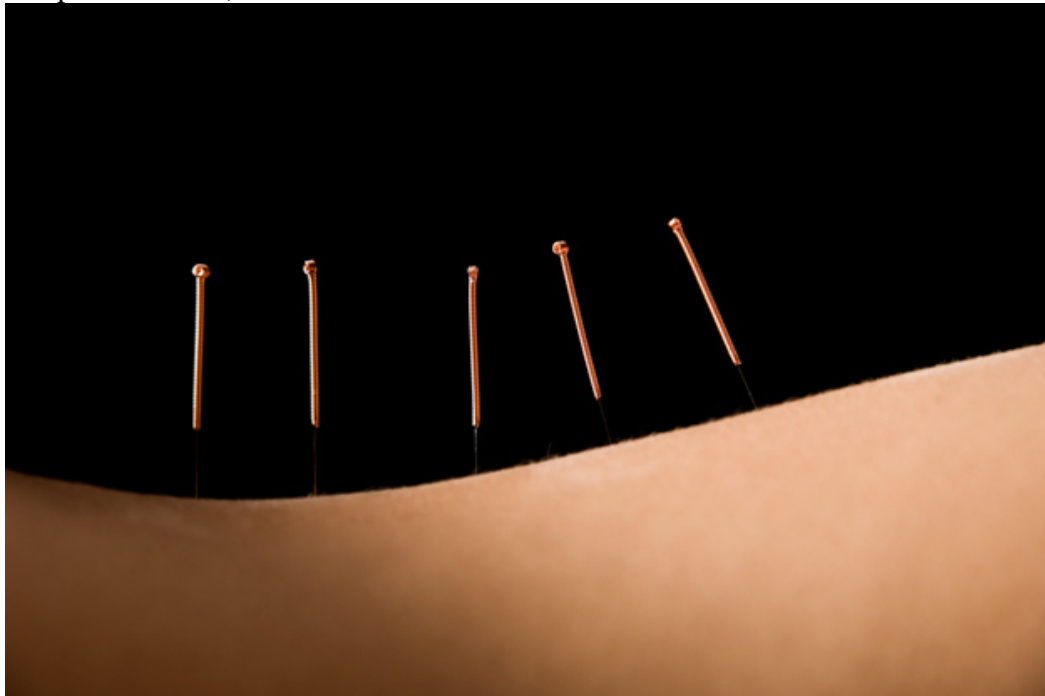


Acupuncture and Herbs Surpass Antiviral Drug For Shingles

31 JANUARY 2016

Acupuncture combined with herbal medicine outperforms acyclovir for the treatment of shingles (herpes zoster). Acupuncture plus herbs has a significantly higher total effective rate for the treatment of shingles than acyclovir, an antiviral medication. Researchers document that acupuncture plus herbs is both safe and effective for relieving pain, reducing overall symptomatic presentations, and for the resolution of



shingles.

Researchers from Hubei Medicine College determined that acupuncture plus herbs has a 100% total effective rate for the treatment of shingles whereas a combination of oral and topical acyclovir plus methylcobalamin has an 82.86% total effective rate. Study participants in the medication group received 200 mg of acyclovir at a rate of five times per day plus 500 mg of methylcobalamin at a rate of three times per day and topical acyclovir. In addition, the participants taking acyclovir were administered antibiotics for the treatment of secondary infections as needed.

Two important clinical improvements stand out from the clinical study of 85 patients published in the Journal of Hubei University of Chinese Medicine. Patients receiving acupuncture and herbs had a significantly faster total recovery rate. The eradication of the herpes zoster presentation was faster for patients receiving acupuncture plus herbs than patients taking acyclovir. In addition, acupuncture plus herbs had a faster effective action for the relief of pain due to shingles. Moreover, acupuncture plus herbs had a 17.14% greater total effective rate than acyclovir.

The semi-protocolized study featured surround acupuncture and a set of primary herbs combined with modifications based on diagnostic presentations. The surround acupuncture procedure involved the placement of acupuncture needles around the area of the herpes zoster rash. The needles were distanced from each other by 2 – 5 cm. Additional Hua Tuo Jia Ji acupoints were added at corresponding levels of rash presentations. Total needle retention time was thirty minutes.

The herbal formula administered to all patients included:

- **Jin Yin Hua 60 – 100 g**
- **Liao Qiao 10 g**
- **Xuan Shen 10 g**
- **Dang Gui 10 g**
- **Gan Cao 10 g**
- **Dang Shen 20 g**
- **Bing Tang 10 g**

The herbal formula was decocted and brewed once per day. Patients consumed 200 ml of the decoction, twice per day, once in the morning and once at night. The herbal formula prescription was modified based on diagnostic presentations with the addition of specific herbs to the base formula:

- **Dull and damaged skin: Tao Ren, Hong Hua**
- **Shingles on the scalp: Ju Hua, Man Jing Zi**
- **Shingles on the chest: Chai Hu, Huang Qin, Chuan Lian Zi**
- **Shingles on the abdomen: Bai Jiang Cao, Pu Gong Ying**
- **Upper limb shingles: Sang Ye**
- **Shoulder or back shingles: Jiang Huang**
- **Lower limb shingles: Niu Xi**
- **For constipation: Da Huang**
- **For insomnia: Suan Zao Ren**

In a related study, Dongfeng General Hospital researchers determined that acupuncture plus herbal medicine has a 98.6% total effective rate when combined with acyclovir treatments. This was an improvement over patients taking only drug therapy. As a standalone therapy, patients

taking oral acyclovir (800 mg) five times per day for fourteen days achieved a 90% total



effective rate.

The addition of acupuncture plus herbs to the drug treatment protocol increased the total effective rate by 8.6%. Two very important clinical features improved with the integrative approach to patient care. Acupuncture plus herbal medicine significantly shortened the time to achieve pain relief for patients with shingles. Acupuncture plus herbs also shortened the time of scab formation.

Acupuncture was applied to corresponding Hua Tuo Jia Ji and Ashi acupoints. Upon the arrival of deqi, needle retention time ranged from 15 – 30 minutes. Acupuncture was administered once per day for 15 days.

The herbal formula was given to patients twice per day as a decoction. No modifications to the formula were made. The ingredients were:

- **Sheng Di Huang 20 g**
- **He Shou Wu 15 g**
- **Sang Ye 15 g**
- **Ku Shen 15 g**
- **Ban Feng He 10 g**

The research conducted at Hubei Medicine College finds acupuncture plus herbs more effective than taking acyclovir for the treatment of shingles. The research conducted at Dongfeng General Hospital finds adding acupuncture and herbs to a regimen of acyclovir intake increases treatment efficacy. In both cases, the researchers conclude that acupuncture plus herbs is both safe and effective for the treatment of shingles.

References:

Wei JD, Chen JM & Wang LS. (2014). Clinical Observation of Surround Acupuncture and Simiaoyon'an Decoction on Herpes Zoster. *Journal of Hubei University of Chinese Medicine*. 16(2).

Yi JK, Tang ZZ & Yang JL. (2015). Efficacy and Safety of TCM Combined with Acupuncture Treatment for Herpes Zoster Neuralgia. 31(8).

Yi GQ & Zhou HJ. (2014). Acupuncture combined with cupping therapy in treating herpes zoster neuralgia: 25 cases. *Journal of External Therapy of Traditional Chinese Medicine*. 23(3): 36-37.