



ACUPUNCTURE & ACUPRESSURE

Paralysis After Traumatic Brain Injury: Can Acupuncture Help?

Editorial Staff | DIGITAL EXCLUSIVE

Can acupuncture help patients with limb paralysis caused by traumatic brain injury? A new study suggests it has promising potential.

Published in the Chinese journal *Zhen Ci Yan Jiu (Acupuncture Research)*, the study included 70 TBI patients divided into a medication group and an acupuncture plus medication group. The goal of the study: "to observe the clinical effect of early acupuncture treatment of limb paralysis in patients with traumatic brain injury (TBI) and changes of serum interleukin-6 (IL-6), brain-derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF) and nerve growth factor (NGF) levels, so as to explore its mechanism underlying improvement of TBI."

Beginning 72 hours after TBI, one group received acupuncture on the affected side, "applied to main points [such]as Fenglong (ST40), Zusanli (ST36), Guanyuan (CV4), Baihui (GV20), Shuigou (GV26) and Fengchi (GB20), etc.," once daily for 28 days (four six-day cycles with one-day breaks).

Researchers evaluated neurological deficit severity with the Glasgow Coma Scale (GCS), and ability to perform activities of daily living (ADL) ability using the simplified Fugl-Meyer Assessment (FMA) scale and modified Barthel Index (BI), finding:



"The therapeutic effect of acupuncture plus medication was obviously superior to that of simple medication in lowering focal injured volume on day 14 and 28, and in increasing FMA and ADL-BI scores on day 28 and 60. ... The therapeutic effect of acupuncture plus medication was [also] evidently superior to that of simple medication in lowering IL-6 on day 3 and 7, and in increasing BDNF and NGF levels on day 3, 7 and 14."

The researchers concluded: "Early acupuncture treatment can significantly improve the TBI patient's limb motor function and daily life activities, which may be related [to] its effects in reducing the inflammation and increasing BDNF and NGF levels."

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