

Thirty-two Cases of Acne Treated with Blood-letting Puncture, Cupping and Chinese-Drug Facemask

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To observe the therapeutic effect on acne treated with blood-letting puncture, cupping and Chinese-drug facemask. Thirty-two patients with acne were treated with above-mentioned therapeutic method. Cure, improvement and ineffectiveness were respectively found in 24, 7 and 1 case, with a curative rate of 75.0% and a total effective rate of 96.8%. The combination of blood-letting puncture, cupping and external application of Chinese-drug facemask is effective in treating acne.

In recent years, the author has adopted blood-letting puncture, cupping and external application of Chinese-drug facemask to treat acne with satisfactory therapeutic effect. The result is reported as follows.

Clinical Data

The patients were selected according to the diagnostic standard of common acne stipulated in *Clinical Dermatology*.¹ Their syndromes were differentiated according to the standard of acne stipulated in *TCM Diagnostics of Dermatoses*.² Those who conformed to the above diagnosis standards and syndrome differentiation and had used neither oral drug for acne within 30 days before the treatment nor externally applied drug for acne within 7 days before the treatment were recruited in the study. Excluded were those women in pregnancy or breast-feeding period, those with allergic diathesis or hypersensitivity to the drug, those complicated with severe primary diseases in blood vessels of the heart and brain, liver, kidney and hematopoietic system, and those with acne caused by chemicals.

Among the 32 cases under observation were 15 women and 17 men at the age of 12-37, mostly 18-29, with the illness courses ranging from 5 months to 14

years, mostly 1-3 years. Their illness conditions were classified¹ into 4 grades: grade I (mild) in 7 cases, grade II (mild-moderate) in 17 cases, grade III (moderate-severe) in 6 cases and grade IV (severe) in 2 cases.

Their syndromes were divided into 2 types. 1) Type of heat accumulation in the lung and stomach: For this type, red or reddish in color and pin-head to sesame in size, acne scattered on the face and forehead, or even on the chest and back in severe cases. After acne is squeezed, there will be comedo or yellow thick pus. Patients with this type of acne often have oily, slippery and bright skin, accompanied with dry mouth, constipation, yellow urine, red tongue, thin and yellow fur, and slippery and rapid pulse. 2) Type of stagnation of *qi* and blood: This type is characterized by bright red or dark red skin rash on the face, which refuses to subside all the year round. Women with this type of acne are often accompanied with aggravated skin rash during menstruation and alleviated skin rash after menstruation, or irregular menstruation with blood stasis and abdominal pain. Men with this type of acne are often accompanied with darkish or purplish red complexion, dark red tongue with ecchymosis, and deep, thready and

uneven pulse.

Methods of Treatment

Blood-letting puncture and cupping: Acupoints are selected for the type of heat accumulation in the lung and stomach. Group one: Dazhui (GV 14), bilateral Feishu (BL 13) and bilateral Weishu (BL 21); group two: bilateral Dachangshu (BL 25) and bilateral Geshu (BL 17). Acupoints selected for the type of stagnation of *qi* and blood include: Group one: Dazhui (GV 14), bilateral Feishu (BL 13) and bilateral Ganshu (BL 18); group two: bilateral Geshu (BL 17) and bilateral Pishu (BL 20). The two groups of acupoints are taken alternatively for needling and cupping. Manipulation: A 3-edged needle is rapidly inserted into the routinely sterilized skin to induce a slight blood letting. Cupping is then followed on the pricked point until 0.2-0.5ml of fresh blood is pumped out. The cup is retained in place for 10 minutes. The treatment is carried out once every 3 days for 1-3 courses and a course consists of 10 sessions.

Chinese-drug facemask is composed of the following ingredients:

Ye Ju Hua (野菊花 Flos Chrysanthemi Indici) 500g

Huo Xiang (藿香 Herba Agastachis) 500g

Fang Feng (防风 Radix Saposhnikoviae) 500g

Liu Huang (硫磺 Sulphur) 500g

Dang Gui (当归 Radix Angelicae Sinensis) 2,000g

Huang Qin (黄芩 Radix Scutellariae) 1,000g

Da Huang (大黄 Radix et Rhizoma Rhei) 1,000g

Dan Shen (丹参 Radix Salviae Miltiorrhizae) 1,000g

Bai Zhi (白芷 Radix Angelicae Dahuricae) 1,000g

Fu Ling (茯苓 Poria) 1,000g

Gan Cao (甘草 Radix Glycyrrhizae) 1,000g.

The above-mentioned components are well mixed and pulverized, and the powder is screened with a 200-mesh sieve. About 20g of the powder is taken and made into a paste with hot water. After the face is cleaned and massaged to ruddy and feverish, a needle is used to remove the matured comedoes. Then the face is sterilized with 75% alcohol and

spread with the paste to form a facemask, which should be washed away 30 minutes later. The treatment is given once every 3 days for 1-3 courses, with 10 sessions being a course of treatment.

Criteria for Effectiveness

According to the criteria for therapeutic results on acne in *The Guiding Principle for Clinical Research into New Chinese Drugs*,³ cured: the skin lesions have subsided with pigmentation left only, and no new acnes and skin rashes. Markedly effective: More than 70% of the skin lesions have subsided with less than 5 new acnes and skin rashes. Effective: 30-69% of the skin lesions have subsided with less than 10 new acnes and skin rashes. Ineffective: Only less than 29% of the skin lesions have subsided or illness condition remains same and even gets worse.

Results of Treatment

As a result, 24 cases (9 cases after one course, 14 cases after two courses and 1 case after three courses) were cured, 7 cases improved and 1 case failed, with a curative rate of 75.0%. The total effective rate was 96.8%.

Discussion

The eruption of acne is related to many factors. Modern medicine holds that acne is mainly caused by hypersteatosis, and the obviously reduced content of linoleic acid in sebum may lead to hyperkeratosis of the duct of sebaceous glands in the hair follicle, and the shrunk follicular orifice may make it difficult for the sebum to be discharged. It is believed that Acne is also caused by infection of propionibacterium. In TCM, this condition is known as rosacea, which is mainly caused by exuberant *qi* and blood during puberty, irregular diet and overtaking of fatty food, resulting in accumulation of damp-heat in the lung and stomach and blockage of the sweat pore in the skin. By using blood-letting puncture, the author pricked the selected acupoint with a 3-edged needle in an attempt

to clear away the accumulated heat from the stomach and intestine, remove the toxic substances, resolve the hard lumps, soothe the liver, promote blood circulation, dispel dampness and eliminate acne. The subsequent cupping is used to draw out the stagnated blood for re-generation of new blood. With its illness in the interior and its eruption in the exterior, acne should be treated both internally and externally and its origin and superficiality should be considered at the same time. In addition to blood-letting puncture and cupping, external application of Chinese-drug facemask should be also used. In the recipe, Da Huang (大黄 Radix et Rhizoma Rhei) and Liu Huang (硫磺 Sulphur) can kill bacteria, stop itching and inhibit the secretion of sebaceous glands. Huang Qin (黄芩 Radix Scutellariae) and Ye Ju Hua (野菊花 Flos Chrysanthemi Indici) can clear away heat and toxic substances. The inhibitor of testosterone reductase in Huang Qin is effective in killing acne bacillus. Dan Shen (丹参 Radix Salviae Miltiorrhizae) and Dang Gui (当归 Radix Angelicae Sinensis) can promote blood circulation to remove blood stasis. Gan Cao (甘草 Radix Glycyrrhizae), Bai Zhi (白芷

Radix Angelicae Dahuricae), Fu Ling (茯苓 Poria) and Huo Xiang (藿香 Herba Agastachis) can resolve dampness and eliminate speckle. Fang Feng (防风 Radix Saposhnikoviae) can dispel wind and stop itching.

The above-mentioned drugs used together can remove toxic substances, eliminate swelling, resolve dampness, astringe sore, promote blood circulation, remove blood stasis, eliminate speckle and nourish the face. The result of treatment shows that blood-letting puncture followed by cupping and Chinese-drug facemask is very effective in treating acne.

Reference

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