman L, 2010] The actions of the anti-hepatitis herbs can be divided in two categories: hepatoprotective and antiviral. The purpose of the herbs in the treatment is to improve the immune system, boost the liver function, alleviate the inflammation, relieve the symptoms, relieve anxiety, arrest hepatic fibrosis, inhibit fibrinogenesis, stimulate and release bile production, improve lipid metabolism, reduce the virus activity and improve the quality of the patient's lives. [Zhang L et al, 2010] [Dharmananda S, 1997] In TCM, acute hepatitis B is seen as toxic heat syndrome and when the disease develops it starts to manifest symptoms of liver Qi stagnation and accumulated dampness. When the disease becomes chronic, the Yin becomes deficient, the Qi is weakened and blood stasis is present. [Dharmananda S, 1997] Treating a chronic hepatitis B infection is a long term process, but with finding and knowing the pattern of the disorder and choosing the right herbal formulas the healing is possible. [Grotte LB, 2017]

Case Report

The treated patient is a 33 year old woman, diagnosed with multiple conditions, but the main treatment was made to correct the hepatitis B infection and the secondary complications – ascites, liver cirrhosis, thrombocytosis, splenomegaly and hepatic vein thrombosis (Budd-Chiari Syndrome). The patient was also diagnosed with primary hypothyroidism. The symptoms that were present are: dry mouth, insomnia, decreased appetite, increased body temperature in the evening, body itching and irregular period in the last three months. The patient was diagnosed with hepatitis B in November, 2016. Since then she was taking tablets – Furosemide 40mg 2x1/2, Spironolactone 100mg 1x1, Sintrom by pattern and Euthyrox 50mcg 1x1 for the hypothyroidism. Beside the prescribed medications, the patient was treated with acupuncture and herbal treatment. The treatment started in May, 2017. In the treatment were used funguses in capsule - Cordyceps sinensis 1.5g per day and Ganoderma lucidum 3g per day. The patient has made 10 acupuncture treatments, once weekly in a period of three months, combined with herbal treatment. Treatments were done in a clinic for TCM and acupuncture in Skopje, Macedonia, by a doctor specialist in acupuncture. Treatments were made indoor, on a room temperature with duration of 35-40 minutes. In the treatment were used fine, sterile, disposable acupuncture needles, size 0.25x25mm produced by Wuijuiang City Medical & Health Material Co., LTD. In the acupuncture treatment were used the points located on the meridians of Spleen, Liver, Stomach, Dumai and Renmai. After the treatment the patient felt better, the accompanied symptoms were gone and the blood test results were significantly improved.

Discussion

The patient's condition was monitored before, during and after treatment. There were done more comprehensive blood tests and abdominal ultrasound. The initial diagnosis was: Cirrhosis hepatis e causa ignota, Ascites, Hyper v.portae cum splenomegalia: Trombocytosis primaria, Hernia umbilicalis, Thrombosis vv hepaticae dex et sin. Hypothyreosis primaria. The finding before the treatment showed fibrotic liver changes with mixed echogenicity and particularly enlarged the left lobe. A clear finding of thrombosis of the hepatic veins of which only the middle one was visible and had a scarce flow. A little fluid was present in the subhepatic area and in the right subphrenum. In the lower parts of the abdomen there were thin layers of fluid in several places. The spleen was diffusely increased and splenic vein was enlarged. The pancreas and kidneys were clean.

After the treatment the findings showed isoechogenic thyroid with reduced dimensions (DL 9.5x10.5, LL 8x12) and normal hormonal status. The results from the hormonal status are shown in table 1.

Table1. Results from the blood analysis for thyroid hormones after the treatment

| Hormones | Results | Range |
|--------------|---------|-------------|
| TSH (mU/l) | 3.37 | 0.27-4.20 |
| fT4 (Pmol/l) | 15.3 | 10.30-24.45 |
| aTPO (iU/ml) | 11.0 | < 34 |

In table 2 are shown the blood test results done before, during and after the treatment for AST (Aspartate Aminotransferase), Bilirubin, RDW-CV (Red Cell Distribution Width), PCT (Procalcitonin), PLT (Platelet Count) and RBC (Red Blood Cell Count). According to the results, gradual improvement is observed in the condition. On examination, the patient said that felt much better, spasms and coughs were very rare, control finding was with significant improvement in relation to synthase function, bilirubin, enzymes and haemograms. The liver was slightly enlarged, middle hepatic vein was clean, and left and right were observed in their flow with absent flow. There were more clearly curved collaterals with present flow. Spleen was moderately enlarged and no ascites was present. The gallbladder, pancreas and kidneys were clean.

The treatment started in May and finished in July. Before the treatment the results were getting worse, even with taking the meds every day. When the treatment started, slowly the condition started to show better results. After finishing, the patient made one month pause from herbal treatment and started again on our initiative for prevention and to get even better results. A recommended treatment period for hepatitis B with herbs is 12 weeks, as it seems to be satisfactory standard course and if necessary it can be repeated once more. [Dharmananda S, 1997]

Table 2. Blood test results done before, during and after the treatment

| Date | AST (5-34 U/L) | Bili (3.4-20.5 umol/L) | PCT (0.17-0.35%) | PLT (150-450 10 ³ /uL) | RDW-CV (11.0-16.0%) | RBC (4.00-6.00 10 ⁶ /uL) |
|----------|----------------|------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 03.03.17 | 40 | 33.4 | 0.50 | 488 | 21.2 | 5.37 |
| 20.03.17 | 52 | 32.8 | 0.50 | 511 | 21.9 | 5.38 |
| 04.04.17 | 69 | 35.7 | 0.48 | 513 | 22.1 | 5.26 |
| 21.04.17 | 52 | 25.2 | 0.48 | 457 | 20.1 | 4.93 |
| 03.05.17 | 69 | 24.1 | 0.49 | 481 | 18.9 | 4.66 |
| 18.07.17 | 44 | 21.4 | 0.42 | 390 | 18.5 | 4.65 |
| 14.08.17 | 44 | 18.1 | 0.44 | 423 | 17.9 | 5.02 |

Conclusion

Acupuncture and herbal treatment as part of the 5000 years old Traditional Chinese Medicine give very positive and satisfying results in the treatment of variety of conditions, especially in persistent, chronic and long-term illnesses and infections. Even sometimes is needed more time and effort to see the results, combined or not, acupuncture and herbal treatment are

valuable option in the treatment of Hepatitis B and the associated complications.

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