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An Alternative for Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, an Observational Case Series

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Purpose: Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS) has an elusive diagnosis and etiology. Treatment focuses on alleviation of symptoms and improving a patient's quality of life. The primary objective was to observe and record changes in a subject's health related quality of life (HRQoL), using the SF 36-Item Health Survey (SF-36), before and six months after a National Upper Cervical Chiropractic Association (NUCCA) atlas correction. The Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index (PSQI) was used to observe changes in a subject's sleep quality.

Methods: Nineteen subjects diagnosed as having CFS according to the 1994 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) diagnostic criteria were studied. Patients who were fatigued six (6) or more months and who met four (4) or more diagnostic criteria were psychiatrically evaluated, and then underwent lab testing and SPECT imaging. Data collection and study administration were conducted using a practice-based research-based protocol. Patients were monitored for a period of six months to insure Atlas alignment was maintained and then retested.

Results: SF-36 results at the end of the study, by a paired t-test of SF-36 data (n=19) revealed a significant increase in the General Health component, from 30.3 pre to 60.9 post (p<0.03) and Mental Health, from 68.6 to 74.7 (p < 0.02). The overall PSQI score significantly decreased from 12.1 to 6.1 (p < 0.05).

SPECT scans and lab testing were inconclusive.

Conclusion: If correction of atlas misalignment in clinically diagnosed CFS patients is the single variable that appears responsible for self-reported improvement of functional and mental health status, then further study is warranted to determine the utility of this intervention in patient care. The study was limited by the lack of a control group and that care was provided by only one practitioner.

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Usefulness of Chinese Herbal Medicine in Advanced Cancer Outpatients: A Study on Efficacy, Tolerability and Quality of Life

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Purpose: This study is to assess the effects of Chinese herbal medicine on aspects of health-related quality of life of patients with heterogeneous advanced cancer

Methods: It was a single-armed, prospective, pre-post and open-label observational study. At the department of oncology in a public hospital, 47 patients who failed previous conventional therapies were recruited to receive one consultation per week (± 2 days) over a study period of eight weeks. Two quality of life instruments, EORTC QLQ-C30 and MOS SF-36, were used to assess HRQoL in patients who were interviewed face-to-face at baseline, on Day 29 and Day 57. Any adverse events were also reported to assess the safety of Chinese herbal medicine.

Results: Thirty-two patients were finally available for data analysis of quality of life. Mean score of the global health status of QLQ-C30 increased from 54.95 ± 9.15 (out of a maximum 100 points) at baseline to 67.45 ± 7.21 points on Day 29, and then decreased to 62.50 ± 7.97 points on Day 57 (F= 5.81; P<0.05). Several measures in the questionnaires also demonstrated improvements over the whole treatment such as emotional function, insomnia and constipation, but without reaching statistical significance. There were no significant change with complete blood count, liver function test and renal function test. Sixteen cases of serious adverse events were reported but none of them was suspected to have a causal relationship with the Chinese herbal medicine used in the study.

Conclusion: After the two-month Chinese herbal medicine treatment, the quality of life and symptoms of advanced cancer patients showed an overall improvement. Chinese herbal medicine is potentially effective for improving quality of life of advanced cancer patients during the palliative period.