Acupressure

(Derleme)

Hemşirelik Yüksekokulu Dergisi (2006) 43–47

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ABSTRACT

Acupressure is a therapy for the relief of pain symptoms that places physical pressure on different points on the surface of the body through greater balance and circulation of energies in the body. The therapy is similar to acupuncture and is practiced by applying pressure with the fingers, hand, palms, elbows, and knee to certain selected points on the body to regulate the internal flow of energy. Acupressure techniques is noninvasive, safe and effective. Acupressure has been suggested to alleviate lower back pain, headaches, osteoarthritis pain, neck pain, musculoskeletal pain, pain before and after surgery, nausea-vomiting and sleep disturbance in patients. Acupressure has implications for multi dimensional nursing practice. Therefore education of nurses about these therapies practicing in clinical setting is important. Nurses should use acupressure as a noninvasive, safe, and effective treatment modalities in their practices.

Key Words: Acupressure therapy, nurse, patient

ÖZET


Anahtar Kelimeler: Akupressur terapi, hemşire, hasta
Introduction

Acupressure has been practiced in China for more than 2000 years, but is only recently beginning to gain acceptance by Western medical practitioners as a legitimate means of treating symptoms of illness (1, 2, 3). It is a very popular complementary therapy at present and plays an important role in multidisciplinary approach to the treatment and management of various symptoms (4, 5).

This therapy is a means of manipulating the same acupoints as used in acupuncture, but without the use of needles (6, 7). Acupressure is a noninvasive, safe and effective massage technique that employs pressure and massage to acupoints in order to stimulate the balance of life energy that in term promotes health and comfort (2, 8, 9). The therapy can be easily taught to patients so that they can manage fatigue, and decrease adverse health outcomes to improve their quality of life (5, 10, 11).

The purposes of acupressure are to regulate and balance the body energy or Chi, and further to maintain health, prevent illness or enhance health (12, 13). This energy referred to as Chi (14, 15). Chi flows through the 12 major energy pathways called meridians, each linked to specific internal organs system and 365-2000 acupoints (2, 11,16). Chi energy also regulate spiritual, emotional, mental and physical health (1).

Acupressure therapy is applied with the fingers on the acupoints and the stimulation lines or meridians of the body surface (7, 12, 17). The meridians start at the finger tips, connect to the brain, and than connect to the organ associated with the specific meridian (17).

These meridians can become blocked or slowed. Through applying pressure (acupressure) into one or more of these acupoints, imbalances can be corrected by stimulating or easing energy flow (14, 15).

Each meridian is classified according to the specific organ to which it is associated. For example, the heart meridian is connected to the heart; the lung meridian is connected to the lungs (18).

Application of Acupressure

Acupressure is a type of stimulation of the body’s acupuncture points by applying pressure using hands, fingers, palms, elbows, knees, thumbs or acustimulations bands more commonly known as Sea-Bands (Relief Bands or Wrist Bands) (1, 4, 9, 10, 14, 19). Sea–bands are bands or elasticated fabric with a small round plastic button inside the band. They are designed to be worn on both wrists (8).

The most commonly two acupoints used in acupressure are Pericardium 6 (P6 or Neiguan) and Stomach 36 (ST36 or Zusanli). Pericardium 6 is situated bilaterally on the pericardium meridian. This is located on the anterior surface of the forearm, approximately three finger widths from the first wrist crease. The ST36 point is located bilaterally on the stomach meridian approximately for finger widths below the knee and one finger width lateral to the tibia (6, 7, 14, 20).

Pressure on the Neiguan point, also called P6 or pericardial median, rebalances the