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Acupuncture and topiramate in treatment of migraine

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Acupuncture has been used to treat headaches for thousands of years. The greatest advantage of acupuncture over western medicine is that it is safe. Unlike synthetic drugs, acupuncture has virtually no side effects, and the procedures for treating headaches are much less invasive. Migraine headaches are usually one-sided, pulsating or throbbing, and moderate or severe in intensity. They can be worsened with activity and may be associated with nausea and/or vomiting, as well as sensitivity to light or noise. Some patients also experience auras, a neurological symptom that develops gradually over 5-20 minutes. The patient may see brief flashes or waves of light, or changes in their vision. Other common features of auras include vertigo, imbalance, confusion and numbness. Acupuncture had been used to treat 50 patient suffering from migraine, topiramate (Topamax) given to prevent the attacks, duration of treatment is 10 weeks; the patients were followed up for one year. Topiramate is called an anticonvulsant. Topiramate is also used to prevent migraine headaches in adults and teenagers who are at least 12 years old. This medicine will only prevent migraine headaches or reduce the number of attacks. It will not treat a headache that has already begun.

Setting & time frame: This study was carried out in Erbil, Iraq during the period 2013-2016.

Methods: Fifty patients all are male, age 25 -35 y, having no systemic disease, complaining of migraine for more than 1y, Liver and renal functions were normal. Classically the headache is unilateral, throbbing, and moderate to severe in intensity. It usually comes on gradually and is aggravated by physical activity.

1st step: I started treating them with acupuncture using the certain points weekly, for 4 weeks with one tablet per day of topamax.

2nd step: Then 2 weeks rest no acupuncture but the patients continued on topamax tablet 1/day.

3rd step: Acupuncture using same acupoints for another 4 weeks, one set/week, with 1 tab of topiramate /every other day.

The patient get 8 set of acupuncture with 60 tablets during 10 weeks of treatment.

Results: All the 50 patients had been followed for one year during this time there was direct contact with them monthly, for checking the investigation which was normal. After 6 months, they were free of pain except 5 patients (10%). After 1y – 35 patients were free of pain –and only 10 patients complained of pain.

Advantages: Acupuncture is effective in treating migraine specially when had been used in combination with Topamax, it has synergistic effect, safe without complications. They cover the acute attacks and had preventing effect.

Biography

Lazgeen Zerki is currently working as a Consultant Anaesthetist and Acupuncturist in Rapareen Teaching Hospital of Erbil- Kurdistan, Iraq.

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