

Nursing Case Report of a Patient with Hemifacial Spasm Treated by Fire Dragon Cupping Comprehensive Moxibustion

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Date: 2024-04-07T00:00:00+00:00

Abstract

This paper summarizes the therapeutic effect observation and nursing experience of one case of hemifacial spasm treated with fire dragon cupping comprehensive moxibustion. Based on the theory of TCM syndrome differentiation and nursing, fire dragon cupping comprehensive moxibustion therapy was administered with dynamic observation, concurrently combined with routine nursing measures including emotional nursing and daily living care, which effectively improved the patient's clinical symptoms, alleviated anxiety, and enhanced patient comfort and quality of life.

Full Text

A Nursing Case Report on Fire Dragon Cupping Comprehensive Moxibustion for Facial Spasm

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Abstract

This article presents a nursing case report on a patient with facial spasm treated with fire dragon cupping comprehensive moxibustion. Based on traditional Chinese medicine syndrome differentiation and nursing theory, the patient received fire dragon cupping comprehensive moxibustion with dynamic observation, combined with routine nursing measures including emotional care and daily living

support. The treatment effectively improved clinical symptoms, alleviated anxiety, and enhanced patient comfort and quality of life.

Keywords: Fire Dragon Cupping Comprehensive Moxibustion; Facial Spasm; Emotional Nursing

Introduction

Hemifacial spasm (HFS) is a cranial nerve disorder characterized by intermittent, involuntary twitching of unilateral or bilateral facial muscles (orbicularis oculi, facial expression muscles, and orbicularis oris), which can be triggered or exacerbated by emotional stress, fatigue, and exposure to cold [1]. The incidence shows gender differences, with females being slightly more affected than males, and the left side being more commonly involved. The incidence increases significantly after age 40. Current Western medicine treatments primarily include medication, botulinum toxin injection, and surgery, but these have low cure rates and are prone to complications [2]. Inheritance and innovation are important aspects of traditional Chinese medicine development [3]. Fire dragon cupping comprehensive moxibustion is a novel characteristic TCM therapy that integrates scraping, moxibustion, massage, and hot compress, with functions of unblocking, regulating, warming, and tonifying [4]. This article summarizes the nursing experience of treating a facial spasm patient with fire dragon cupping comprehensive moxibustion.

Case Presentation

The patient, Ms. Wang, was a 49-year-old female who presented with a chief complaint of recurrent involuntary twitching on the left side of her face for over six months, which had worsened in the past week. The patient reported that six months prior, she developed involuntary twitching of the left facial muscles without obvious precipitating factors. During episodes, there was occasional twitching at the corner of the mouth, occurring 6-8 times per hour with each episode lasting approximately 30 seconds. There were no symptoms of facial deviation, pain, or numbness. One week before presentation, the symptoms intensified, prompting her visit to the Traditional Chinese Medicine Nursing Clinic of Zaozhuang Hospital, Dongfang Hospital, Beijing University of Chinese Medicine on March 25, 2024.

Current symptoms included mental tension, involuntary twitching of the left corner of the mouth, zygomatic region, and outer canthus, accompanied by dryness of the left eye but no pain. The daily frequency of episodes was variable. She experienced poor sleep, normal appetite, and regular bowel and bladder function. Tongue appearance was dark red with a thin white coating, and pulse was wiry and thready. Past medical history was unremarkable. Physical examination revealed negative neurological findings. Western medicine diagnosis: hemifacial spasm. Traditional Chinese medicine diagnosis: facial muscle twitching; syndrome differentiation: liver blood deficiency. Treatment principle: nourish

blood, extinguish wind, unblock collaterals, and relieve spasm. The patient was prescribed facial fire dragon cupping comprehensive moxibustion, administered once daily for 30 minutes per session for six consecutive days.

Treatment Course

Following the first treatment on March 26, the patient reported reduced frequency of facial twitching with prolonged intervals between episodes and improved sleep quality, prompting continuation of therapy. After the third treatment on March 28, she reported significantly reduced twitching frequency, a sensation of eye relaxation, and shortened duration of each twitch. Following the sixth treatment on March 31, the patient reported that twitching lasted only a few seconds with markedly prolonged intervals, the affected area no longer felt tight or constricted, she felt relaxed in the affected region, experienced improved mood, and was able to sleep soundly.

Nursing Care Process

Assessment

Assessment included two standardized measures: (1) Facial spasm intensity using the Cohen Albert grading standard [5], and (2) Facial spasm frequency using the Penn grading standard [6]. The Cohen Albert scale ranges from Grade 0 (no spasm) to Grade 4 (severe spasm with uncontrolled facial muscle activity affecting daily functioning). Grade 1 represents atypical spasm with only mild increase in blinking during stress or fatigue, Grade 2 indicates mild spasm with slight visible twitching but normal facial movement, and Grade 3 represents moderate spasm with obvious twitching and mild functional impairment. The patient's facial spasm intensity was Grade 2. The Penn scale ranges from Grade 0 (no spasm) to Grade 4 (>10 episodes/hour), with Grade 1 representing stimulation-induced moderate spasm, Grade 2 indicating \$1 episode/hour, and Grade 3 representing >1 but \$10 episodes/hour. The patient's facial spasm frequency was Grade 3.

Diagnosis

Based on the comprehensive assessment and patient reports, the following nursing diagnoses were identified: 1. Anxiety related to lack of disease-related knowledge 2. Disturbed sleep pattern related to mental stress

Plan

The following nursing plan was developed to address identified problems: 1. Emotional care: Enhance communication with the patient to release stress, provide reassurance, stabilize emotions, and improve sleep quality 2. Health education enhancement: Provide education on hemifacial spasm to improve disease prevention awareness

Interventions

Fire Dragon Cupping Comprehensive Moxibustion Technique The patient was placed in a supine position with the face and neck fully exposed. A small fire dragon cup was selected, and gua sha oil was evenly applied to the local area. The moxa stick inside the cup was ignited, and once burning evenly, the cup was maneuvered with one hand. During application, the therapist's hypothenar eminence first contacted the skin before placing the cup. Various techniques including kneading, grinding, pushing, pressing, pointing, shaking, flashing, vibrating, and hot compress were applied to the facial and neck skin and muscle tissue through forward rotation, reverse rotation, and shaking-pulling motions. Key acupoints including Yangbai (GB14), Taiyang (EX-HN5), Jingming (BL1), Sibai (ST2), Quanliao (SI18), Xiaguan (ST7), Dicang (ST4), and Jiache (ST6) were targeted with shaking-pulling manipulation. Throughout the procedure, the cup was continuously maneuvered, with the therapist using the hypothenar eminence to sense skin temperature and make adjustments. Careful control of cup temperature was maintained to avoid excessive or improper movement that could cause moxa ash to fall and result in burns. Each session lasted 30 minutes until the skin became slightly red and warm. Treatment was administered once daily for six consecutive days.

Syndrome-Based Nursing Care

1. **Lifestyle and Daily Living Care:** Maintain regular daily routines in a quiet, clean environment with fresh air. Engage in appropriate exercise to strengthen constitution and participate in suitable physical activities.
2. **Dietary Care:** Maintain regular meals, selecting foods that are easy to chew and soft in texture. Avoid stimulating, overly sour, overly sweet, and hot-natured foods.
3. **Emotional Care:** Explain disease-related knowledge to the patient, analyze the relationship between disease and emotions, encourage active participation in thematic discussions to release negative emotions, and help establish effective coping abilities. Encourage listening to music such as "Spring River in the Flower Moon Night" to cultivate temperament [7], thereby maintaining positive emotions and promoting recovery.
4. **Health Education:** Pay attention to keeping the head and face warm, avoid local moisture and cold exposure, refrain from emotional excitement and fatigue from staying up late, listen to soft music regularly, maintain emotional peace, ensure adequate sleep, and wash face with warm water.

Outcomes and Follow-up

Prior to treatment, the patient's facial spasm intensity was Grade 2 and frequency was Grade 3. After six days of treatment, facial spasm intensity decreased to Grade 1 and frequency to Grade 2. The patient reported that twitch-

ing lasted only a few seconds with markedly prolonged intervals, the affected area no longer felt tight or constricted, she felt relaxed in the affected region, experienced improved mood, and was able to sleep soundly. At the 7-day follow-up after treatment completion, the patient's condition remained stable with no recurrence of symptoms.

Discussion

Hemifacial spasm falls under the categories of “facial wind,” “convulsion syndrome,” and “eyelid tremor” in traditional Chinese medicine. The pathogenesis primarily involves deficiency of healthy qi leading to invasion of external pathogenic factors and malnourishment of tendons and vessels [8]. This patient was an older woman with insufficient yin blood, causing internal stirring of deficiency wind, leading to prolonged stagnation of pathogenic qi in facial meridians, resulting in qi and blood stasis, failure of blood to nourish collaterals, obstructed vessels, and malnourished tendons, manifesting as facial muscle twitching and contraction.

Fire dragon cupping comprehensive moxibustion achieves therapeutic effects of warming meridians, dispelling cold, promoting qi and blood circulation, and activating collaterals through specially designed cup openings combined with cup maneuvering techniques of pressing, pushing, kneading, and grinding [9]. By stimulating acupoints including Yangbai, Taiyang, Jingming, Sibai, Quanliao, Xiaguan, Dicang, and Jiache on the affected side, this treatment activates facial meridian qi to unblock collaterals and relieve twitching, thereby improving local microcirculation and enhancing systemic qi and blood flow. This can significantly reduce the frequency and intensity of facial spasms [10]. In summary, fire dragon cupping comprehensive moxibustion for hemifacial spasm offers advantages of being free of side effects, simple to operate, and providing stable efficacy, warranting further in-depth research and clinical promotion.

Acknowledgments

Informed consent was obtained from the patient. There is no conflict of interest in this article.

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