

The treatment consisted of clearing obstruction in the channel and nourishing blood. I chose the following points: Shenshu BL-23, Dachangshu BL-25, Huantiao GB-30, Fengshi GB-31, Yanglingquan GB-34, Xuanzhong GB-39, Qiuxu GB-40, Zusanli ST-36 and the most tender ahshi point.

Shenshu BL-23 and Zusanli ST-36 were reinforced, the ahshi point was pricked to bleed, and all the other points were reinforced. Wherever possible the needle sensation was induced to transmit along the painful leg.

After 40 minutes, Mr. S. stood up and tried to move his back and leg. He was surprised to find he felt no pain at all. However, the numbness was still there and I explained to him that the numbness would require repeated treatment.

After five further treatments using the same points, but without the bleeding of the ahshi point, he was no longer suffering either pain or numbness. I decided that he had no further need of acupuncture, but asked him to take *Tao Hong Si Wu Tang* (Four-Substance Decoction with Safflower and Peach-Pit) tablets.

After two further months, the patient was so satisfied that he expressed his appreciation to me for the excellent curative effect of acupuncture in a letter.

Clinical experience

1. The combination of points according to channel and pattern differentiation can offer the best curative effect. Intervertebral lumbar disc prolapse often affects the Gall Bladder and Bladder channels (i.e. the lateral and posterior sides of the leg). If the pain is caused by blockage of the Gall Bladder channel, the points to treat are Huantiao GB-30, Fengshi GB-31, Yanglingquan GB-34 and Qiuxu GB-40. When the Bladder channel is blocked, the relevant points are Dachangshu BL-25, Weizhong BL-40 and Kunlun BL-60. If the pain is aggravated by cold or dampness, the application of moxibustion is required.
2. In cases of obvious blood stasis, bleeding therapy on the ahshi point has a great effect on pain relief.
3. In case of chronic pain, points to nourish the Kidneys and activate blood should be added, for example Shenshu BL-23, Mingmen DU-4, Xuehai SP-10 and Geshu BL-17.
4. If there is severe lumbar pain, choose Renzhong DU-26 to relieve the pain effectively.
5. If there is severe leg pain, local acupuncture should not be performed at the early stage of treatment. Instead, the upper extremities should be treated first, for example: Houxi SI-3, Wangu SI-4, Yemen SJ-2 and Zhongzhu SJ-3. Once the leg pain is somewhat relieved, points on the leg can be needled.
6. If pain remains in the lumbar region and leg after surgery, Pishu BL-20 and Zusanli ST-36 can be added to tonify qi and nourish blood.
7. When accompanied with abdominal pain and the patient cannot bend forward or backward, the problem

is caused by blockage of the Conception and Governing vessels. Guanyuan REN-4, Qihai REN-6 and Mingmen DU-4 should be needled.

8. If the patient suffers from constipation, the problem is caused by blockage of the intestinal qi and the following points can be chosen: Tianshu ST-25 and Shangjuxu ST-37.
9. If there is acute incontinence of urine and faeces, surgery is the best choice, but acupuncture can be of great help in chronic cases. Points to use are Tianshu ST-25, Qihai REN-6, Zhongji REN-3 and Dachangshu BL-25.
10. In case of impairment of sexual function, the tongue needs to be checked. If it is reddish with a thick yellow coating (indicating damp-heat), select Ganshu BL-18, Taichong LIV-3 and Sanyinjiao SP-6. If the tongue is pale or white or shows tooth prints on the edges and the tongue coating is thin and white (indicating Kidney yang deficiency) choose Taixi KID-3, Mingmen DU-4, Ciliao BL-32 and Qihai REN-6.

Conclusion

1. Acupuncture is useful for the syndrome of intervertebral lumbar disc prolapse. It can relieve pain, relax the muscles and restore nerve function.
2. The results of a CT-scan or MRI, whilst important, do not replace careful physical examination.
3. Correct identification of the affected channels is the foundation for point selection and can obtain outstanding results. ■

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