

Manual treatment for relief of sinusitis symptoms

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Introduction

Sinuses are interconnected cavities in the skull which mainly allow mucus to drain into the nose [1]. Acute sinusitis symptoms include a congested nose which is most often caused by the virus of the common cold. Chronic sinusitis occurs when the sinuses are inflamed for three months or longer. Chronic condition can be brought on by an infection, by nasal polyps or by different allergies [2].

Sinusitis symptoms

Pain in the forehead, paranasal area and cheekbones, nasal inflammation, runny nose, postnasal drainage and nose congestion with difficulty breathing through the nose. Irritation of the eyes, photosensitivity, blurred vision, mental focus disturbances, sensitivity to cold air or wind is also reported. Complications are very rare but can include meningitis, osteomyelitis and eye infection [2].

Diagnosis

Physical examination is usually sufficient but differential diagnosis might include nasal endoscopy, CT imaging, nasal and sinus sampling for allergy testing and bacteriology [2].

Recommended treatment options

Saline nasal spray, nasal corticosteroids, decongestant, antihistaminic, anti-inflammatory drugs (Mayo). Although the condition is well known and affects significant percentage of the population, there is scarce evidence for physical therapy modalities which could aid with treatment options [3]. There is one case reported where the treatment included use of electromagnetic field and LED light for 30 consecutive days where, after the series of treatments, symptoms improvement was reported, including elimination of frontal headaches, eye and nose pain, nasal discharge and congestion [4]. However, the author of this article was unable to find any literature on manual treatment options that are specifically tailored for treatment of sinusitis. Therefore, the need to report this case series is existing.

Manual treatment

There is anecdotal evidence of a manual therapy used traditionally in South-Eastern Europe for over a century which is said to be effective in treatment of acute and chronic sinusitis.

The therapy consists of manual massage of the posterior side of the neck, cheekbones and includes also decompression of the specific points on the scalp done through pulling of the hair in a specific way. In order to achieve optimal effects

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this procedure is performed once per week for three consecutive times. The hair pulling maneuver is specific and appropriate points of interest are identified by palpation through the treatment. The points for decompression of the scalp differs from person to person and can vary in number from 6 to 20. By comparing the points that were identified through practice and available anatomical charts it could be assumed that the treatment targets mostly lymphatic vessels' path of the head and neck and in some cases pathways of the scalp nerves. It seems that it is not practical to treat more than 30% of points per one session in order to avoid discomfort or even painful sensations.

Effects of this therapy was evaluated during year 2021, from autumn until summer next year in clinical settings on a three hundred (300) patients. All of the patients have had confirmed diagnosis based on physical examination and, where needed, imaging. All of the patients have reported symptoms such as congested nose, feeling of pressure in the forehead and in paranasal area, difficulty breathing, pain of up to 6-8 NRS points, as well as significantly decreased quality of private and professional life in terms of anxiety, mental focus, mood. None of the patients were with allergy, bacterial infection, polyps, bony obstruction nor muco-cella. Follow-up was conducted on day 30 after the conclusion of the treatment.

Majority of the patients (294) have reported significant symptoms relief following the treatment while the remaining 6 had minimal relief, mostly in form of pain reduction and improved breathing through nose.

Upon completing questionnaire, it was concluded that the pain was resolved for 98% of the treated patients although in some cases (around 10% of the group) some sort of discomfort (1-2 NRS) was still present. Comfortable or normal breathing for the 98% was re-established while the rest of the reported symptoms disappeared (feeling of pressure, lack of focus, anxiety, mood swings). Furthermore, the reported quality of the life has significantly improved. On a 30 days follow-up no negative changes of the previously recorded results were noted.

No negative side-effects were reported although in some cases there was sudden sweating and/or feeling of blood pressure drop immediately after the scalp decompression but lasting for no longer than 5 minutes. One interesting finding in 12-15 years old patients whom had accompanying tonsillitis aside from sinusitis is that the tonsillitis related symptoms have disappeared after this treatment. This could be something that might be explored further since treatment described here most likely targets elements of the lymphatic system and it is already known that tonsils are lymphatic nodes.

Conclusion

The above described technique has shown to be effective as a treatment option for sinusitis, both chronic and acute. The positive aspect of this treatment is that no medications were used with no severe side effects to be reported.

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