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Acupuncture helps regain postoperative consciousness in patients with traumatic brain injury: A case study

Ying-Jung Tseng, Yu-Chiang Hung and Wen-Long Hu
Physician, Taiwan

Objective: This report of one case illustrates the potential effect of acupuncture therapy in addition to Western medicine for regaining postoperative consciousness in patients with traumatic brain injury (TBI).

Clinical features: A 65-year-old man experienced a TBI after being involved in a motor vehicle accident. His initial Glasgow Coma Scale (GCS) score was E1V1M2, and brain computerized tomography showed a right sided subdural hemorrhage. He received emergency medical treatment and underwent craniotomy to remove the lacerated portions of brain as well as sub temporal decompression, followed by a decompressive craniectomy the following day to remove an intracerebral hematoma due to late-onset temporo-parietal rebleeding. Twelve days after surgery, the patient remained in poor condition due to serious complications and the GCS was E2VeM4. His family then underwent counseling and he subsequently received acupuncture treatment.

Intervention & Outcome: This patient was treated with acupuncture three times each week, consisting of strong stimulation at GV26 (Shuigou) and the 12 Well points using the half-needling technique. After 3 weeks of consecutive treatment, his GCS score improved to E4VtM6. In addition, he regained consciousness and could tolerate rehabilitation programs.

Conclusions: We believe that an experienced physician may use acupuncture as complementary therapy in patients with TBI who fail to regain consciousness postoperatively.

Biography

Ying-Jung Tseng is an attending Physician serving in the Division of Acupuncture, Department of Chinese Medicine, Kaohsiung Chang Gung Memorial Hospital, Taiwan. Her specialized practice focuses on healing from chronic diseases, including conscious disturbance, stroke, mental health, sports injuries and myofascial pain, radiculopathy, weight problems, and women's health. She has been a member of Chinese Medical Association of Acupuncture (CMAA) since 2011, and obtained the certificate of specialty in Acupuncture Medicine. Her recent research topics are acupuncture in treating conscious disturbance, electrodermal screening and meridians, Radix Salvia miltiorrhiza (Dan Shen), etc. She believes in using integrated therapies and aims to use a variety of techniques to help people with recovery from illness.

eztseng@gmail.com

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