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## Postprint Review of Integrated Chinese and Western Medicine Rehabilitation Nursing for Stroke Recovery

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### Abstract

Stroke is a common and frequently occurring disease in clinical practice, also known as cerebrovascular accident or cerebral apoplexy, characterized by a high incidence rate that predominantly affects middle-aged and elderly populations. With the accelerating progression of population aging, the incidence of stroke in China has increased significantly. The primary clinical manifestations of stroke include cerebral ischemia and hemorrhagic injury. This disease is associated with high disability and mortality rates, poses a serious threat to human health, and represents one of the most significant fatal diseases worldwide. Clinical symptoms of stroke encompass headache, vomiting, vertigo, sudden visual impairment, consciousness disturbance, and others, which substantially impact patients' physical health and quality of life. In the absence of timely and effective treatment, stroke can readily jeopardize patients' lives and health. Therefore, administering timely and effective treatment to stroke patients is of paramount importance. To effectively enhance therapeutic efficacy and promote favorable recovery in stroke patients, it is also imperative to provide effective nursing interventions. A substantial proportion of stroke patients experience varying degrees of disability, including limb dysfunction and consciousness disturbance, which impose tremendous psychological and economic burdens on both patients and their families. Consequently, it is essential to intensify rehabilitation nursing for stroke patients. With the continuous advancement of traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) in China, its application in clinical nursing practice has become increasingly extensive, and its therapeutic role has become progressively more prominent. For example, during the stroke recovery period, implementing effective integrated Chinese and Western medicine rehabilitation nursing plays a significant role in improving patients' rehabilitation outcomes. This study presents a retrospective analysis of relevant research on integrated Chinese and Western medicine rehabilitation nursing during the stroke recovery period.

## Full Text

### Abstract

Stroke is a common and frequently-occurring clinical condition, also known as cerebrovascular accident or cerebral apoplexy, characterized by high incidence particularly among middle-aged and elderly populations. As population aging accelerates in China, the incidence of stroke has increased significantly. The main clinical manifestations include cerebral ischemia and hemorrhagic injury, with high rates of disability and mortality that pose serious threats to human health, making it one of the world's most critical fatal diseases. Clinical symptoms such as headache, vomiting, vertigo, sudden visual disturbances, and consciousness disorders substantially impact patients' health and quality of life. Without timely and effective treatment, stroke can easily become life-threatening. Therefore, prompt and effective treatment is essential for stroke patients. To enhance therapeutic outcomes and promote optimal recovery, effective nursing interventions are equally crucial. A large proportion of stroke survivors experience varying degrees of disability, including physical dysfunction and consciousness disorders, imposing tremendous psychological and economic burdens on both patients and their families. Consequently, strengthening rehabilitation nursing for stroke patients is imperative. With the continuous development of traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) in China, its application in clinical nursing has become increasingly widespread and significant. For instance, during the stroke recovery period, implementing effective integrated Chinese and Western medicine rehabilitation nursing plays a vital role in improving patients' rehabilitation quality. This study provides a retrospective analysis of relevant research on integrated rehabilitation nursing during the stroke recovery period.

**Keywords:** stroke; integrated Chinese and Western medicine; convalescence; rehabilitation nursing

## 2. Research Progress in Integrated Chinese and Western Medicine Rehabilitation Nursing

Stroke is a severe cerebrovascular circulation disorder with high incidence, disability, and mortality rates, particularly affecting middle-aged and elderly populations, thereby seriously endangering human health. Currently, clinical medicine lacks highly effective treatment measures for stroke, making prevention the best approach for disease control. Once stroke occurs, mortality rates are high, and many survivors experience varying degrees of disability and loss of self-care ability, severely impacting their quality of life. To improve patients' quality of life, strengthening prognostic interventions becomes essential. While Western nursing plays a certain role in stroke patient care, its overall effectiveness is not entirely satisfactory. TCM theory posits that stroke is closely related to improper diet, yin-yang imbalance, and qi-blood disharmony, advocating for qi-supplementing and blood-activating principles in treatment. In recent years, with continuous development of TCM in China, its clinical

applications have become increasingly extensive. During the stroke recovery period, TCM-based rehabilitation nursing demonstrates significant importance in enhancing rehabilitation quality and therapeutic outcomes. Combining TCM nursing with Western nursing allows the advantages of both approaches to be fully realized, thereby improving rehabilitation effectiveness for stroke patients during the recovery period.

Integrated rehabilitation nursing has also demonstrated important applications in other medical fields. For example, He Baihua and Zhong Lingying conducted a detailed analysis of integrated rehabilitation nursing in patients following total hip arthroplasty, concluding that its application significantly promotes joint function recovery, improves patient satisfaction with reduction, and enhances quality of life, making it worthy of broader promotion. This illustrates the high clinical value of integrated rehabilitation nursing and its significant role in promoting patient recovery across various clinical contexts.

## 1. Stroke Recovery Period

Stroke, also known as cerebrovascular accident, is a collective term for acute cerebrovascular circulation disorders caused by various etiologies. The disease is characterized by sudden onset, rapid progression, and persistent symptoms that can become life-threatening without timely and effective treatment. Clinically, stroke is typically divided into four stages based on disease duration: acute stage, spastic stage, recovery stage, and sequelae stage. This staging system facilitates better prevention and treatment by medical staff while also supporting teaching and academic exchanges. The acute stage encompasses the first two weeks after onset, during which patients' conditions change rapidly, requiring primarily emergency treatment and progression control. The spastic stage occurs 2-4 weeks post-onset, characterized by associated reactions, synergistic movements, increased muscle tone, and spasticity. The recovery period spans 1-6 months post-onset, representing a critical phase for treatment and prognosis where most patients can achieve recovery, with only a minority progressing to the sequelae stage. The sequelae stage refers to conditions remaining unresolved after six months, where patients experience various functional impairments including sensory, speech, and cognitive disorders, often resulting in complete loss of self-care ability.

The stroke recovery period is particularly crucial, as treatment and nursing outcomes during this stage directly affect patients' prognoses. Numerous studies in China have demonstrated that early inpatient rehabilitation nursing is especially important for functional recovery in stroke patients. Recovery period rehabilitation nursing can effectively improve motor function and sensorimotor responses, playing a vital role in promoting recovery and reducing hospitalization costs. Implementing TCM-based rehabilitation interventions during the recovery period—including acupuncture, massage, limb rehabilitation training, and dietary guidance—can effectively improve symptoms and rehabilitation outcomes, thereby enhancing quality of life for both patients and their families.

Therefore, emphasizing recovery period nursing is essential for improving therapeutic and rehabilitation effectiveness.

Rehabilitation nursing during the stroke recovery period primarily aims to gradually correct erroneous movement patterns through training, thereby promoting the restoration of normal movement patterns. Integrated Chinese and Western medicine rehabilitation nursing represents a novel nursing model that combines TCM rehabilitation nursing with Western rehabilitation nursing, integrating modern rehabilitation techniques with traditional Chinese rehabilitation methods to achieve superior outcomes. In recent years, with continuous development of TCM in China, its therapeutic standards have improved significantly, and TCM nursing has become particularly important in stroke rehabilitation nursing. TCM rehabilitation methods are diverse, including moxibustion, acupoint massage, herbal fumigation and washing, herbal hot compress, acupoint application, and other suitable TCM nursing techniques that effectively promote functional recovery in hemiplegic limbs and alleviate pain. These methods demonstrate significant advantages in improving quality of life during the sequelae stage and play important roles in enhancing rehabilitation quality. Research analyzing the effects of integrated rehabilitation nursing interventions on stroke patients with qi deficiency and blood stasis syndrome concluded that this approach is significantly effective, safe, and reliable, with high clinical application value. The study demonstrated that the control group receiving Western rehabilitation nursing alone achieved a total effective rate of 70%, while the observation group receiving integrated rehabilitation nursing achieved a total effective rate of 95%, with the observation group showing significantly superior outcomes. This clearly illustrates the remarkable effectiveness of integrated rehabilitation nursing in stroke patient care.

### 3. Integrated Rehabilitation Nursing During Stroke Recovery Period

Emotional nursing (情志护理) plays an important role in promoting recovery during the stroke recovery period. Many stroke patients in this stage easily develop negative emotions such as anxiety, depression, and irritability due to disease and treatment effects, which directly impact rehabilitation outcomes. Emotional nursing can effectively improve patients' psychological state, enabling them to face their disease with correct and positive attitudes. During implementation, targeted emotional nursing can be applied based on different syndrome differentiations. For patients with liver qi stagnation, liver-soothing and depression-relieving approaches can be adopted, such as consuming citrus fruits and bananas or drinking rose flower and dried tangerine peel tea. For those with heart-spleen deficiency, qi-supplementing and blood-nourishing calming methods can be used, incorporating small amounts of lotus seeds, longan fruit, Chinese yam, and codonopsis in the diet. Additionally, music therapy can be employed to improve patients' emotions, with appropriate music selected according to their psychological state.

Massage therapy is a commonly used rehabilitation method in TCM that plays an important role in promoting blood circulation and improving motor function in hemiplegic patients. Massage primarily involves manipulating relevant acupoints on the limbs, including Jianjing (GB21), Hegu (LI4), Quchi (LI11), Zusanli (ST36), and others, using techniques such as kneading, pinching, and plucking. Massage can effectively promote blood circulation, relax spastic muscles, and facilitate joint mobility recovery. Hu Yi and colleagues provided a detailed analysis of acupoint massage as a TCM rehabilitation method in their research on integrated rehabilitation techniques for stroke patients with limb dysfunction during the recovery period, concluding that acupoint massage benefits the recovery of motor function and daily living abilities in stroke patients.

Acupuncture therapy is a commonly used TCM nursing technique in clinical practice. It primarily works by stimulating proprioceptive sensory nerves to initiate stretch reflexes, causing antagonistic muscle contraction and reducing spastic muscle tone, thereby achieving the goals of spasm inhibition and meridian unblocking. For stroke patients in the recovery period, acupuncture therapy can effectively improve clinical symptoms and promote functional recovery. During implementation, appropriate acupoints must be selected, including scalp acupoints, limb acupoints, and swallowing-related acupoints, with each session lasting 30 minutes and administered once daily, producing improvements in neurological, swallowing, and limb functions. Wu Yunjing and colleagues' research on the effects of electroacupuncture therapy on limb motor function in hemiplegic stroke patients with spasticity indicated that electroacupuncture treatment on the hemiplegic side, combined with rehabilitation training, can correct abnormal patterns of forearm pronation and foot inversion-plantar flexion, promote recovery of shoulder abduction function and hip/knee flexion movements, and facilitate transformation toward correct movement patterns, thereby improving motor function and daily living abilities. This demonstrates the remarkable nursing effectiveness of acupuncture therapy in stroke rehabilitation nursing.

*Note: Figure translations are in progress. See original paper for figures.*

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