Application of reflexotherapy according to the «hexagram balancing» method in the combined treatment of neuropathy of the facial nerve

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The article is devoted to one of the most urgent problems of neurology - neuropathy of the facial nerve. Often, various diseases, especially those that are aggravated under the influence of psycho-emotional stress and other adverse psychosocial factors, are accompanied by long-term symptoms. Medicinal methods of treatment are not fully effective, so non-medicinal technologies should be resorted to. Combined treatment of neuropathy of the facial nerve by reflexology methods has been used for a long time, mainly when there is a slowdown in the recovery of the functions of the facial nerve, and this is, first of all, its motor functions in relation to the muscles of the face.

The article also presents the main theoretical principles of the «Balancing of Hexagrams» method and its practical implementation. A clinical case is also presented: neuropathy of the facial nerve with a delayed course. The methods of acupuncture diagnosis are presented, the acupuncture diagnosis is characterized in detail, the description of acupuncture correction is given, the methods of medical correction used in treatment, the features of the «favorable» hexagram are considered.

Thus, patients with neuropathy of the facial nerve with a delayed course are found in the practice of a neurologist and a reflexologist. In the combined of therapeutic measures for neuropathy of the facial nerve with a delayed course, the use of the acupuncture method «balancing hexagrams» is effective.

Keywords: reflexotherapy, “balancing hexagrams” method, neuropathy of the facial nerve with a delayed course.
diabetes (1%), psychotrauma (4%). A significant percentage of neuropathies of the facial nerve (20–23%) belongs to the etiology of unknown genesis: so-called, idiopathic neuropathies of the facial nerve – «Bell's palsy» [1].

One of the main etiological factors (43–49%) in this disease is hypothermia, and the maximum number of diseases (62–68%) occurs in autumn and winter. Cold leads to irritation of receptors of the skin of the face and vessels of the cranio-cervical region, which causes reflex vascular disorders of the type of spasm of the vessels that feed the trunk of the facial nerve [1].

The second most frequent etiological factor (12–30%) is infection. However, in children, infection is the cause of neuropathy of the facial nerve even more often. Acute neuropathies of the facial nerve are the result of various infections, both local and general, especially those affecting the cranio-cervical structures. Most often, lesions of the facial nerve occur in the case of tonsillitis, sinusitis, otitis, diseases of the parotid gland, odontogenic processes, as well as in the case of tuberculosis, syphilis, malaria, and diphtheria [1].

Now, during military operations, traumatic injuries of the facial nerve have become relevant. Etiology of neuropathy of the facial nerve from the point of view of a neurosurgeon: consequences of removal of a tumor of the posterior cranial fossa (54%), open traumatic injury (15%), consequences of removal of a tumor of the parotid region (15%), birth trauma of the facial nerve (5%), consequences of a closed cranial – brain injury with a fracture of the temporal bone (6%), Bell’s palsy (5%). Consequences of a closed cranioencebral injury with a fracture of the temporal bone; fractures of the bones of the vault and base of the skull (70%), fractures of the bones of the front and middle cranial fossae (15%), multiple fractures of the bones of the base of the skull that spread to all three cranial fossae (5%), isolated fracture of the pyramid of the temporal bone (10%).

Meanwhile, the treatment of neuropathy of the facial nerve is far from fully resolved: 8–15% of patients have a gross facial defect due to residual paresis of facial muscles, and 16–32% of patients develop post-neuritic contracture. 45–92% of patients experience significant emotional distress, depression, anxiety, sleep disturbances, and even suicidal thoughts or actions as a result of facial muscle paresis. This especially applies to persons whose professional activity is related to their external data (models, announcers, artists), which requires early medical and diagnostic and rehabilitation measures [1]. One of these measures is the use of reflexotherapy methods [1].

The positive effect of reflexotherapy methods on the body is mainly realized through the endogenous opioid system [8, 9]. Endogenous opioid systems, neurotransmitters acetylcholine, norepinephrine, dopamine, substance P, inhibitory and excitatory amino acids, free radicals, neurotrophic factors, increased activity of Na+ channels, significant activation of microglia, dysfunction play an important role in neuroimmunocommunication disorders in various nervous system diseases and pathological conditions immune system, hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis, disruption of neuroplasticity processes in the central nervous system. But also, as is well known, thanks to the normalization of these substances and regulatory influences, the mechanisms of therapeutic effects of acupuncture methods are provided [8, 9].

Endogenous opioid systems are closely related to pathological mechanisms in diseases of the nervous system, but, at the same time, they primarily form the mechanisms of acupuncture effects and are one of the most studied neurotransmitter systems in acupuncture research [8, 9]. Endogenous opioid systems cause a number of effects in the regulation of pain mechanisms, emotions, cognitive functions, endocrine glands, urination, neuroplasticity, cardiovascular activity, breathing, digestion, sexual functions [8, 9].

The above-mentioned effects, in conclusion, are possible due to the fact that acupuncture increases the activity of endogenous opioid systems in the central nervous system with an increase in the level of beta-endorphin (as well as other opioids) in the cerebrospinal fluid and blood plasma [8, 9]. Due to the regulation of endogenous opioid systems, as shown by 8th the data of modern research, acupuncture is able to mitigate numerous stressors on the nervous system and the immune system, exerting a protective effect against their damage.

Reflexotherapy methods are effective not only neurologic diseases, but also with depression, asthma and others psychoemotional disorders [2–5, 7], and exaggerates the placebo effect, as stated by modern research [10].

Below, we would like to cite a clinical case where a complex approach was used to treat a patient (man) with facial nerve neuropathy with a delayed course using reflexotherapy methods, in particular the method of «balancing hexagrams».

The method of «balancing hexagrams» is one of the methods of compiling acupuncture prescriptions [11, 12], of which there are many in the practice of acupuncture. It is used as an adjunct to basic acupuncture treatment. The main task of the «balancing hexagrams» method is to change the state of the «affected» acupuncture meridian and the corresponding «affected hexagram» to the energy state of the «favorable» hexagram, and thus a positive change in the CHI (vital energy) of the «affected» acupuncture meridian, corresponding to the energy state of the organ and CHI of the whole organism [11, 12]. The main theoretical principles of the «balancing hexagrams» method: 20 hexagrams are selected from the «full set» – 64 hexagrams of I Ching, based on a multifaceted analysis of hexagrams. The first thing to do using this method is to find the «affected» acupuncture meridian based on acupuncture diagnostic methods. Then you need to pick up, in accordance with it, the «affected» hexagram. And then, from 20 possible options, choose a «favorable» hexagram [11, 12].

What should be paid attention to when choosing a «favorable» hexagram: the correspondence between the patient’s clinical symptoms and the used strokes of the «afflicted» hexagram; for the presence of a quick or delayed clinical positive effect after using the «favorable» hexagram; in accordance with the «auspicious» hexagram of the acupuncture season; the results of the analysis of the «favorable» hexagram (its upper and lower trigrams in accordance with the theories of Wu-Xing, YIN-YANG, the location of the trigrams, the functions of the trigrams; the results of the analysis of the «afflicted» hexagram [11, 12].
Features of the clinical application of the «balancing hexagrams» method – we would like to draw your attention to the fact that it is designed to enhance the effect of using other acupuncture methods. Therefore, acupuncture using this method is not often used. The total number of procedures according to it is 1 session per week of acupuncture treatment. If we talk about the absolute number of procedures according to it, then in our practice we conducted them from 1 to 4, depending on the total duration of the course of acupuncture therapy [11, 12]. It is necessary to make full use of the possibilities of the general action of the «favorable» hexagram [11, 12]. It is desirable to ensure that the «image» and «symbol» of the «favorable» hexagram corresponds to the functional state that will occur with the patient during treatment [11, 12].

The most common method of analysis in traditional Chinese medicine is, namely, the method of «image» and «symbol», according to which trigrams and hexagrams reflect different aspects of life, for example: different family members, different seasons, body parts, organs, functions, different acupuncture meridians, functional states, pathological changes. In terms of the graphic representation of the «favorable» hexagram, it is necessary to take into account the main movements of the CHI in the pathological process of the patient (the upper and lower trigrams and the «opposite» lines of both hexagrams in the aspect of raising the CHI up or lowering the CHI down, which is often necessary in the acupuncture correction of patients). Regarding the location of the hexagram lines, we know, thanks to the works of Wen Wang and Wu Wang, the founders of this method, that when the YIN and YANG lines within one hexagram occupy the middle positions, this is called «middle harmony», and that these hexagrams, when applied as «auspicious», they have privileges over other hexagrams of the I Ching [11, 12].

Clinical case patient B., male, 45 years old, sought help from a reflexologist in 2019 (after undergoing basic medical and physiotherapeutic treatment in the spring of this year from a neurologist in one of the departmental hospitals of the capital) with complaints of facial distortion caused by transferred neuropathy of the facial nerve on the left (he had it this spring, after he was in a draft for a long time – he is a driver and sat so that the wind blew on the left side of his face, his neck from the open car windows), and residual weakness, and at the same time, a spasm of facial muscles on the left side. In addition, the patient was bothered by pain in the left half of the face, which increased during a spasm of facial muscles. Weakness remained on the left: chin muscles (1 hexagram line), upper lip muscles (3 hexagram lines), zygomatic muscles (4 hexagram lines), muscles surrounding the eye (5 hexagram lines) (Fig. 1) [adapted by 13], and at the same time, their spasm appeared. Emotional lability, irritability, general weakness that was not there before were also disturbing.

Clinical diagnosis: the condition after neuropathy of the facial nerve on the left with moderately pronounced left-sided spasmoparesis of facial muscles, slow recovery of their function. Cerebrasthenic syndrome. Due to the fact that a lot of time has passed since the acute neuropathy of the facial nerve, and the function of facial muscles has not fully recovered, we decided to use the method of «balancing hexagrams» as part of complex reflexology treatment. The general meaning of hexagram No. 34 Da Zhuang in traditional Chinese medicine [14]: «Thunder» shows «Heaven» great power. Image: a ram that searches the mud. Symbol: curvature at the beginning and smoothness at the end. Approximate. Listen to advice. Fullness of life. Great encouragement. Strive for success. Time to move forward. Avoid emotional excesses, strive for balance.

Direct your energy in a favorable direction. Powerful Hexagram: Focus your energy with a sense of CHI for a favorable outcome. Medical significance [14]:

1) prognostic: extremely aggressive diseases; illness with high fever; excess liver;

2) indications for acupuncture treatment: severe headaches; paresis, muscle spasms; stagnation of liquid in the lower heater; The wind of the liver rises to the heart; pathogenic CHI rises to the head; constipation; stagnation CHI and food in the middle of the heater; diseases caused by overeating and excessive alcohol consumption; nail damage; diseases associated with excess.

Paresis – corresponds in traditional Chinese medicine to damage to the stomach acupuncture meridian. The hexagram associated with it is Kan («afflicted» hexagram – Kan) (Fig. 2) [adapted by 13].

We choose a «favorable» hexagram for this condition: it is Da Zhuang, I Ching hexagram No. 34. Evaluating hexagram No. 34 of Da Zhuang positively, it should be noted that the «afflicted» Kan hexagram corresponds to «Earth», like both of its Kan trigrams, and afflicted stomach acupuncture meridian – correspond to the «Earth», well, we know what powerful energy is possessed by what belongs to the «Earth». The upper trigram of the hexagram Da Zhuang – Zhen corresponds to the «Tree», and its lower trigram – Qian – corresponds to the «Metal» (we have a clinical situation – the reverse control of the «Earth» over the «Tree», and it is expedient to strengthen the «Tree» (functional trigram).

That is, «Earth» heals «Earth», and «Metal» is the «son» of «Earth», which is important in the treatment of «excess» (spasmoparesis that is, more «excess» from tra-
ditional Chinese medicine). Also, the acupuncture points that we used for the effect [12] correspond to the patient’s symptoms, and it is advisable to use this hexagram for therapeutic purposes in autumn.

Acupuncture prescription for this case (Fig. 3) [adapted by 12]: the patient has problems on the left side (damage of mimic muscles, spasmoparesis on the left side), so we inject acupuncture points E-45, 43, 42, 41 on the right side; on the left side, we inject acupuncture points RP – 1, 3, 4, 5 (paired meridian of acupuncture that enhances the treatment, the points for influence are similar to the number of lines of the «affected» hexagram (Fig. 3) [12].

If there was a general disease (without lateralization of symptoms), then in a male patient (for example, pain in the epigastrium due to heartburn syndrome, or pain in the perineum due to chronic prostatitis), acupuncture points should be pricked on the left side, and on the right side to prick the acupuncture point of the paired meridian, which enhances the effectiveness of the treatment, and in a female patient – to prick the acupuncture point of the main meridian on the right side, and on the left side to prick the acupuncture point of the paired meridian, which enhances the effectiveness of the treatment.

The acupuncture procedure using the «Hexagram Balancing» method was performed 3 times during the course of treatment, which lasted 15 sessions. A «nosological» acupuncture recipe was also used, in particular the following points: TR 17, VB 20, VB 1, VB 2, VB 3, VB 34, E2, E 3, E 4, E 7, E 6, E 36, E 40, GI 4, GI 6, GI 20, TR 23, TR 5, V 1, PC 6, F 3, R 1, R 3, RP 4, AP 8, AP 11, AP 34 [1,6,15].

Catamnesis: after a course of treatment using reflexotherapy methods, there is a recovery of facial muscle functions on the left by 90% (and clinically which is confirmed by electromyography data).

CONCLUSIONS
1. Neuropathy of the facial nerve with a protracted course occurs in the practice of a neurologist and a reflexologist.
2. In the combined treatment measures for neuropathy of the facial nerve with a protracted course, the use of the reflexotherapy method «balancing hexagrams» can be effective.

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