

Forty Cases of Insomnia Treated by Suspended Moxibustion at Baihui (GV 20)

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Objective: To observe the therapeutic effect of suspended moxibustion at Baihui (GV 20) for insomnia. **Methods:** 75 cases were divided randomly into two groups, with 40 cases in the treatment group treated by suspended moxibustion over Baihui (GV 20) and 35 cases in the control group treated by oral administration of Estazolam. **Results:** The difference in therapeutic effect between the two groups was not statistically significant ($P>0.1$). **Conclusion:** It was concluded that suspended moxibustion at Baihui (GV 20) is as effective as Estazolam for insomnia.

Key words: Baihui (GV 20); moxibustion; insomnia

Insomnia is a common disorder characterized by no normal sleep, severely influencing patient's life, work and study, so, it should be prevented and treated as early as possible. At present, pharmacotherapy is used widely for insomnia, but with many side effects. Therefore a lower cost therapy becomes the focus of study on insomnia. Recently the authors have treated 40 cases of insomnia. A report follows.

GENERAL DATA

According to the sleep efficiency computation (effective sleeping duration / duration from lying down on the bed to getting up $\times 100\%$) established by WHO, sleep quality is divided into five levels. Level 1 means sleeping rate is 70–80%, passable sleep; level 2, 60–70%, difficulty in sleep; level 3, 50–60%, sleep disorder; level 4, 40–50%, moderate sleep disorder; and level 5, 30–40%, serious sleep disorder. 75 cases were divided randomly into two groups. Among 40 cases in the treatment group 18 were males and 22 females, and among 35 cases in the control group 14 were males and 21 females. The youngest was 25 years old, and the eldest was 75 years old. The duration of illness ranged from a half year to five years. Among these patients, 42 cases were level 3 and 33 cases were level 4. All the patients were diagnosed as having primary insomnia without organic lesion.

METHODS

For the treatment group

Suspended moxibustion at Baihui (GV 20) was performed, and Baihui (GV 20) as the main point, and Sishencong (EX-HN1), Taiyang (EX-HN5), Fengchi (GB 20) and Neiguan (PC 6) as adjuvant points were acupunctured by routine operation and uniform reinforcing-reducing method. During retaining of needles, the moxa-support was vertically placed over Baihui (GV 20) and held about 2 cm from patient's skin, and then an ignited moxa stick was put in the support. Treatment was performed about 30–60 min each time, once a day, five sessions constituting one course. The patient was asked to be in a good humor and moderate exercise.

For the control group

Estazolam was orally administered to the patients 1–2 mg daily before going to bed. Five days of treatment constituted one course.

Standards of the curative effects

The curative effects were evaluated according to the *Sleep Efficiency Computation* established by WHO. Cured: All the symptoms disappeared, and the sleeping rate was above 75%. Relieved: The symptoms alleviated, and the sleeping rate was

65–74%. Improved: The symptoms alleviated a little, and the sleeping rate was 55–64%. Failed: The symptoms were not improved, and the sleeping rate was below 55%.

RESULTS

After two courses, of 40 cases in the treatment group, 8 were cured, 16 were relieved, 12 improved and 4 failed with a total effective rate of 90.9%. Of 35 cases in the control group, the corresponding cases were respectively 3, 13, 12 and 7 with a total effective rate of 80%. The difference in therapeutic effect between the two groups was not significant ($\chi^2 = 1.540$, $P > 0.1$).

DISCUSSION

TCM holds that insomnia is caused by derangement of *qi* and blood, and imbalance between *yin* and *yang*. *Jingyue Quanshu* (景岳全书 *Jingyue's Complete Works*) states, "Insomnia induced by anxiety, fatigue, fear and melancholy, restlessness are due to insufficiency of kidney-*yin* and blood and imbalance between *yin* and *yang*." So the main pathogenesis of insomnia is insufficiency of *yin*-blood and imbalance between *yin* and *yang*.

Baihui (GV 20) is a point on the Governor Vessel, and it is located on the highest place of the head where all the yang meridians meet. It connects all the five *zang* and six *fu* organs through the Back-*shu* points of the Urinary Bladder Meridian of Foot-Taiyang. LI Shi-zhen, a famous physician of Ming Dynasty, indicated, "The brain is the house of mentality." So "The heart controls mental and emotional activities", "Spirit and soul store in the five *zang*-organs." The Governor Vessel runs along the midline of the back, and collaterals travels through

the heart and the brain, so it is closely related to human's mental activities. Acupuncture at Baihui (GV 20) regulates the five *zang's* activities, strengthens brain, and relieves mental stress. And moxibustion can elevate spleen-*yang*, lead the blood to the brain and to nourish it, activate meridians and collaterals. In addition, the herbs in the moxa stick also have functions of invigorating the brain, tranquilizing the mind, harmonizing *yin* and *yang* to cure insomnia.

Modern medicine holds that insomnia is related to function of the cerebral cortex resulting from mental or nervous tension. Rich blood vessels and nerves, such as trochlear nerve, greater occipital nerve, branches of the frontal nerve, etc. distribute on the surface of Baihui (GV 20). The deep tissue of the point contains motor area of cerebrum and paracentral lobule, surrounded by a web of arteries and veins. Suspended moxibustion on this point can improve blood supply to brain tissue and elasticity of blood vessels, and enhance excitability of related sites of cortex, so this therapy can treat nervous system diseases.

Modern experimental study indicates moxibustion can generate far-infrared and near infrared energy spectrum to regulate function of body's organs and systems. Moxibustion on Baihui (GV 20) has double effects including acupuncture point effect and moxibustion effect, regulating disorder of body's function, finally increasing body's resistance.

Although the difference in therapeutic effect between estazolam and suspended moxibustion therapies was not statistically significant, the latter may be more acceptable for no side effect.