

A Proposed Case Series To Study Effects of Multi-modal Treatment of Neurodegenerative Disease with Chinese Medicine

Introduction

Reports and research from Asia indicate promising possibilities for the treatment of Neurodegenerative diseases with acupuncture, electro-acupuncture, moxibustion, herbal medicine and body-mind exercises.^{1 2 3 4 5 6 7} Such treatments are normally more intensive and extensive than can be found in western countries, possibly accounting for the relatively low expectations held by the public for those modalities. Daily acupuncture, for example, is a rarity outside of China. Combining all of the above mentioned modalities is also difficult for western practitioners who must contend with limitations of time, space, money, personnel and training.

For this proposed series of cases, treatments will be designed to mimic the level of care found in Chinese specialty hospitals where multi-modal traditional medicine is commonly applied for patients with serious illnesses.

¹ Lin, J.-G.; Chen, C.-J.; Yang, H.-B.; Chen, Y.-H.; Hung, S.-Y. Electroacupuncture Promotes Recovery of Motor Function and Reduces Dopaminergic Neuron Degeneration in Rodent Models of Parkinson's Disease. *Int. J. Mol. Sci.* 2017, *18*, 1846.

² Cheng Yongde, Formulating a therapeutic program with the governing vessel in treating 46 cases of ALS, *Shanghai Journal of Acupuncture and Moxibustion* 1998; 17(5): 43. (in Chinese)

³ Cheng Yongde, Clinical observation on 46 cases of amyotrophic lateral cord sclerema (ALS) in consideration of the treatment principle breaking through the Dumai (GV), *Zhejiang Journal of Integrating Traditional Chinese Medicine and Western Medicine* 1999; 9(1): 16-17. (in Chinese)

⁴ Dharmananda, S. Treatment of ALS with Chinese Medicine. ITM Online. 2003. Available at: <http://www.itmonline.org/arts/als.htm>. Accessed 09/07/2017.

⁵ Sangmi Lee and Sungchul Kim, "The Effects of Sa-Am Acupuncture Treatment on Respiratory Physiology Parameters in Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis Patients: A Pilot Study," *Evidence-Based Complementary and Alternative Medicine*, vol. 2013, Article ID 506317, 7 pages, 2013. doi:10.1155/2013/506317

⁶ Jiang J, H, Yang E, J, Baek M, G, Kim S, H, Lee S, M, Choi S, -M, Anti-Inflammatory Effects of Electroacupuncture in the Respiratory System of a Symptomatic Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis Animal Model. *Neurodegener Dis* 2011;8:504-514

⁷ Weidong Pan, Xiangjun Chen, Jie Bao, et al., "The Use of Integrative Therapies in Patients with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis in Shanghai, China," *Evidence-Based Complementary and Alternative Medicine*, vol. 2013, Article ID 613596, 6 pages, 2013. doi:10.1155/2013/613596

Methodology

A series of 10-12 case reports will be presented, reflecting clinical reality. The modalities employed are all complex, individualized, and interactive. Their effects are also cumulative. Therefore, research methods that would require standardization of each treatment in isolation would undermine or nullify their effectiveness.

Inclusion

Study participants must be diagnosed with a neurodegenerative disease and be able to follow all treatment recommendations.

Exclusion

Those with heart disease or diabetes are not eligible.

Plan

Acupuncture and Electro-acupuncture. Sessions will last 60-90 minutes, and may include a wide range of strategies depending on their presenting clinical picture.

Treatments will be scheduled as follows:

- 3/week for 1-3 months
- 1/week for 3-6 months
- 1/month for a year

An alternative schedule will be available for those who must travel far to the treatment area: 5/week for a month, followed by one year of remote herbal consults.

Moxibustion. Treatment with moxa (direct and indirect) will be integrated with the acupuncture sessions, with one session each week emphasizing more intensive moxibustion techniques over acupuncture. Patients and/or their caregivers will also be provided training and material to do simple moxa treatments at home.

Herbal Medicine. Patients will receive customized formulations of raw herbs based on classically defined patterns and formulas. They must be prepared at home by a



caregiver, and generally are taken twice per day. Patients must cover the cost of herbs, which will vary. Expect to pay \$200-\$300/month.

Qigong. Patients (facilitated by their caregivers) will be trained to perform qigong or other simplified mind-body exercises according to their ability, which they will perform at home daily. Exercises will be designed to accommodate wheelchair-bound patients and other disabilities.

Dietary Therapy. All patients will be instructed to avoid added sugar and sweeteners, dairy products, and alcohol.

Conclusion

This proposal is for a short series of cases to demonstrate the efficacy of traditional methods from China for the treatment of neuro-degenerative diseases. It also aims to demonstrate the level of care that is required to be successful with these methods.