

Acupuncture Treatment for Postpartum Lactation

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Abstract: Due to the influence of high work pressure, fast pace of life and the age tendency of puerpera after the implementation of the two-child policy in China, more than 80% of modern puerpera suffer from lactation difficulties, such as lack of milk, and even up to 90% in first-tier cities. Acupuncture, as a traditional Chinese medicine nursing technique, has the advantages of quick onset, few side effects and simple operation in the treatment of postpartum lactation. In order to provide scientific guidance for the diagnosis and treatment of postpartum lactation, this paper reviews the literature on the treatment of postpartum lactation with acupuncture.

Key words: Acupuncture; Postpartum lactation; review

On April 11, 2018, the world health organization (who) and the United Nations children's fund (UNICEF) released a charter of ten measures to promote successful breast-feeding to increase support for breast feeding. Breast feeding is recognized worldwide as the best way to feed infants and young children, saving the lives of more than 820000 children under the age of five every year. About 20 million new babies and mothers are born in China every year, according to the latest figures. However, due to the great work pressure, fast pace of life and the implementation of the two-child policy in China, the age of puerpera tends to be larger and other factors, leading to more than 80% of puerpera suffer from lactation difficulties, such as lack of milk, even up to 90% in first-tier cities. Acupuncture, as a traditional Chinese medicine nursing technique, has the advantages of quick onset, few side effects and simple operation in the treatment of postpartum lactation.

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I. Postpartum lactation

Postpartum lactation deficiency refers to that the amount of breast milk is too small or no breast milk is secreted during the period after birth or feeding, or the original milk is secreted normally, and then the milk is reduced or even stopped, and the amount of breast milk cannot meet the needs of newborn feeding[1]. In traditional Chinese medicine, postpartum lactation, also known as "insufficient milk", "not good milk", "lactation disorder", etc, often occurs within 2-3 days to 2 weeks after delivery, or during the whole feeding period of puerpera[2].

At present, the diagnostic criteria for postpartum lactation are various and there is no clear and uniform regulation. Zheng Guizhen[3] conducted clinical research on acupuncture treatment of postpartum lactation, and the diagnostic criteria were based on the standard of diagnosis and efficacy of diseases and syndromes of traditional Chinese medicine (formulated by China administration of traditional Chinese medicine in 1995). The specific diagnostic contents were as follows: (1) Postpartum milk secretion little or no milk secretion, it can not meet the needs of infant breastfeeding (2) the breast does not feel swelling pain, check the soft, thin milk, pressing the breast milk is drip state; or breast fullness, there is pain, breast touch hard lump, milk sticky, pressing breast milk is difficult to flow; (3) cracked nipples or depression caused by milk pooling immobility, outflow, infant children appear sucking difficulties. Wang na[4] took "gynecology of traditional Chinese medicine" as the diagnostic standard of the research object in the comparative study of the treatment of lactation patients after cesarean section. The specific diagnostic criteria are as follows: it conforms to the syndrome of weakness of qi and blood in traditional Chinese medicine: after delivery, the milk is thin, the amount of breast milk is small or there is no milk secretion; The breast examination is soft and does not accompany with distension. With god little fatigue, color shao hua, tongue light moss, pulse weak.

Research on the correlation between postpartum lactation and physical factors, Zhang Shanshan[5] selected the gynecology of traditional Chinese medicine (2002) and "standard of diagnosis of disease and curative effect of traditional Chinese medicine" (released in 1994, the state administration of traditional Chinese medicine) as a standard for the disease, choosed the department of gynaecology common disease diagnosis and treatment of traditional Chinese medicine guide (2012) of China association of Chinese medicine for the screening of dialectical criteria for research object. Zhu Yunfei[6], in the research on the effect of acupoint massage on postpartum lactation based on meridian theory, regarded the diagnostic criteria of TCM

gynecological diseases and syndromes as the diagnostic criteria of the research object: (1) Lactation: postpartum women complained of no milk flow during 2-3d breast compression. No pain or fullness of the breast during physical examination. (2) Less milk: the primary complaint of postpartum women is that the breast milk is thin 2-3d, the newborn needs to suck for a long time for several times, the sucking interval is no more than 1 hour, each sucking time is more than 20 minutes, the physical examination of the breast is not enough, pressing the breast has a small amount of milk outflow.

2. Acupuncture treatment for postpartum lactation

At present, there is no effective clinical treatment method for postpartum lactation in western medicine, and traditional Chinese medicine is the main treatment method, including acupuncture, massage and traditional Chinese medicine[7]. Acupuncture, as a traditional Chinese medicine nursing technique, has the advantages of quick onset, few side effects and simple operation in the treatment of postpartum lactation[8]. At present, researches on the treatment of postpartum lactation by acupuncture mainly involve simple acupuncture and combination of acupuncture and other therapies.

2.1 Simple acupuncture

Ou yan[9] selected 100 cases of postpartum lactation patients with deficiency of qi and blood from the 7th day after postpartum to conduct acupuncture once a day, and selected acupuncture points of than zhong, zhong wan, xia wan and so on for acupuncture treatment. The statistical results showed that there was no statistically significant difference in prolactin level, breast fullness degree and symptom score at 1 day after diagnosis and treatment compared with that before diagnosis and treatment. However, breast augmentation and prolactin levels at 5 and 15 days after treatment were significantly higher than those before treatment, and symptom scores were lower than those before treatment, indicating that acupuncture is an effective Chinese medical treatment for postpartum lactation, and can effectively improve lactation disorders. Ban Huijuan[10] selected acupuncture method to treat 56 cases of lactation patients, including 8 cases of patients with menstrual labor and 48 cases of patients with primary labor. Zu san li, milk root and shao ze bilateral acupoints were selected and acupuncture was performed once a day for 7-14 days. The therapeutic effects were 31 cases of recovery, 20 cases of improvement and 5 cases of failure, accounting for 55.4%, 35.7% and 8.9%, respectively. Results acupuncture can improve the symptoms of postpartum lack of milk. Liu Xinguang[11] after 3 years, 243 cases of postpartum lactation were treated with chicken claw thorn method, including 160 cases of actual disease and 83 cases of deficiency disease. Main points selection tan zhong, bilateral milk roots, bilateral shao ze points; Matching points were selected according to different types of symptoms. Deficiency symptoms were matched with yin lingquan and zu sanli acupoints on both sides, while real symptoms were matched with he gu and tai chong acupoints on both sides. The treatment plan was acupuncture once a day, 5 times a week, 1 week as a course of treatment, 2 days between each course of treatment, and the statistical results after 2 courses of treatment. Results showed that 198 cases were cured, 30 cases were effective, 15 cases were ineffective, and the effective rate was as high as 93.8%, indicating that the chicken claw thorn method is an effective treatment method for postpartum lactation, and can achieve the effect of bedside treatment to enable the lactation women to return to normal breastfeeding.

2.2 Acupuncture and massage

Li Qiuxia[12] included 200 postpartum lactation patients with deficiency of qi and blood, including 60 women who underwent laparotomy, and 140 women who delivered spontaneously. There were 120 parturients in the first and 80 parturients in the second trimester. The subjects were randomly divided into observation group and control group according to different diagnosis and treatment plans, with 100 cases in each group. The control group received low-frequency pulse electric stimulation (massage) for treatment, while the observation group received acupuncture treatment in addition to low-frequency pulse electric stimulation. Each group received treatment once a day for 5 days on the 7th day after delivery. The results showed that the clinical effect of massage treatment for postpartum lactation was not good, and there was no significant change in breast fullness, prolactin level and hunger level of infants after breast-feeding before and after treatment, and the difference was not statistically significant. Treatment of postpartum lactation with massage and acupuncture has a good therapeutic effect, and the efficacy is more satisfactory on 5 and 15 days after treatment. The study also showed that acupuncture is the main diagnostic and treatment method for postpartum lactation due to deficiency of qi and blood, which has the advantages of simple, effective and cheap.

Zhuo Cuili[13] randomly divided 40 postpartum women with lactation who met the inclusion criteria into two groups, with 20 patients in each group, to explore the therapeutic effect of acupuncture combined with massage in the diagnosis and treatment of postpartum lactation. Treatment group with acupuncture and manipulation, select tan zhong, bilateral milk roots and shao ze points; Match a point to undertake choosing according to different card model and breast symptom. The control group received oxytocin. After 8h of

treatment, the effective rate of the treatment group and the control group was 95% and 60%, respectively, and there was a significant difference between the two groups. Acupuncture and massage treatment of postpartum lactation has a significantly better therapeutic effect than oxytocin treatment, which can promote lactation, increase lactation volume, and shorten the time of milk secretion.

2.3 Combination of acupuncture and medicine

Zhang Jingyun et al.[14] randomly divided 300 postpartum women with lactation deficiency into control group, traditional Chinese medicine group, traditional Chinese medicine plus acupuncture group (combined group), to explore the therapeutic effect of acupuncture and medicine on postpartum lactation deficiency. The control group received only basic treatment, including early postpartum sucking, maternal and infant room, frequent sucking and food nutrition support. In addition to receiving basic treatment, the traditional Chinese medicine group also received self-prepared tong ru decoction. Combined group in the traditional Chinese medicine group on the basis of acupuncture treatment. Breast milk secretion and clinical symptom scores of each group were measured before diagnosis and treatment and 1~5 days after diagnosis and treatment. The results showed that the combination of acupuncture and drugs for postpartum lactation was an effective combination for postpartum lactation, with significantly increased milk secretion, significantly decreased clinical symptom score and no side effects.

Gao Zhongyun et al.[15] selected 30 postpartum lactation parturients with deficiency of qi and blood, and randomly divided them into acupuncture and drug group (self-designed lactation decoction) and single drug group (self-designed lactation decoction), and observed the efficacy of the two groups after one course of treatment (7 days). The curative effect shows that the combination of acupuncture and medicine can improve the symptoms of lactation in puerpera, but the combination of acupuncture and medicine is more satisfactory, which is worth promoting in postpartum lactation patients. Yu Zhigang[16] according to dialectical classification, 30 cases of postpartum lactation patients were treated with acupuncture and drug combination, including 24 cases of positive evidence and 6 cases of deficiency syndrome. Different acupuncture and traditional Chinese medicine treatment were given for the syndrome of deficiency, and the curative effect was observed 5 days later. Among the 6 parturients with deficiency syndrome, 4 were cured, 2 were effective, and the total effective rate reached 100%.

2.4 Acupuncture and massage

Lei JinPing[17] choose 300 cases of postpartum hypogalactia maternal, using the random number table method will be the research object is divided into control group and treatment group, 150 cases in the control group to implement simple local massage, the treatment group implementation of acupuncture plus massage therapy, diagnosis and treatment for five days in a row, observe the efficient of two groups after treatment and diagnosis and treatment in the two groups before and after the change of the breast milk secretion, research results indicate that acupuncture and massage curative effect is better than simple, combination therapy can effectively increase the amount of lactation, improve the symptoms of postpartum hypogalactia.

Zhao Honglan[18] treated 152 cases of postpartum lactation with acupuncture and local acupoint massage, including 97 patients with liver stagnation and qi stagnation, and 55 patients with qi and blood weakness. The combination therapy was performed once a day for 7 days. The results of observation indicated that the total effective rate of acupuncture combined with massage was 95.39%. Before and after treatment, the amount of breast milk and the degree of breast filling were improved, and the effect was improved gradually with the increase of treatment times. The researchers also indicated that the treatment effect of this method was satisfactory within 1 week after postpartum lactation, and the treatment effect was not satisfactory after more than 1 week postpartum lactation, suggesting that the diagnosis and treatment of postpartum lactation should be conducted as soon as possible. Zhang huimin et al.[19] selected 43 patients with postpartum lactation for acupuncture and massage therapy, and the control group received lactation therapy. The statistical results showed that in the treatment group of 43 lacteal parturients, 40 parturients were cured, 3 parturients were improved, and 0 parturients were unhealed. The total effective rate was up to 100%. The total effective rate was only 44.2%, and the effective rate of the treatment group was significantly higher than that of the control group. It was proved that acupuncture and massage treatment of postpartum lactation had better effect than milk production.

2.5 Other combined therapies

Li Yongmei[20] using the points and point thorn bloodletting and acupuncture treatment methods to study of 69 patients with postpartum hypogalactia, cure, powerfully, effective and invalid patients' number is respectively 57 cases, 4 cases, 7 cases and 1 case. The total effective rate is as high as 98.5%, shows that the combination therapy can effectively treat postpartum hypogalactia, operate simply, see effect quickly, without any side effects and easy to be accepted by maternal. Tan Xiaoling et al.[21] observed 56 cases of lactation

puerpera with clinical diagnosis and treatment by using acupuncture tan zhong, shao ze bloodletting, and cured 45 cases and improved 11 cases, with a total effective rate of 100%. Research shows that this combination therapy can effectively promote the secretion of breast milk, increase the amount of breast milk, to improve the treatment effect of postpartum lactation. Xu weiwei[22] selected 100 natural parturientes to explore the efficacy of acupuncture combined with hot compress and massage in the treatment of postpartum lactation. The results showed that the efficacy rate of 2d breast milk patency was 94% in the acupuncture combined group, and 12% in the control group only using hot compress and massage techniques.

To sum up, acupuncture, as a traditional Chinese medicine nursing technique, can effectively promote breast milk secretion, increase milk production and improve postpartum lactation symptoms. Acupuncture combined with massage, acupuncture and medicine, acupuncture combined with massage, and acupuncture combined with other therapies have better therapeutic effects than acupuncture alone or other simple therapeutic methods.

II. Summary

It is universally recognized that breast-feeding is the best infant feeding method at present. Under the realistic background of high work pressure, fast pace of life and the implementation of the two-child policy in China, the age of puerpera tends to be relatively old, a large proportion of puerpera suffer from lactation difficulties such as lack of milk and little milk. Acupuncture, as a traditional Chinese medicine nursing technique, has the advantages of quick onset, few side effects and simple operation in the treatment of postpartum lactation. Acupuncture combined with massage, acupuncture and medicine, acupuncture combined with massage, and acupuncture combined with other therapies have better therapeutic effects than acupuncture alone or other simple therapeutic methods. Literature studies have found that, acupuncture treatment of postpartum lactation point selection is not clear unified regulation, ren mai, small intestine and hand sun meridian, among which the use of more points for milk root, tan zhong, shao ze, zu san li, etc.

In addition, although the clinical research on acupuncture treatment of postpartum lactation has made some achievements, there are still many problems worthy of clear discussion:(1) The diagnostic criteria of postpartum lactation patients are diversified, and there is no clear and unified basis for selection.(2) The lack of comparison of single acupoint and multiple acupoints in the study of acupuncture alone.(3) In previous studies, there was no comparison between dialectical acupoint addition and acupoint reduction therapy and non-acupoint addition and reduction therapy. (4) Although the treatment of postpartum lactation by syndrome differentiation has been reported, the research is not in-depth, and there is no scientific and clear research results showing how to select acupuncture points for each syndrome differentiation type to improve the curative effect. It has not been reported which acupuncture combined therapy is better for patients with different types of syndrome differentiation.(5) In existing studies, the initial treatment time, treatment course, efficacy evaluation time and efficacy evaluation indexes of acupuncture treatment for postpartum lactation are not uniform, which makes the comparability of results of different studies controversial.

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