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Acupuncture complementing western medicine in in-patient setting- A case series from Singapore

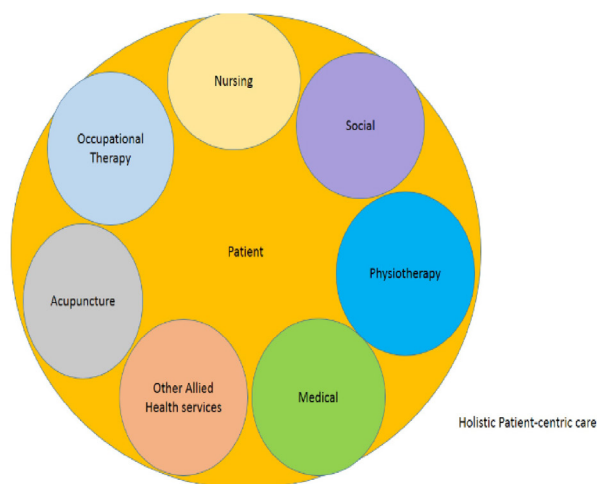
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Statement of the Problem: Patients who require longer stay following an acute stroke or fractures that are treated conservatively are generally transferred to a step-down care institution for further rehabilitation. Studies done with regards to cognitive or affective impairments predict rehabilitation participation among patients admitted to inpatient rehabilitation; especially those with stroke or chronic pain, to have reactive depression, which affects rehabilitation participation. In our institution, patients were offered acupuncture for stroke or chronic pain. The purpose of this study is to describe the potential positive effect of providing acupuncture as complementing conventional treatment for patients with either stroke or chronic pain while in they are receiving treatment inpatient or outpatient.

Methodology: All patients were assessed weekly at multidisciplinary meetings involving physicians, nurses, occupational therapists, physiotherapists and other allied health professionals with regards to their rehabilitation potential using functional independence measurement (FIM) score and length of stay (LOS).

Findings: 3 patients enrolled in this study were found to have improved FIM score for both stroke as well as chronic pain patients within a shorter period of time. Though LOS did not see significant improvement for these patients, the reason was mainly awaiting arrival and training of care-giver, as these patients still require assistance upon discharge.

Conclusion & Significance: Patients who hold positive attitude towards acupuncture and were willing to give it a try, tend to be more optimistic and participatory to physiotherapy. This study showed significant improvement of FIM score and potentially shorter in-patient LOS, resulting in reduced medical cost, hospital bed occupancy and care-givers stress. Strongly recommend that healthcare institutions recognize this synergy and modality of care, and introduce similar programs in their institutions to treat patient holistically, utilizing both western medicine complemented by acupuncture all within the same team of doctors and therapists.



Biography

Richard Tan Tiong Heng has done his MBBS, Grad. Dip. in Acupuncture, Grad. Dip. in Occupational Medicine, is a registered Family Physician and a Designated Workplace Doctor, and currently works as a Principal Resident Physician in Sengkang Health at Alexandra Hospital in Singapore. He holds special interest in Acupuncture, Geriatric Medicine and Occupational Health. He has been offering acupuncture as a complementary treatment to patients mainly for chronic pain such as chronic pelvic pain, muscular skeletal pain as well as for stroke. He has published articles in local media, and presented in overseas conferences on acupuncture for chronic pelvic pain. He had spoken in various meetings in both public and medical forums on acupuncture.

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