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STATISTIC ANALYSIS OF EFFECTIVENESS OF ACUPUNCTURE TREATMENT

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ABSTRACT

Traditional Chinese Medicine is one of the oldest healing systems on the planet which is in practice for thousands of years. If an old tradition is still used today for healing we shouldn't question its effectiveness - it's used because it is effective. This research is made as a proof, according to the answers of 55 interviewed patients who have been treated with acupuncture treatment, that the acupuncture treatment is effective in most of the cases. Patients were given to answer a questionnaire with 12 questions. Patients were with different diagnosis and level of pain, but main three were: musculoskeletal pain, autoimmune and neurological diseases. In this research are included 7 male and 43 female patients, from 20 to 70 years of age. All of them had acupuncture treatment in our clinic. 42.31% or 22 patients reported that the symptoms totally disappeared, 51.92% - 27 patients said that the pain is almost gone and only 5.77% - 3 patients didn't have any improvement so far. Acupuncture as part of the Traditional Chinese Medicine is very often used in variety of conditions and is pretty effective treatment, which gives positive results and helps the body naturally to heal on its own.

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INTRODUCTION

Acupuncture as part of the Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) originates from China, but now it is used worldwide because of its benefits and proofs of its effectiveness. Acupuncture is probably the most important component procedure in the TCM, which is used in variety of diseases, for treatment and prevention, by puncturing with fine sterile needle on certain points located on the meridians on the body where the energy flows. [1] According to the TCM theory the disease appears as a results of internal imbalance of the energy and Yin Yang and if there are some blockages in the energy flow. The aim of the treatment is to balance the energy, to regulate the flow of the energy and Blood, to harmonize the whole well-being, help the body heal naturally, remove the pain and all the symptoms, restore the balance of the body, boost the immune system and etc. [2-4] Traditional Chinese Medicine is way more older than the Western Medicine. Their approach to the illness is totally different as they come from different philosophical theories. The Western medicine uses drugs, tablets, chemicals and the TCM uses only natural products for healing. In TCM theory meridians are seen as pathways where the energy freely flows and on those certain places are inserted the acupuncture needles, while the Western medicine sees these places as where muscles, nerves and

connective tissue are stimulated. [5] TCM approaches to the patients individually, doctors treat every patients in a different way taking into consideration the whole well being, as every patient is different from another, but the Western medicine treats two patients in the same way, considering only the obvious symptoms. Sometimes the treatment with TCM take more time, but the aim is no to intoxicate the organism, but in the most natural way to help the body to heal with its own ability. [6] The aim of this research is to show that acupuncture treatment as part of the TCM, can help in correction of many disharmonies and imbalances in the flow of the Qi energy in the body. [7]

MATERIAL AND METHODS

In this research participated 55 patients, who answered on 12 questions about their experience with the acupuncture treatments. Each answer has been analyzed and has contributed to get clear view on the effectiveness of acupuncture treatment. All the patients had acupuncture treatment in a clinic for TCM and acupuncture in Skopje, Macedonia by a doctor specialist in acupuncture. All of them are in our base o patients in the clinic. In the treatments were used cold sterile needles for one use (normal acupuncture) or hot needles (fire needle acupuncture). Duration of the treatment with normal acupuncture was 30-45 minutes and

with fire needle acupuncture 5-10 minutes. In conditions with inflammation and musculoskeletal disorders we usually use fire needle acupuncture. Our protocol for treatments is one treatment every week, in a series of 10 treatments and pause of one month. if the patients feels better after three treatments we stop the treatment. In some severe and chronic cases are needed more than 50 treatments. Each of the surveyed patient needed different number of treatments, but some of them have made just a few and immediately had results. Usually the patients who made fire needle acupuncture treatment get better and faster results, because the pain physically is removed from the body and the blockages from the treated area are eliminated immediately. The survey was made online using the application Smart Survey, including questions for factors such as age, gender, disease, symptoms, number of treatments, the kind of pain, pain scale etc. The patients were chosen random. All of them have done acupuncture treatments in our clinic for TCM.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Our surveyed patients have answered on 12 questions that we have formulated and established in a very simple way for them so they can easily express and describe their condition and experience with acupuncture treatment. Following are shown and explained the results from all the question.

Q1. Gender

According to this parameter on the questions of the survey answered 48 female (87, 27%) and 7 male (12, 73%) patients.

Q2. AGE

There are 7 groups of patient by the age. The younger group of age is from 20 to 30 years old including 30, 91% or 17 patients. Most common age group is from 30 to 40 years old with 38, 18% or 21 patients. The numbers indicate that in our clinic those who mostly need acupuncture treatment are patients from 30 to 40 years old. On table 1 are shown the results and the age groups.

Table.1 Age groups and number of patients in each group

| Age | n. of patients | Response percent |
|-------|----------------|------------------|
| < 20 | 0 | 0,00% |
| 20-30 | 17 | 30,91% |
| 30-40 | 21 | 38,18% |
| 40-50 | 9 | 16,36% |
| 50-60 | 5 | 9,09% |
| 60-70 | 2 | 3,64% |
| >70 | 1 | 1,82% |

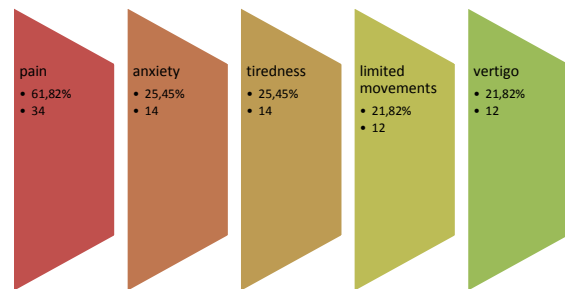
Q3. There are various answers about what was the primary reason for seeking acupuncture treatment, but the most of the respondents have decided to do the treatment because of pain (acute or chronic) in local parts of the body. In table 2 are shown the reasons why the patients came to the clinic and the number of patients in each group. Before starting the treatments some patients complained of extreme pain and during the procedures they said that the pain and the symptoms were slowly going down and also could confirm general health improvements. The most common symptoms that the patients had were pain, limited movement, loss of balance, nausea, redness ect. In some particular movments, acts and parts of the day these symptoms were even stronger than usual. Also after hard working, weather change, improper body posture the patients had difficulites in performing normal daily activities. The results from the patients answers show that with

acupuncture, rest, massage, warm food and drinks their situation became better.

Table 2 Reasons of starting acupuncture treatment and number of patients in each group

| | Response Percent | Response Total |
|-----------------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Pain | 49,09 % | 27 |
| Autoimmune disease | 10,91 % | 6 |
| Hormonal imbalance | 12,73 % | 7 |
| Respiratory system diseases | 5,45 % | 3 |
| Digestive system diseases | 3,64 % | 2 |
| Urinary system disorders | 0 % | 0 |
| Infectious disease | 0 % | 0 |
| Skin diseases | 1,82 % | 1 |
| Neurologic diseases | 18,18 % | 10 |
| Other | 27,27 % | 15 |

Q4. Of all the symptoms present, the most common is the pain - 34 people or 61,82%. Some of the patients were unable to sleep because of severe pain, others couldn't move properly and many other patient were taking too much tablets to calm the pain. After the treatments the pain and all the symptom that patients complained about before were gone or almost gone. On graphic 1 is shown which symptoms were present.



Graphic 1 Symptoms and number of patients in each group

Q5. Do something makes symptoms worse and what?

29 Patients or 46,30% said that nothing worsen the symptoms and they are always with the same intensity. Other 25 patients or 53,70% answered that the stress, hard work, cold, tiredness, improper position of the body are the reasonses for worsened symptoms.

Q6. Do something relieves the symptoms and what?

The majority of the respondents - 35 patient or 70% said that with good combination of taking rest, carefully chosen food and clothes, also with acupuncture, massage and exercise the symptoms relieve a little bit. The other 30% or 15 patients answered that nothing helps with the symptoms. 5 patients didn't give an answer this question.

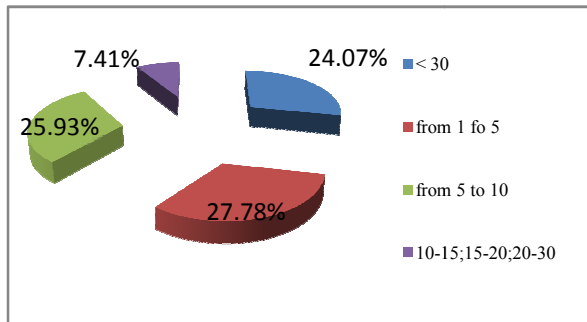
Q7. Have you used medications during your acupuncture treatment?

Only a small percentage of patients used medications during the acupuncture treatments - 32, 08% or 17 patients. Those who used medications, usually used Dicloduo (a nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug) for pain. 67.92% or 36 patients didn't use any medications during the therapies.

Q8. How many acupuncture treatments have you done?

Each patient responded in a different way and at a different rate, and the effects are cumulative with pain relief often increasing as treatment progresses. Generally, people come once a week for a treatment. In many acute conditions, initially the treatment can be 2-3 times a week, or once a week for

chronic conditions. In our survey 27, 78% - 15 patients made from one to five therapies and the symptoms were almost of totally gone. 25, 93% (14 patients) made from 5 to 10, 24, 07% (13 patients) needed more than 30 therapies to relief pain and 7, 41% (4 patients) have made from 10-15, 15-20 and 20-30 therapies. The results are shown on graphic 2.



Graphic 2 Number of acupuncture treatment done

Q9. Which description best describes your pain? (If pain is present)

The pain can be expressed in different ways and form, like dull ache, tensile, pressure and etc. We gave the patients 10 possible answers to choose which pain most resonates to theirs. Patients were given the choice to choose multiple answers. In the survey 27, 78% or 15 patient had pain like dull ache and with the same percentage patients that feel tensile pain, 20.37% or 11 patient said that their pain is acute and other 11 patients with pressure. Pulsating pain and tingling is present in 9 patient or 16, 67 %. There are patient that had constant pain with 24, 07% or 13 people, and 9, 26% or 5 of the patient had prickling pain. 8 patients or 14, 81% reported no pain and 3, 70% or 2 patient have different type of pain. On table 3 are shown the answers from the patients.

Table 3 Type of pain and number of patients in each group

| Type of pain | Response Percent | Response Total |
|--------------|------------------|----------------|
| Dull ache | 27.78% | 15 |
| Acute pain | 20.37% | 11 |
| Pulsating | 16.67% | 9 |
| Tensile | 27.78% | 15 |
| Constant | 24.07% | 13 |
| Tingling | 16.67% | 9 |
| Prickling | 9.26% | 5 |
| Pressure | 20.37% | 11 |
| No pain | 14.81% | 8 |
| Other | 3.70% | 2 |

Q10. Pain before therapy and Q11. Pain after therapy - Results show that the pain level before and after the therapies is totally different. For these questions was used categorical numerical rating scale from 1 to 10, 1 - no pain, 10 - severe pain. Before the therapies 29, 17% (17 patients) said that their pain degree on the categorical numerical rating scale from 1 to 10 is 10 and after the therapies the biggest pain on the scale was 6 and 7 with only 2, 17% - 1 patient. 8, 70 % (4 patient) said that have pain degree 5 and 10, 87% (5 patients) reported pain degree 3 and 4. Most of the patient after the therapies didn't have pain - 34, 78% (16 patients) and pain degree 2 with 28, 26% (13 patients). On table 4 are shown the results from the answers of the patients.

Table 4 Pain before and after the treatments

| | Pain before therapies (%) | Pain after therapies (%) |
|----|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 | 10.42 | 34.78 |
| 2 | 0.00 | 28.26 |
| 3 | 8.33 | 10.87 |
| 4 | 4.17 | 10.87 |
| 5 | 6.25 | 8.70 |
| 6 | 8.33 | 2.17 |
| 7 | 4.17 | 2.17 |
| 8 | 16.67 | 0.00 |
| 9 | 12.50 | 0.00 |
| 10 | 29.17 | 0.00 |

Q12. After finishing the needed number of treatments (after they felt better or finished the series of 10 treatments) 42, 31% of the patients or 22 reported that the symptoms totally disappeared, 51.92% (27 patients) said that the pain is almost gone and only 5.77% or 3 patients didn't have any improvement.

Scientific trials and analysis around the world have proved the positive effects to the human health of the acupuncture treatment. Acupuncture helps in a natural way to cure a variety of conditions without toxins and unpleasant negative side effects, for children and adults, for acute or chronic situation. There are examples where only the acupuncture treatment helped to reduce some kind of pain, without doing any other therapy. According to the results that have been processed by this survey we can conclude that acupuncture is a pretty effective method and safely treats a wide range of common health problems, including musculoskeletal pain, neurologic and autoimmune diseases. [3] [8-12] Acupuncture as part of the 5000 year old TCM is pretty effective in the treatment of different kind of disorders and pain, thus can give positive permanent results and improve the health condition of patients.

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