

Treat Menstrual Pain with Acupuncture Therapy

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Abstract

Introduction: Menstrual pain, or dysmenorrhea, is pain or cramps in the lower abdomen that appear before or during menstruation. Dysmenorrhea can be mild or so severe that it interferes with activities. According to TCM, painful menstruation is caused by Qi and poor blood circulation caused by the clotting of cold and damp blood by pathogens. **Objective:** The purpose of this study was to see the effect of acupuncture therapy on reducing menstrual pain. **Method:** The research method used in the treatment of menstrual pain through acupuncture therapy is a qualitative research method with an interview and observation approach. In the process of this research, an observational approach was carried out because there were several respondents who experienced menstrual pain. **Result and Discussion:** Based on the results of the study, acupuncture therapy was carried out nine times with a quantity of three times a week, 5-7 days before the menstrual period, for three menstrual cycles, and the menstrual pain experienced by the client experienced a significant change. **Conclusion:** This is marked by a change in the pain scale from 7 to 1. In addition, the volume of menstruation also decreases, the color of the blood is lighter and not darker than before, and there are no clots.

Keywords: Acupuncture; Menstrual Pain; TCM;

Introduction

According to the Indonesian Ministry of Health, women aged 35–45 years are included in the category of late adulthood. At this age, women are usually experiencing perimenopause, a transition experienced by women when they are about to enter menopause (Rasjidi, 2010). Menstrual pain is known as dysmenorrhea. This condition is characterized by the sensation of throbbing pain or cramps in the lower abdomen before and during menstrual periods. This discomfort is very disturbing. Some women can even just lie down and cannot do their activities all day (Kie Jie, 2021). Menstrual pain usually occurs in the lower abdomen or pelvis, although some women also experience pain in the lower back or upper thighs. This pain is usually crampy in nature and varies in intensity from mild to severe pain that can limit daily activities (Lestari, 2013).

The cause of menstrual pain is still not fully understood, but it is believed to be related to the production of prostaglandins, which are compounds that affect uterine contractions during menstruation. High levels of prostaglandins can cause stronger and more frequent uterine contractions, which in turn cause pain (Sari, 2022). Factors such as heredity, history of gynecological diseases, and lifestyle can also affect the severity of menstrual pain. Some women may experience significant menstrual pain and require medical treatment, while others may experience little or no pain at all (Susanti, 2021). Conventional treatment of menstrual pain includes using pain relievers such as analgesics (e.g., ibuprofen), hormonal contraception, or applying heat to areas that feel painful (Sunarni, 2022).

In traditional Chinese medicine, also known as TCM. Zhang Jie Bin in the Ming dynasty (1368–1644) argued that menstrual pain has two groups, namely Xu Syndrome and Shi Syndrome, so that it can be concluded that menstrual pain is caused by cold or hot pathogens, Qi and Xue (blocked blood), Xue Xu (lack of Xue or blood), and Qi Xu (weak Qi). In conditions of menstruation, when a woman's body experiences a lack of blood, which causes the body's resistance to decrease, when pathogens are exposed to wind, cold, or humidity, this causes the flow of Qi and Xue (blood) to be disrupted, so that there are obstacles in the Chong and Ren meridians, this is what causes menstrual pain (Kie Jie, 2021).

If a woman has weak Qi and lacks Xue (blood), Qi is unable to have the strength to drive Xue (blood) to circulate in the body, and Xue does not provide enough nutrition to the uterus, thus giving rise to menstrual pain that is Xu in nature. In addition, a body that has weak Gan (liver) and Shen (kidney) traits can also cause the uterus and Chong and Ren meridians to be deficient in nutrition, which can cause menstrual pain of a Xu nature. Based on the elaboration of the explanation above, it can be concluded that menstrual pain is closely related to the Gan (liver), Pi (spleen), Shen (kidney), and Chong and Ren meridians (Handoko, 2008).

Acupuncture can have the meaning of a treatment using needles that are inserted into certain points on the skin of Xie Wei's human body (Kie Jie, 2018). Treatment through acupuncture techniques has the function of improving the flow and balance of energy through the meridians. This treatment uses the human body as a system of energy flow; when the energy flow is balanced, the human body is said to be healthy (Setyowati, 2018).

The purpose of this study was to treat menstrual pain through acupuncture therapy in women aged 35–45 years. Acupuncture therapy for menstrual pain aims to strengthen Qi, refresh, harmonize, and increase Xue, then strengthen the Chong and Ren meridians (Kie Jie, 2021).

Method

This research method is qualitative, with observation and interview approaches. The qualitative method is a research process that has the goal of understanding problems in a social context as whole and complex and reporting detailed views from sources of information without any intervention from researchers (Sugiyono, 2011). This research was conducted for 3 months, from November 2022 to January 2023, with 9 therapy sessions (3 menstrual cycles). This therapy begins 5-7 days before the menstrual period.

The acupuncture points used are to strengthen Qi and increase Xue (blood), as well as strengthen the Chong and Ren meridians. The acupuncture points are Guanyuan (RN4), Zhongji (RN3), Zigong (extra meridian point), Xuehai (SP10), Sanyinjiao (SP6), Gongsun (SP4), Taichong (LR3), Pishu (BL20), and Ciliao (BL32). The decrease in the pain scale was measured using the Mankoski pain scale. Measurements are taken on the patient, and by selecting the numbers 0–10, each number has a much more detailed explanation (Nofitasari et al., 2021).

Result and Discussion

Result

In this study, we used 2 clients. Client 1 is a housewife aged 45 years, while Client 2 is a private employee aged 44 years and not married. Client 1 has complaints of pain that feels like pressure; the stomach feels cold; and client 2 has complaints of lateral lower abdominal pain in the pelvis, waist, and thighs. Both clients have slightly fat bodies and normal menstrual cycles, namely 28 days and 5 days of menstruation. Both clients have dark red menstrual blood and clots. Both clients before therapy felt a pain scale of 7 (Feeling severe cramps in the lower abdomen, pain spreading to the waist, thighs, or back, no appetite, nausea, weakness, not strong enough to move, unable to concentrate). Disturbing sleep. Painkillers for stronger pain are only partially effective (the strongest painkillers relieve pain) and have a syndrome of blood coagulation by cold and damp pathogens.

After the 9th therapy session, the two clients felt that the pain had been resolved and that they were not experiencing any disturbances due to menstrual pain. The pain scale that is felt is scale 1, that is, there is still a feeling of cramps in the lower abdomen that can still be endured, can still do activities, and can still concentrate. Minor distractions: sometimes there are very few distractions. There is no need for medicine.

Discussion

Interviews with several clients were carried out to obtain some data about the symptoms they often experience. Symptoms experienced by client 1 include that during menstruation, she often feels pain deep below the abdomen; sometimes this pain can change positions from the pelvis, thighs, or buttocks and often radiates to the legs. The pain can usually be reduced if it is followed by something pressing from outside the body

to reduce the pain. In client 2, aged 44 years, the symptoms he experienced included pain in the lower abdomen, pelvis, waist, and thighs. This pain can be reduced if followed by a heating process. Based on these characteristics, both clients have symptoms of menstrual pain with blood clotting syndrome caused by cold and damp pathogens.

Based on the symptoms experienced by the patient, it was found that the client needed medical assistance through acupuncture techniques to minimize menstrual pain and eliminate the pain. This therapy is carried out 5-7 days before the menstrual period three times; this shows that therapy with a quantity of three times for three consecutive months is considered more effective for treating some symptoms of menstrual pain, including improving blood circulation, and warming the meridians to dispel cold pathogens, as well as eliminating damp pathogens to relieve menstrual pain.

The decrease in the pain scale is caused by using the right points to treat menstrual pain. The first point used is guanyuan; this point functions to warm and strengthen the lower Yuan Qi sector as well as harmonize the Chong and Ren meridians. The second point of Zhongji is the meeting point between the Ren meridian and all the Yin meridians of the feet and functions to launch Qi and Xue (blood) in the Chong and Ren meridians, which are closely related to Zi Bao (uterus), so that blood stasis can be melted and the effect of menstrual pain can be cured. The third point of the zigong has a significant healing effect and has the functions of promoting blood circulation, eliminating stasis, regulating Qi, and relieving pain.

The fourth point of Xuehai has the effect of drawing blood back into the meridians, treating various diseases of the blood system, and relieving pain in the lower abdomen during menstruation. The fifth point of sanyinjiao is the meeting point between the three-foot Yin meridians (Tai Yin foot of Pi/Spleen, Jue Yin foot of Gan/Heart, and Shao Yin foot of Shen/Kidney). This point is to relieve pain from all gynecological diseases. The sixth point of Gongsun can strengthen the Pi (spleen) so that it has the effect of eliminating damp pathogens has the effect of smoothing Xue (blood) in these meridians so that it can eliminate abdominal pain during menstruation.

Seventh point of Taichong, this point can help expedite Qi, calm the Heart to enhance the effect of smoothing blood stasis, and relieve pain. It can not only treat menstrual pain but also treat other gynecological diseases. the eighth point of Pishu; this point is the Shu point of the Tai Yin meridian of the Pi/Spleen leg. Strengthens Pi (spleen) to produce Xue (blood) and strengthens Qi. ninth point, Ciliao; this point serves to relieve low back and pelvic pain.

Conclusion

The results of the study can be concluded that acupuncture therapy is carried out 3-5 days before the menstrual period with a quantity of 3 times, carried out routinely for 3 consecutive months at Guanyuan (RN4), Zhongji (RN3), Zigong (extra meridian point) points, Xuehai (SP10), Sanyinjiao (SP6), Gongsun (SP4), Taichong (LR3), Pishu (BL20), and Ciliao (BL32). Respondents experienced significant changes, starting with the reduced intensity and scale of pain experienced during menstruation. This change in the pain scale was originally from 7 to 1.

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