Sixty-four Cases of Scapulohumeral Periarthritis Treated by Auricular Plaster Therapy

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By auricular plaster therapy with the self-developed 
Li qi Huoxue Qufeng Zhentong Wan (理气活血祛风 镇痛丸 The Pain-Relieving Pills with the Effects of Regulating Qi, Activating Blood and Dispelling Wind) applied on certain auricular points, the authors have successively treated scapulohumeral periarthritis with good therapeutic results as reported in the follows.

General Data

All the 64 cases in this series were outpatients with their diagnosis made according to the Criteria of Diagnosis and Therapeutic Effects for TCM Syndromes (1999 Edition) stipulated by the State Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine. Of them, 5 cases were at the age of 40-48 years, 52 cases 49-55 years, 7 cases 56-65 years. 38 cases were female and 26 male, ranging in course of disease from one week to two years. 36 cases had their right shoulder affected and 28 cases the left. According to TCM differentiation, 26 cases belonged to the wind-cold-damp pattern, 23 cases the qi-blood deficiency pattern, and 15 cases the qi-blood stagnation pattern.

Preparation of the Medicinal Plaster

The following drugs of Dang Shen (党参 Radix Codonopsis)200g, Bai Zhu (白术 Rhizoma Atractyloides Macrocephalae)120g, Fu Ling (茯苓 Poria)100g, Wu Gong without head and feet (蜈蚣 Scolopendra) 15 pieces, Dang Gui (当归 Radix Angelicae Sinensis)100g, Chuan Xiong (川芎 Rhizoma Chuanxiong)100g, Bai Shao (白芍 Radix Paeoniae Alba)150g, Gan Cao (甘草 Radix Glycyrrhizae) 60g, Bai Zhi (白芷 Radix Angelicae Dahuricae)150g, Qiang Huo (羌活 Rhizoma seu Radix Notopterygii) 150g, Chen Pi (陈皮 Pericarpium Citri Reticulatae)100g, Xi Xin (细辛 Herba Asari) 50g, and Xu Chang Qing (徐长卿 Radix Cynanchi Paniculati)150g were ground into fine powder and made into pills as big as the mung beans. In addition, the plaster for medical use was cut into small square pieces (5×5 mm in size).

Method of Treatment

The auricular points of Shoulder, Shoulder Joint, Kidney and the tender spots were selected. On each of the points, a small piece of the plaster with one medicinal pill placed in the center was applied. The auricular points were then pressed hard by the patients themselves once every 3 hours during the daytime, with the two ears treated alternately. One treatment course consisted of 7 sessions, with a 3-day interval between courses. During the treatment, the patients were asked to do functional exercises of the affected shoulder, such as the upward, downward, inward, outward, leftward and rightward movements by flexion, extension, adduction and abduction of the shoulder joint with a gradually increased amplitude. The exercise was practised three times a day respectively in the morning, afternoon, and evening.

Criteria for Therapeutic Effects

Cured: Disappearance of the pain in the shoulder with completely or basically restored joint functions. Improved: The pain alleviated in the shoulder with improved joint functions. Failed: No obvious improvement of the symptoms and the joint functions.
Results of Treatment

After 3 courses of treatment, 52 cases were cured, 8 cases improved, and 4 cases failed, with a cure rate of 81.3%, and total effective rate of 93.9%.

Comment

In accordance with the etiology and pathogenesis of scapulohumeral periarthritis, the authors have successfully treated the disease by auricular plaster therapy with the self-developed Ligi Huoxue Qufeng Zhentong Wan (理气活血祛风镇痛丸 The Pain-Relieving Pills with the Effects of Regulating Qi, Activating Blood and Dispelling Wind) applied on certain auricular points. The main auricular points of the Shoulder, Shoulder Joint, and the tender spots were used for relieving the shoulder pain, and the auricular point Kidney for warming up the kidney, strengthening yang, and warming the meridians to stop pain. Dang Shen (党参 Radix Codonopsis), Bai Zhu (白术 Rhizoma Atractylodis Macrocephalae), Fu Ling (茯苓 Poria), Dang Gui (当归 Radix Angelicae Sinensis), Chuan Xiong (川芎 Rhizoma Chuanxiong), Bai Shao (白芍 Radix Paeoniae Alba) and Chen Pi (陈皮 Pericarpium Citri Reticulatae) were prescribed to nourish qi and blood, and regulate qi to strengthen the body resistance. Wu Gong (蜈蚣 Scolopendra), Qiang Huo (羌活 Rhizoma seu Radix Notopterygii) and Xu Chang Qing (徐长卿 Radix Cynanchi Paniculati) were used to eliminate damp and relieve pain. Xi Xin (细辛 Herba Asari) and Bai Zhi (白芷 Radix Angelicae Dahuricae) were used to warm the meridians and stop pain.

According to the analysis of the therapeutic result, in the 26 cases of the wind-cold-damp pattern, 22 cases were cured, 2 cases improved, and 1 case failed, with a effective rate of 96%; in the 23 cases of the qi-blood deficiency pattern, 19 cases were cured, 3 cases improved, and 1 case failed, with a effective rate of 95%; and in the 15 cases of the qi-blood stagnation pattern, 11 cases were cured, 2 cases improved, and 2 cases failed, with a effective rate of 87%. One more thing that should be stressed here is that the functional exercises are also very important for a desired good results.

(Translated by Yu Min 余敏)