

A “Yang-invigorating” Chinese herbal suppository preparation relieves symptoms in patients with Parkinson’s disease

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Summary

An exploratory clinical study was conducted to investigate the effect of treatment with a “Yang-invigorating” Chinese herbal suppository preparation (ViNeuro) on 9 subjects (40-69 of age; 6 males and 3 females) with Parkinson’s diseases (PD) for 3.5-14 years. During the 6-month trial period, 8 out of 9 patients were also taking one to three types of anti-Parkinsonian drugs. After taking ViNeuro for 6 months, all patients reported to have improvement in various Parkinsonian symptoms, particularly with a response rate of 100% in relieving rigidity and tremor. The relief on “Yang-deficiency” symptoms was also observed, with response rates ranging from 67-86%. ViNeuro may produce the symptom-relieving effect in patients suffering from PD by virtue of its “Yang-invigorating” (i.e. ATP generation-stimulatory) and antioxidant actions.

Keywords: Parkinson’s disease, Chinese medicine

Introduction

Parkinson’s disease (PD) is a common neurodegenerative disorder clinically characterized by bradykinesia, rigidity, and tremor (1). The therapeutic approach for the treatment of PD has so far been palliative, and the drugs also cause numerous undesirable side effects (1). Clinical observation has revealed the gradual development of “Yang-deficiency” symptoms in PD patients according to Chinese medicine. The enhancement of mitochondrial ATP generation has been proposed to be the pharmacological basis of “Yang-invigoration” in Chinese medicine (2). A “Yang-invigorating” Chinese herbal suppository preparation (ViNeuro, previously called VI-28) has been shown to produce “Yang”-promoting effect (3) and enhance red cell antioxidant status in middle-aged healthy male subjects (4). Earlier experimental studies also indicated that ViNeuro pretreatment produced liver and heart protection against oxidant injury in rodents (5). Given the presence of “Yang-deficiency” and the involvement of free radical-mediated processes as well as mitochondrial dysfunction (6, 7) in the pathogenesis of PD, it is of therapeutic interest to examine whether ViNeuro can produce any symptom-relieving effect on patients suffering from PD. In the present study, the effect of ViNeuro treatment on “Yang-deficiency” and Parkinsonian symptoms was examined in 9 PD patients.

Materials and Methods

ViNeuro suppository was a multi-component Chinese herbal formula comprising Radix Ginseng, Cornu Cervi, Semen Allii Tuberosi, Fructus Evodiae, Rhizoma Kaempferiae etc., as described in Mak et al. (4). An exploratory clinical study was conducted to investigate the effect of ViNeuro treatment on 9 subjects (40-69 of age; 6 males and 3 females) with PD for 3.5-14 years. All subjects signed a written informed consent before the commencement of the trial. During the 6-month trial period, all patients took ViNeuro at a daily dose recommended by the manufacturer. Eight out of 9 patients were also taking one to three types of the following anti-Parkinsonian drugs: Madopar (Levodopa + Benserazide), Sinemet (Levodopa + Cardidopa), Bromocriptine, Artane (Benhexol) and Selegilene. Questionnaire on changes in “Yang-deficiency” and Parkinsonian symptoms was performed in the end of the trial.

Table 1 ViNeuro treatment produced symptom-relieving effect in patients suffering from Parkinson’s disease

No. of Patients Complaints	Patients with Symptoms	Patients with improvement	Percentage of change
Parkinsonian Symptoms			
• Facial dullness	8	8	100
• Tremor of limbs	6	6	100
• Weakness of limbs	4	4	100
• Unstable movement	3	3	100
• Slow movement	5	2	40
• Stiff and painful shoulder	5	3	60
“Yang-deficiency” Symptoms			
• Aversion to cold	7	5	75
• Poor appetite	3	2	67
• Frequent urination	8	6	75
• Constipation	7	6	86

Results

As shown in Table 1, after taking ViNeuro for 6 months, all patients reported to have improvement in various Parkinsonian symptoms, particularly with a response rate of 100% in relieving rigidity and tremor. The relief on “Yang-deficiency” symptoms was also observed, with response rates ranging from 67-86%.

Conclusion

One of the oldest concepts maintains that a failure in producing energy would impair the functioning of the central nervous system. Given that ViNeuro possesses “Yang-invigorating” property that can enhance mitochondrial ATP generation, the symptom-relieving effect afforded by ViNeuro treatment in PD patients may be related to its ability to enhance the energy status of the brain. ViNeuro may produce the symptom-relieving effect in patients suffering from PD by virtue of its “Yang-invigorating” (i.e. ATP generation-stimulatory) and antioxidant actions.

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