Acupuncture for the Treatment of Chronic Knee Pain: A Case Report

ABSTRACT


In this case study a four-week acupuncture treatment of the left knee and opposite elbow appeared to have reduced the chronic pain and stiffness on the knee joint significantly confirming the efficacy of this treatment protocol.
INTRODUCTION / CASE HISTORY DESCRIPTION
A 65-year-old female presented with chronic knee pain on the left knee, which was aggravated by overexertion. For the last two years pain was stubbing at times depending on joint movement and appeared to come and go. Client was overweight and had a non-regular irregular weak pulse of 78 beats per minute. Tongue was flabby with serrations and thin white moss, which was slightly thicker towards the back. After physical examination and questioning patient was strongly advised to visit her GP for further testing in terms of heart function. After ECG and stress tests patient was prescribed heart medication due to a dysfunction on the electrical conductivity of the SA node. Client was diagnosed with qi and blood stagnation on the stomach channels of the left knee with some underlying spleen qi deficiency. The treatment was to move qi and blood along the stomach channel of the left knee, relieve the pain and tonify the spleen. The patient was advised to attend two acupuncture sessions per week for a month. After two treatments the pain started improving and after four weeks pain was reduced significantly, but was not eliminated. A further month of treatment was suggested

LITERATURE REVIEW
The databases used for literature review were Biomed Central, Wiley online library, Oxford Journals and Google scholar. The keywords for the searches were: knee pain, acupuncture, treatment, chronic, knee replacement, efficacy. Search results showed that acupuncture significantly improves chronic knee pain (White et al. 2007, p.388, Witt et al. 2005, p.141 and Ezzo et al. 2001, p.819) and electroacupuncture also offers long or short-term pain control (Osiri et al. 2009, p.2, Tukmachi et al. 2004, p.14 & Bjordal et al. 2007, p.12).

DISCUSSION / CASE PRESENTATION / TREATMENT OUTCOME
Interestingly, the literature review indicated only use of the local traditional prescription points for knee pain (Witt et al. 2005, p.136, Taechaarpornkul et al. 2009, p.3 and Osiri et al. 2009, pp. 10-17), whereas in this treatment protocol additional points on the opposite elbow were used (Deadman & Al-Khafaji 2007, pp.111-112). Prescription: (traditional local points on the left hand side) ST35 Dubi, MN-LE-16 Xiyan, ST36 Zusanli, ML-LE-27 Heding, GB33 Xiyangguan, (Deadman & Al-Khafaji 2007, p.653) and SP9 Yinlingquan; (bilateral points) GB34 Yanglingquan, ST36 Zusanli and LI4 Hegu; (points on the right/opposite elbow) LI10 Shousanli and LI11 Quchi. While patient was suffering for two years from this condition after two treatments the pain started improving gradually till the end of the month and no adverse effects were observed. Further treatment for one month could be beneficial to stabilise the results (Tukmachi et al. 2004, p.21 & Bjordal et al. 2007, p.9). It is questionable the impact of the client’s excess weight on her condition and the treatment outcome. However, the client wasn’t ready to make any dietary changes. Treatment was effective as pain was reduced, but it wasn’t possible to determine at this point if this was the optimum outcome for this case.

ACUPUNCTURE SUBSTANTIALLY REDUCED THE CHRONIC PAIN AND STIFFNESS IN THE KNEE JOINT OF A 65-YEAR-OLD FEMALE PATIENT AND WHILE ADDITIONAL TREATMENTS COULD ENHANCE AND STABILISE THE OUTCOME (Bjordal et al. 2007, p.9) the results so far have demonstrated the effectiveness of acupuncture for the condition

REFERENCES
4. Taechaarpornkul, W, Suvapan, D, Theppanom, C, Chanthipwaree, C & Chirawatkul, A 2009, ‘Comparison of the effectiveness of acupuncture substantially reduced the chronic pain and stiffness in the knee joint of a 65-year-old female patient and while additional treatments could enhance and stabilise the outcome (Bjordal et al. 2007, p.9) results so far have demonstrated the effectiveness of acupuncture for the condition
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CONCLUSIONS / SUMMARY
Acupuncture substantially reduced the chronic pain and stiffness in the knee joint of a 65-year-old female patient and while additional treatments could enhance and stabilise the outcome (Bjordal et al. 2007, p.9) the results so far have demonstrated the effectiveness of acupuncture for the condition

REFERENCES