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Application of TCM Meridian Theory in Lymphoma Regulation and Adjuvant Therapy

Yuyang Zhao

JSerra Catholic High School, San Juan Capistrano, USA
zhaoyuyang0319@gmail.com

Abstract. Lymphoma, a prevalent hematological malignancy, is characterized by rising global incidence and high recurrence rates, with conventional treatments often causing significant toxic side effects. This paper explores the application of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) meridian theory in lymphoma adjuvant rehabilitation, drawing evidence from the clinical case of Professor Chen Rongqiu, who achieved a clinical case of Professor Chen Rongqiu, who achieved clinical cure through combination with Western medicine and long-term meridian massage. The study confirms that TCM's core principles of "Supporting Healthy Qi and Eliminating Pathogenic Factors" are effective in regulating systemic imbalances in Yin-Yang and Qi-Blood. Analysis of the Twelve Main Meridians reveals specific correlations between meridian pathways and common lymphoma symptoms, such as digestive issues and fatigue. Clinical practice demonstrates that systematic meridian massage can effectively alleviate post-chemotherapy symptoms, including weakness, chest tightness, and insomnia, while enhancing immune function. Furthermore, integrating meridian therapy with standard Western treatments achieves a synergistic effect of "local treatment plus overall regulation." Although challenges regarding the scientific mechanism of meridians exist, this combined approach provides a safe, non-invasive strategy to improve patient prognosis and quality of life, offering significant value for home-based rehabilitation.

Keywords: Lymphoma, meridian theory, adjuvant rehabilitation, integrated Chinese and Western medicine

1. Introduction

Lymphoma is a common hematological malignancy clinically, with a growing incidence worldwide in recent years [1]. Conventional treatment methods for lymphoma mainly include chemotherapy, radiotherapy and surgery, which can effectively control tumor progression in the early stage, but they also have obvious limitations such as obvious toxic and side effects, damage to the body's immune system, long recovery period and high recurrence rate in advanced cases [1, 2]. Thus, it is of great clinical significance to find safe and effective adjuvant treatment methods to improve the treatment effect and quality of life of patients. In 2008, Professor Chen, a renowned Chinese management scholar and graduate of MIT's management program, was diagnosed with lymphoma. After receiving standard Western medical treatment including chemotherapy, he combined traditional Chinese medicine meridian massage for long-term adjuvant rehabilitation, and finally

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achieved clinical cure five years later [3]. His case provides valuable practical evidence for the application of traditional Chinese medicine meridian theory in lymphoma regulation and rehabilitation. Over the past decade, Professor Chen has documented his anti-cancer experience in books and delivered speeches to guide cancer patients in improving their prognosis through mindset adjustment, lifestyle modification and environmental improvement, emphasizing the important role of holistic regulation in cancer rehabilitation. As an important part of traditional Chinese medicine, meridian therapy has the characteristics of non-invasiveness, low cost and few side effects, and has shown unique advantages in relieving treatment-related side effects and regulating the body's immune function in tumor adjuvant rehabilitation. However, at present, relevant studies on the application of meridian theory in lymphoma rehabilitation are relatively fragmented, lack systematic combing and in-depth exploration of the mechanism, and there is no unified clinical application standard. At present, the application research of meridian theory in lymphoma rehabilitation still has fragmented problems. The material basis and mechanism of action of meridians have not been fully confirmed by modern medicine, and there is a lack of unified intervention standards in clinical application, and the applicable population is not clear. Relevant research still needs further systematic combing and in-depth exploration. This paper systematically explores the role, practical value and application status of meridian theory in lymphoma regulation and adjuvant rehabilitation by combing relevant literature and clinical cases, providing scientific reference for the clinical promotion and application of meridian therapy in lymphoma comprehensive treatment.

2. Core theories and methods of TCM in cancer treatment

2.1. Core theories

TCM emphasizes holistic regulation and supporting healthy qi and eliminating pathogenic factors, two core principles that run through the entire process of cancer treatment. Supporting healthy qi and eliminating pathogenic factors is a core principle of TCM treatment, referring to regulating the body's healthy qi to enhance resistance and removing pathogenic factors to achieve disease recovery. In the context of lymphoma, TCM holds that the occurrence and development of the disease are closely related to the imbalance of yin and yang, the disorder of qi and blood, and the deficiency of healthy qi. When the body's healthy qi is insufficient, pathogenic factors can invade and accumulate, leading to the formation of tumors. Thus, TCM treatment does not only focus on eliminating the tumor itself but also pays more attention to regulating the overall state of the body, restoring the balance of yin and yang and the smooth flow of qi and blood, so as to enhance the body's own anti-tumor ability [4]. No matter where the disease occurs, it is regarded as a systemic disorder of the body, which is consistent with the modern medical view that cancer is a systemic disease. This holistic concept provides important theoretical support for the application of meridian therapy in adjuvant cancer treatment, as meridian therapy is exactly a typical way to achieve overall regulation by stimulating the body's meridian system.

2.2. Diagnostic methods

TCM diagnoses diseases through four diagnostic methods which are observation, listening-smelling, inquiry and palpation. Observation involves examining the patient's physical development, facial complexion, tongue coating, facial expressions, and other external signs to detect pathological changes in the internal organs. Listening-smelling involves listening to the patient's voice, cough, and wheezing, as well as smelling halitosis, body odor, and other abnormal odors. Inquiry means

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asking the patient about their subjective symptoms, past medical history, and family medical history. Palpation mainly consists of taking the pulse. The theoretical basis is that external parts of the body are closely connected with zang-fu organs, and any imbalance of yin, yang, qi, or blood in zang-fu organs will be reflected on the body surface [5].

2.3. External treatment methods

Meridian massage is a typical embodiment of holistic treatment in TCM, which regards the human body as a whole where all parts are closely connected through the meridian system. By stimulating meridians throughout the body, corresponding zang-fu organs are regulated to achieve therapeutic effects, which is consistent with the core concept of TCM holistic regulation. Meridian massage exerts its therapeutic effect by dredging meridians, regulating qi and blood, balancing yin and yang, and harmonizing zang-fu organs. For lymphoma patients, especially those who have received chemotherapy or radiotherapy, meridian massage can effectively relieve treatment-related side effects and promote physical recovery [6]. Professor Chen persisted in meridian tapping and acupoint massage for a long time during treatment and rehabilitation. At that time, after six months of chemotherapy, he suffered from severe physical weakness, poor appetite, difficulty breathing, frequent chest tightness, poor sleep, and frequent night urination. Through systematic meridian massage, including tapping the pericardium meridian and massaging key acupoints such as Neiguan and Ximen to relieve chest tightness and palpitations, tapping the gallbladder meridian to improve digestion and appetite, and pressing the Yongquan acupoint on the sole of the foot to improve sleep, his physical symptoms were significantly improved after one month of persistence. In the context of lymphoma, patients after chemotherapy often present with qi-blood deficiency and spleen-stomach weakness. Massaging the Stomach Meridian and Spleen Meridian can invigorate the spleen and stomach, replenish qi and blood, thereby relieving symptoms such as loss of appetite and fatigue. This practice fully proves that meridian massage has obvious effects in relieving the physical discomfort of lymphoma patients and promoting rehabilitation, and it is a safe and effective TCM external treatment method.

3. The twelve main meridians and their correlation with lymphoma rehabilitation

The twelve meridians are the core of TCM basic theory, closely related to the body's immunity, qi and blood circulation, and zang-fu functions. Their patency directly affects the body's anti-tumor ability, serving as energy transmission channels connecting zang-fu organs and limbs [7]. Five zang-organs and six fu-organs are important components of the human body in TCM. The Lung Meridian starts from the chest, runs along the anterior edge of the arm inward, and ends at the thumb, and it relieves coughing, shortness of breath and other symptoms possibly accompanied by lymphoma. The Large Intestine Meridian starts from the index finger, runs along the anterior edge of the arm outward, passes through the shoulder and neck, and ends at the side of the nose, and it relieves toothache, constipation, skin diseases and other complications of lymphoma treatment. The Stomach Meridian starts from the inner corner of the eye, runs downward through the face, neck, chest and abdomen, along the anterior side of the thigh, and ends at the second toe, and it improves gastric pain and indigestion in lymphoma patients after chemotherapy. The Spleen Meridian starts from the inner side of the big toe, runs upward along the inner side of the lower leg and thigh, and enters the abdomen, and it relieves abdominal distension, loss of appetite, body heaviness and weakness, and promotes nutrient transport. The Heart Meridian starts from the armpit, runs downward along the posterior edge of the arm inward, and ends at the little finger, and it relieves palpitations, insomnia

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and forgetfulness in lymphoma patients with emotional disorders. The Small Intestine Meridian starts from the outer side of the little finger, runs upward along the posterior edge of the arm, circumnavigates the scapula, and ascends to the ear, and it relieves shoulder and neck stiffness and cervical spondylosis caused by long-term bed rest. The Bladder Meridian starts from the inner corner of the eye, runs upward to the top of the head, passes through the back of the head and both sides of the spine, runs along the posterior side of the thigh, and ends at the little toe, and it relieves back pain, colds, headaches, and promotes detoxification. The Kidney Meridian starts from the sole of the foot, runs upward along the inner side of the lower leg and thigh, passes through the spine, and enters the abdomen, and it enhances resistance, relieves waist and knee weakness and hair loss, and reduces tumor recurrence risk. The Pericardium Meridian starts from the outer side of the nipple, runs downward along the middle line of the inner side of the arm, and ends at the middle finger, and it improves chest tightness and palpitations, and regulates immune function in lymphoma patients. The Triple Energizer Meridian starts from the ring finger, runs upward along the middle line of the outer side of the arm, passes through the shoulder and neck, circumnavigates the back of the ear, and ends at the fringe of the eyebrow, and it relieves migraine and endocrine disorders. The Gallbladder Meridian starts from the outer corner of the eye, circumnavigates the sides of the head, runs downward through the sides of the body, along the outer side of the thigh, and ends at the fourth toe, and it improves poor appetite and fatigue in lymphoma patients after chemotherapy. The Liver Meridian starts from the outer side of the big toe, runs upward along the middle line of the inner side of the lower leg and thigh, circumnavigates the genitals, and enters the abdomen, and it relieves emotional depression and irregular menstruation [8].

4. Integrated Chinese and Western medicine for lymphoma treatment

There is widespread controversy about the existence of meridians in the academic community, which is mainly due to the different research perspectives between TCM and modern Western medicine. Since meridians have not been identified through static anatomical studies, some people regard meridian theory as pseudo-science, but the health-promoting effect of meridian stimulation has been verified by a large number of clinical practices and modern research. Modern medical studies have found that meridian stimulation can regulate the body's neuro-humoral-immune regulatory system, promote the secretion of immune-related cytokines, enhance the activity of immune cells, and thus improve the body's immune function [9]. TCM adopts a holistic perspective, dialectically analyzing the condition, and does not view the tumor as an independent lesion but as a manifestation of the overall imbalance of the body. Therefore, TCM treatment of cancer does not only focus on local tumor elimination but also pays attention to the overall regulation of the body, restoring the balance of yin and yang, qi and blood, and zang-fu functions. This holistic treatment concept has unique effects in cancer treatment, especially in relieving treatment-related side effects, improving the quality of life of patients, and reducing the recurrence rate. For lymphoma patients, TCM dialectical treatment combined with meridian therapy can effectively make up for the limitations of Western medicine treatment, achieve the effect of complementary advantages, and provide a more comprehensive treatment plan for patients.

Western medicine's surgery, chemotherapy and radiotherapy are targeted local treatment methods, which can quickly control tumor progression and even eliminate tumors in the early stage. Surgery is mainly used for early lymphoma, which can remove local tumor lesions and reduce tumor burden; chemotherapy uses chemical drugs to kill cancer cells or inhibit their proliferation, suitable for middle and advanced lymphoma; radiotherapy uses ionizing radiation to kill cancer cells, often used as adjuvant treatment after surgery or chemotherapy [1]. However, these methods also have obvious

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limitations, such as strong toxic and side effects, which can damage the body's normal cells and immune system, leading to a series of complications such as fatigue, poor appetite, and decreased immunity. Combined with TCM holistic therapy, lymphoma patients can take meridian massage as an adjuvant means for long-term rehabilitation on the basis of Western medical standard treatment. Under the premise of dialectical treatment and standardized operation, meridian massage can effectively relieve the toxic and side effects caused by Western medicine treatment in applicable groups, improve the body's immune function, and promote physical recovery. Simple meridian massage schemes including Pericardium Meridian tapping, Gallbladder Meridian massage and Yongquan Acupoint pressing are safe, easy to operate, and do not require professional medical equipment, which have the potential for wide popularization in home-based rehabilitation [10]. Patients can perform meridian massage by themselves or with the help of their families, which is convenient and practical, and can continuously play a role in adjuvant rehabilitation during the long-term recovery period.

Meridian therapy is non-invasive, low-cost, and free of obvious side effects, which can well complement Western medicine treatment and form a comprehensive treatment system for lymphoma. Western medicine focuses on local tumor control and elimination, while TCM meridian therapy focuses on overall regulation and improvement of the body's own anti-tumor ability. The combination of the two can achieve the effect of local treatment and overall regulation, making the treatment more comprehensive and effective. Western medicine chemotherapy can quickly kill tumor cells and control tumor progression, but it is easy to damage the body's healthy qi and cause qi-blood deficiency; meridian massage can replenish qi and blood, enhance the body's immunity, and relieve side effects such as fatigue and loss of appetite caused by chemotherapy by stimulating meridians and regulating zang-fu functions. The combination of the two achieves the synergistic effect of "local tumor control + overall body regulation", which not only controls tumor progression but also promotes body recovery and reduces recurrence risk. By viewing the body as a holistic whole, TCM identifies the root causes of diseases within the body system and resolves symptoms through comprehensive regulation, thereby achieving the goal of comprehensive treatment.

5. Controversies and prospects of meridian theory in lymphoma rehabilitation

At present, the application of meridian theory in lymphoma rehabilitation still has many controversies and limitations, which need to be solved through in-depth research and clinical practice. First, the material basis of meridians has not been fully confirmed by modern medicine, and its mechanism of action needs further exploration. Although modern medical studies have found that meridian stimulation can regulate the neuro-humoral-immune system, the specific mechanism of meridian signal transmission and physiological function regulation remains unclear, which restricts the further promotion and application of meridian therapy. Second, there is no unified standard for meridian massage intervention schemes. At present, the massage techniques, frequency, duration, and selected acupoints of meridian massage for lymphoma rehabilitation vary in different studies and clinical practices, which leads to inconsistent therapeutic effects and is not conducive to the standardization and popularization of meridian therapy. Third, the applicable population of meridian therapy is not clear. It is not clear which type of lymphoma patients can benefit more from meridian therapy, and whether there are patients who are not suitable for meridian therapy, which needs to be verified by more large-scale clinical trials [8]. In view of these problems, future research should focus on verifying the mechanism of meridian therapy through modern medical technology such as molecular biology and neurophysiology, clarifying the material basis and signal transmission pathway of meridians. At the same time, it is necessary to carry out large-scale clinical trials to

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establish unified and standardized meridian massage intervention schemes suitable for lymphoma patients, clarify the applicable population and contraindications of meridian therapy, and promote the clinical application of meridian therapy in lymphoma comprehensive treatment.

6. Conclusion

TCM meridian theory, with holistic regulation as the core, has unique advantages in lymphoma adjuvant rehabilitation, which has been verified by a large number of clinical practices and relevant studies. Meridian massage, as an important form of meridian therapy, can effectively improve the physical symptoms of lymphoma patients such as fatigue, poor appetite, chest tightness, and insomnia, regulate the body's immune function, enhance the body's resistance, and reduce the toxic and side effects of Western medicine treatment such as chemotherapy and radiotherapy. The combination of meridian therapy and Western medicine achieves the synergistic effect of local targeted treatment plus holistic regulation, which makes up for the limitations of single treatment methods, improves the treatment effect and quality of life of patients, and provides a new approach for lymphoma treatment. Although there are still controversies and limitations in the application of meridian theory in lymphoma rehabilitation, such as unclear mechanism of action, lack of unified intervention standards, and unclear applicable population, with the deepening of modern medical research and the accumulation of clinical practice experience, these problems will be gradually solved. It is believed that in the future, meridian therapy will become an important part of integrated Chinese and Western medicine for lymphoma rehabilitation, providing safer, more effective and convenient adjuvant treatment options for more lymphoma patients, helping them improve their prognosis and return to a healthy life.

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