

6. Nervous System Diseases

Reference

Kwon NH, Shin YJ, Kim CY, et al. Comparative clinical study between Oriental medical and Oriental-Western medical treatment on Bell's palsy. *Daehan-Chimgu-Hakhoeji (Journal of Korean Acupuncture & Moxibustion Society)* 2008; 25(3): 19–28 (in Korean with English abstract).

1. Objectives

To compare the effectiveness of Bell's palsy treatment with Oriental medicines only to that of combined treatment with Oriental and Western medicines.

2. Design

Randomized controlled trial (RCT).

3. Setting

One Oriental hospital (Kyunghee University Hospital at Gangdong), Republic of Korea.

4. Participants

Thirty patients with Bell's palsy diagnosed by an otolaryngologist.

5. Intervention

Arm 1: Oriental medical treatments (acupuncture, herbal medicine, physiotherapy) only (n=15).

Arm 2: Oriental and Western medical treatments (acupuncture, herbal medicine, physiotherapy + [steroids]) combined (n=15).

6. Main outcome measures

House-Brackmann grade (H-B grade).

7. Main results

1) Treatment significantly improved outcome (H-B grade) during the interval between pre-treatment and 4 weeks after treatment in both arms ($P=0.000$).

2) The improvement in H-B grade was greater in Arm 1 than in Arm 2 after 1 week, similar in both arms after 2 weeks, and greater in Arm 2 than in Arm 1 after 3 and 4 weeks. There was no statistical significant between-arm difference in outcome after 4 weeks (1.73 ± 0.88 [Arm 1] vs. 1.93 ± 0.80 [Arm 2]; $P=0.436$).

8. Conclusions

Oriental-Western medical co-treatment compared to Oriental medical treatment only has greater impact on long-term treatment outcome, but the between-treatment difference is without statistical significance.

9. Safety assessment in the article

Not mentioned

10. Abstractor's comments

This study compares the effectiveness of Oriental medical treatment with Oriental-Western medical co-treatment for Bell's palsy. Recently, many Oriental-Western medical co-treatments have been tried, prompting a comparison of their effectiveness. In previous studies (Kang MJ. A clinical study comparing Oriental medicine with Oriental-Western medicine treatment for facial nerve paralysis, *Daehan-Chimgu-Hakhoeji [Journal of Korean Acupuncture & Moxibustion Society]* 2000; 17(1): 55–66; Kim NH. A clinical study comparing Oriental medicine with Oriental-Western medicine treatment for Bell's palsy. *Journal of Korean Acupuncture & Moxibustion Society* 2001; 18(5): 99–108), it was reported that the Oriental medical treatment only was more effective than Oriental-Western co-treatment in improving outcome. This result is in contrast with the results of this study, but the treatment period was three weeks in the previous study and four weeks in this study. Although the present study concluded that Oriental-Western co-treatment had a better therapeutic effect, four weeks is too short to determine the therapeutic effect on Bell's palsy, and more than two months of follow up are needed to determine the final recovery rate and presence of sequelae. To determine treatment effect, incomplete paralysis needs to be differentiated from complete paralysis more precisely. Since improvement may depend on the periodicity of steroid cycles, a comparative study that takes this factor into account is needed.

11. Abstractor

Lee EJ, 26 May 2010.