Comments regarding “A case of perforating injury of eyeball and traumatic cataract caused by acupuncture”

Sir,

We read with interest the article written by Shuang and Yichun (2016) entitled, A Case of Perforating Injury of Eyeball and Traumatic Cataract by Acupuncture. The article does trigger an alarm in the standardization of clinical acupuncture, but we are still confused about the case.

Aiming to avoid similar accidents in the clinical practice, we decide to seriously analyze this case. Since the authors are ophthalmologists instead of acupuncturists, they do not give a detailed account of the acupuncture therapy in this article. Judging from the text and pictures, it is discovered that the perforated cornea and iris are the major cause of traumatic cataract and subsequently patient’s vision loss.[1] However, there are several uncertainties about the case: First, we are curious about the selection of acupoints and its selecting principle, as well as the acupuncture manipulations adopted for cerebral infarction; second, as shown in the picture, what we find is only two holes with a diameter of 3 mm, which does not conform to the use of acupuncture needles with a diameter of 0.25 mm in clinical practice; furthermore, based on the position of the holes, it is puzzling that how we could reach the spot in acupuncture therapy. Why did the performer take no notice of the acupuncture dangers or patient’s pain or bleeding at that time? If the performer did apply eye acupuncture therapy,[1] the extraocular horizontal insertion,[2] instead of needling into eyes, would be recommended. Due to the risk in needling acupoints around eyes, we are especially careful, and few people would choose them to treat cerebral infarction. We would like to clarify why the performer chooses that therapy.

Due to this article’s essence on the accident of acupuncture, we come to believe that a large number of acupuncturists would be interested in the article. Therefore, it is suggested that the authors should give more detailed description of the patient’s history of present illness, which would objectively influence the acupuncture.

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Conflicts of interest
There are no conflicts of interest.

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Authors' reply

Sir,

Thank you for your attention and comments on my case report. Restricted to the expertise and knowledge, my article was mainly focusing on the injury of his eyeball. Thus, the details of descriptions for acupuncture treatment seem to be neglected. And I hope the following steps could deal with parts of your doubts.

First, for the medical history of his acupuncture treatment, I have talked with his relatives. The cerebral infarction led to his hemiplegia and hemianopsia. They have chosen the acupoints around the eye for his hemianopsia treatment for 1 year and have got slightly improvement. Unfortunately, we cannot contact with the acupuncture therapist directly, and the exact acupoints and protocol for this medical accident were not clear. Second, I think you might misunderstand the size of the lesion. We cannot find any hole with the diameter of 3 mm, but only a 3 mm long self-sealed corneal injury could be observed, which we guess might be injured during pulling out the needle. Moreover, the diameter of the iris hole was approximately 0.25 mm, which we can find clearly from the figure. Third, during the acupuncture therapy, the patient did not feel seriously painful. He mistakenly reckoned the pain come from the acupuncture therapy (the stimulation of acupoints) rather than the corneal injury. Hence, he endured the slightly pain than usual without bleeding until the end. All the histories of the accident were obtained from his relatives.

In China, acupuncture therapy has been widely used in ophthalmic clinic. The figure shows several acupoints around the eyes [Fig. 1]. Since closing to the eyeball, the periocular acupuncture may hurt the eyes in any careless situation. This article aims to attract the importance for the acupuncture therapy around eye acupoints. Moreover, I think acupuncturists know more about the selection of acupoints and its selecting principle for eye-related acupoints diseases. Sorry for the incomplete on this issue.

Yours sincerely.

Declaration of patient consent

The authors certify that they have obtained all appropriate patient consent forms. In the form the patient(s) has/have given his/her/their consent for his/her/their images and other clinical information to be reported in the journal. The patients understand that their names and initials will not be published and due efforts will be made to conceal their identity, but anonymity cannot be guaranteed.

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