

Complex application of soft manual techniques and pharmacopuncture in chronic headaches treatment

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Abstracts: Combined application of soft manual techniques and methods of reflexotherapy (pharmacopuncture) considerably reduces the rehabilitation period duration for the patients suffering from chronic headaches, decreases relapses in future and can be used as an effective addition to generally accepted pharmacotherapy.

Key Words: headache, soft manual techniques, pharmacopuncture.

Chronic headache is one of the most widespread symptoms of our time that determines the quality of life and the degree of social adaptation of patients. The current research is aimed to estimate the efficiency of the complex application of soft manual techniques and pharmacopuncture in chronic headaches treatment.

Materials and methods

We examined 80 patients suffering from everyday headache including 40 men (50%) and 40 women (50%) aged from 29 to 50 (the average age 37 years old). The group under research consisted of patients with clinical presentations of chronic headache and cervicgia without serious organic pathologies of the spine, organs or systems. A thorough cliniconeurological research and everyday monitoring of the neurological status were carried on; the headaches intensity was estimated in the dynamics according to the scale of general clinical impression. All the patients underwent the course of pharmacotherapy and 40 patients had an additional combined course of soft manual techniques on the cervical-collared zone and pharmacopuncture. Soft manual techniques were based on the minimization of force and length of indirect techniques influencing three-dimensional biokinematic chains, coupling of methods with the breathing cycle and their orientation on the maximum relaxation and elimination of direct influence on the pathological symptom – tension, hypertone, pain. The effectiveness of the soft manual techniques was estimated judging by the relaxation of segmental tissue architectures and the increase of the general and local motor activity reserves. Mineral, photogenous and natural substances were applied in pharmacopuncture. The medications contained vitamins in homoeopathic dilution, plants components, ferments and catalysts. Pharmacopuncture was the method of influence involving the injections of medications into biologically active points. The medications were injected not deeply, intracutaneously or subcutaneously. Superficial intracutaneous level of the injection (from 1 to 1.5 mm) and microdoses of the medication supported the existence of the constant skin reservoir with low local diffusion.

Results and discussion

45 patients had two-sided headache and 35 patients had one-sided headache. As a rule, chronic everyday headache reflected different combinations of transformed migraine, headache of tension, abuse and cervical headache. Most of the patients (80%) had headaches supplemented by vegetative disregulations. All the patients had considerable intensity of cephalgias, they complained of everyday headache – background and attack-like. Background headache was long, two-sided, had a constricting, compressing, sometimes pulsatory character with uncertain lateralization. Attack-like headache was more intensive, pulsatory with certain lateralization.

In the group of the patients who underwent a supplementary course of soft manual techniques all characteristics of headache, including attack-like and background headache, were certainly lower after the treatment than in the group where patients got only pharmacotherapy, which shows a higher therapeutic effect.

Soft manual techniques were applied according to the functional disorder, they were painless and under control of personal emotional reactions of the patients. The therapeutic effect of these techniques was based on the fact that changed muscles or ligaments don't stretch as they do in classic manual therapy, but on the contrary, they draw together. The forced contraction of muscles and ligaments brings to the reduction of pathologic impulsation from muscle and ligament receptors and the decrease of activity of the nervous system centers regulating muscle tone. As a result, the decrease of the impulse activity to muscles and other links of the biokinematic chain is observed and consequently, it leads to relaxation of the spasmodic muscles and ligaments.

Pharmacopuncture procedures were aimed at the improvement of microcirculation. The medication was injected into the acupuncture points influencing vessels, into the local points on the extremities and paravertebral points on the level C1 – C7. The classic mesotherapeutic method (intra-dermal introduction) was applied, followed by methods causing biostimulating, antioxidant and metabolic effect. The insertion of homeopathic drugs into acupuncture points brings to their energization. In fact, it is one of the methods allowing to regulate energy circulation and functional activity of the whole organism normalizing its physiological functions. Actually, this is a peculiar therapeutic effect of acupuncture points which becomes apparent when there is any influence on them. Besides local irritation caused by pharmacopuncture and putting into action the therapeutic qualities of points, homeopathic drugs that gradually penetrate the lymphatic and circulatory systems spread all around the whole organism, causing therapeutic action.

Pharmacopuncture was also used for treatment of painful muscle areas containing trigger points or junctions. The development of trigger points is based on the mechanism of the disturbance of muscle fibers relaxation. They can be quite often defined with the help of palpation as junctions or hardenings. Trigger points can irritate nerve endings close to them. This irritation produces projecting pain. Pharmacopuncture allowed to reduce significantly the intensity of trigger contractions.

Supplementary manual treatment contributed to the final regress of local muscle hypertones, functional blockades of cervical vertebra-motor segments (craniovertebral passage), dysfunction of the skull and face muscular systems with the tone decrease of the head aponeurosis. These positive reactions helped to reduce cephalgia intensity for all the patients, but mostly for the patients suffering from headaches of tension and cervical headaches.

Complex application of soft manual techniques and pharmacopuncture had a regulative effect on the unbalanced work of nociceptive and antinociceptive systems. One of the most regulative mechanisms was the increase of functional activity of the antinociceptive systems of the organism. Complex influence was also accompanied by the change of activity of the vegetative nervous system links. The registered increase of the vagal activity can underlie well-known general reactions of the organism to acupuncture.

Conclusions

1. Consequently, soft manual techniques supplemented by pharmacopuncture considerably reduce the intensity and duration of headaches.
2. Methods of soft manual techniques have an additional positive impact on the functional condition of the vertebra-motor segments and the antinociceptive system.
3. Complex application of soft manual techniques and pharmacopuncture noticeably decreases the duration of rehabilitation period of patients with chronic headaches, reduces relapses in future and can be used effectively as an addition to the generally accepted drug therapy.

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