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Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis: An Acupuncture Approach

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ABSTRACT

Background: Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) is an adult onset neurodegenerative disorder that has no curative treatment and is usually fatal. Modern medicine treatment is mostly supportive. Acupuncture has much more to offer by way of symptomatic relief and improving quality of life (QoL). Useful points for the treatment of bulbar paralysis, paralysis of upper and lower extremities, and correction of underlying Disharmony Patterns are discussed and an illustrative case is presented to demonstrate the acupuncture approach for treating ALS.

Case: A 55-year-old woman had weakness in her right arm and both legs for 4 months. She also had muscle cramps and clumsiness in the affected limbs, which rapidly progressed in the 4 months prior to presentation. She was diagnosed with ALS, given 50 mg of oral riluzole per day, and told that the condition was fatal. She sought acupuncture and was treated for two courses of 8 weeks each.

Results: After acupuncture, this patient's symptomatic relief was near perfect in that she became free from disabling symptoms and is now leading a normal life.

Conclusions: Acupuncture can be an effective modality of treatment for ALS, producing symptomatic relief and improving QoL.

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