

Research Progress of TCM Treatment of Uterine Fibroids

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Abstract: Uterine fibroids are the most common benign tumors in gynecology. Traditional Chinese medicine treats uterine fibroids according to syndrome differentiation and treatment. The treatment of uterine fibroids has the characteristics of definitive curative effects and minor side-effects, but there are also many shortcomings, which require more in-depth research and exploration.

Keywords: Traditional Chinese medicine; Uterine fibroids; Research progress

Publication date: January, 2021

Publication online: 31 January, 2021

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1 Introduction

Uterine fibroids are one of the most common benign tumors of the female reproductive system, and they belong to the categories of "Zheng Jia" and "Shi Jia" in Chinese medicine. The incidence in women of childbearing age can reach more than 20%, and it is common in 30-40 years old, and the high incidence period is 40-50 years old^[1]. The main clinical manifestations include abdominal masses, compression, menstruation and abnormalities in the lower abdomen, which seriously endanger women's life and health. Judging from the current treatment methods, surgical removal of fibroids is the main clinical practice. For patients with excessive fibroids and multiple fibroids, the uterus may even be removed^[2], which greatly increases the suffering of patients. Therefore, the advantages of traditional Chinese medicine are gradually emerging. It can not

only shrink tumors, but also treat people dialectically with fewer side effects. This paper summarizes and analyzes the research progress of Chinese medicine in the treatment of uterine fibroids. Zhai Chunjie et al.^[11] believe that although uterine fibroids are caused by "blood stasis", it is not the only cause, and phlegm evil often plays a role in the pathogenesis too.

2 Pathogenesis and Pathology

As recorded in the ancient books, it was believed that the illness is mostly caused by the lack of normal qi and dysfunction of the viscera due to poor emotions and unregulated diet. It then forms pathological products such as qi stagnation, blood stasis, phlegm dampness, and damp heat etc., which accumulate in the abdomen and form lumps. Among them, blood stasis is the main cause and pathogenesis. Many modern doctors generally believe that uterine fibroids are closely related to the disorder of qi and blood, and blood stasis is often present throughout the disease, because "no fibroids will form without blood stasis"^[3]. Zhao Wenfang et al.^[4] believe that the main pathogenesis of uterine fibroids is stagnation of qi and blood stasis, which can also lead to abnormal menstruation. You Zhaoling^[5] believes that the main pathogenesis of uterine fibroids is lack of normal qi and accumulation of evil energy; and the accumulation of evils damages the normal qi, and blood stasis form due to deficiency of qi, resulting in accumulation of lumps in the abdomen. Yang Feng^[6] believes that the occurrence of uterine fibroids is caused by internal dysfunction of the liver, spleen and kidneys, and external causes of "cold qi" residing at the vagina (zi men), blood stasis and coagulation, and

long-term accumulation of heat combine with internal dampness, causing blood stasis to stay put and grow larger day by day, resulting in this illness.

3 Syndrome Differentiation and Treatment

3.1 Qi Stagnation and Blood Stasis Type

Zhang Bo^[7] used Shugan Sanjie Decoction to treat 52 patients with this syndrome. The control group was treated with mifepristone, and the experimental group was treated with Shugan Sanjie Decoction on the basis of mifepristone. Results: After treatment, the fibroids volume, hemoglobin and progesterone of the experimental group were significantly better than those of the control group, and the difference was statistically significant ($P < 0.05$). Shugan Sanjie Decoction can effectively reduce the volume of fibroids, lower the level of progesterone, improve clinical efficacy, and promote patient recovery. Zhao Yuling^[8] used Fuliu Pingxiaozheng Decoction to treat 80 cases of patients with this syndrome, gave the control group Guizhi Fuling Capsule, and the experimental group Fuliu Pingxiaozheng Decoction. Results: Before treatment, there was no significant difference in the size of fibroids measured by ultrasound between the two groups. After treatment, the tumors of the experimental group were significantly smaller than those of the control group. The total treatment efficiency in the experimental group was 95.00%, which was significantly higher than that of the reference group (80.00%). It can be seen that Fuliu Pingxiaozheng Decoction has a more significant therapeutic effect, which can effectively inhibit the growth of uterine fibroids and is worthy of clinical promotion.

3.2 Qi Deficiency and Blood Stasis Type

Wang Yan et al.^[9] used Xiaoliu Fang to treat 146 patients with qi deficiency and blood stasis, and gave the control group Guizhi Fuling capsule treatment, and the experimental group Xiaoliu Fang treatment. Results: The total treatment efficiency in the experimental group was 95.89%, which was significantly higher than the 84.3% in the control group. Xiaoliu Decoction was effective in treating uterine fibroids of qi deficiency and blood stasis, which could effectively shrink the tumor and relieve menstrual disorders. Li Xiaohua et al.^[10] used Yiqi Huayu Decoction to treat 60 patients with this

syndrome, gave the control group Guizhi Fuling Capsule, and the experimental group Yiqi Huayu Decoction. Results: The experimental group was better than the control group ($P < 0.05$) in terms of menstrual condition (menstrual period and volume) and TCM syndrome improvement. Yiqi Huayu Recipe can relieve clinical symptoms, shrink tumors, and help relieve menstrual disorders.

3.3 Phlegm and Stasis Type

Zhang Qinshu et al.^[11] used Xia's Xiaozheng Decoction to treat 50 patients with this syndrome, treated the control group with mifepristone and the experimental group with Xia's Xiaozheng Decoction. Results: The total treatment efficiency of the experimental group was 87.50%, which was significantly higher than 76.00% of the control group. Xia's Xiaozheng Decoction could inhibit the growth of uterine fibroids and reduce the volume of fibroids. Cao Qiaochun^[12] used Baixiaoyi Decoction to treat 96 patients with this syndrome. The control group was treated with mifepristone, and the experimental group was treated with Baixiaoyi Decoction on the basis of mifepristone. Results: The total treatment efficiency on clinical symptoms in the experimental group was 93.75%, which was significantly higher than 77.08% in the control group; in terms of recurrence rate, the experimental group was 4.17%, which was significantly lower than 20.83% in the control group. The differences between the groups were statistically significant ($P < 0.05$). Modified Baixiaoyi Decoction combined with mifepristone has good clinical effects in the treatment of phlegm and blood stasis type uterine fibroids, and at the same time can reduce the risk of recurrence.

3.4 Damp Heat Stasis Type

Wang Fangfang^[13] used Xiaoji Granules to treat 58 patients with this syndrome of uterine fibroids. The control group was given Gongliuxiao treatment and the experimental group was given Xiaoji granules. Results: The total treatment efficiency of the experimental group was 87%, which was higher than that of the control group (63%). There was a significant difference in the total treatment efficiency between the two groups ($P < 0.05$). Xiaoji Granules have definitive effects in reducing fibroids, improving menstrual flow, and relieving dysmenorrhea.

4 Conclusions

TCM diagnosis and treatment of diseases is characterized by overall syndrome differentiation and treatment, with unique advantages in the treatment of uterine fibroids. It can not only effectively relieve the clinical symptoms of patients, but also reduce the volume of fibroids, so that some patients can avoid surgical pain. In addition, traditional Chinese medicine has the advantages of long-lasting efficacy, high efficiency, and few adverse reactions. It has a relatively broad development prospect in combination with Western medicine and is worthy of further exploration. However, traditional Chinese medicine also has many shortcomings in the treatment of uterine fibroids, including inconsistent syndrome differentiation, large differences in medications, lack of standards for efficacy and a widely recognized efficacy assessment standard, and non-standard clinical research in terms of planning design and inclusion standards. The data analysis is simplistic and not objective; the clinical design lacks long-term follow-up results, and the lack of large-sample clinical research etc. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct more in-depth research and exploration to enable us to have a more comprehensive understanding and knowledge of uterine fibroids, to inform patients of early detection and early treatment, pay attention to life and mental adjustments, which will help in preventing and treating this disease. Under the guidance of TCM theory, we should use modern scientific research methods to improve the scientificity and reliability of TCM treatment of uterine fibroids, explore more deeply on the mechanisms of TCM treatment effects, and provide patients with choices of more diverse treatment methods.

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