6. Nervous System Diseases

Reference

1. Objectives
To evaluate the efficacy of Hominis placenta herbal acupuncture in the treatment of Bell’s palsy.

2. Design
Randomized controlled trial (RCT).

3. Setting
One Oriental hospital (Oriental Medicine Hospital of Dongeui University), Republic of Korea.

4. Participants
Patients with Ramsey-Hunt syndrome were excluded. Forty-four patients diagnosed with Bell’s palsy by an otolaryngologist and treated with Western medicine. The patients received their first medical examination within 7 days of the disease onset, were hospitalized 7–10 days, and then received 4 weeks of ambulatory care.

5. Intervention
Injections (0.03 cc) were given 3 times per week during hospitalization and two times per week during ambulatory care. Affected facial acupuncture points included: Yangbai (GB14), Quanliao (SI18), Dicang (ST4), Jiache (ST6), Yifeng (TE17), and Sizhukong (TE23).

Arm 1: Hominis placenta herbal acupuncture treatment group (n=23).
Arm 2: Saline acupuncture treatment group (n=21).

6. Main outcome measures
Yanagihara’s unweighted grade.

7. Main results
1) Yanagihara’s unweighted grade increased between pre-treatment and 3 weeks after treatment, but the increase was nonsignificantly greater in Arm 1 than in Arm 2. The difference (which was not significant before treatment; 17.4±4.1 [Arm 1] vs. 16.4±3.97 [Arm 2]; P=0.532) but became significant 5 weeks after treatment (33.7±5.7 [Arm 1] vs. 28.7±7.5 [Arm 2]; P=0.032).

2) The most frequently occurring symptom was stress-induced hypertension, and the initial symptom was postauricular pain.

8. Conclusions
The efficacy of hominis placenta Herbal acupuncture is greater in late treatment period than in early treatment period. In the early treatment period, most of the efficacy is attributable to Geo pung tong gi (祛風通氣, expelling wind and promoting the circulation of Ki). It is thought that hominis placenta Herbal acupuncture is more effective in older patients, patients with wasting diseases, and in cases where the treatment course is slow.

9. Safety assessment in the article
Not mentioned.

10. Abstractor’s comments
This article examined the efficacy of hominis placenta herbal acupuncture in the treatment of Bell’s palsy. Compared to previous papers, this article was more objective, using saline as a placebo. The limitations of the study are the small number of patients and short follow-up period, which was too short (5 weeks) to demonstrate complete recovery. A new trial with more patients and follow-up longer than 2 months is needed. Moreover, the use of Western treatment and physical therapy simultaneously complicates the interpretation of these hominis placenta herbal acupuncture findings.

11. Abstractor
Lee EJ, 26 May 2010.