A New Finding—peripheral Vision Phobia: A Possible Subtype of Social Phobia

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[Abstract]

Background and objectives: Social phobia is a nervous anxiety characterized by one or more constant fear in social activity or specific situation which causes serious damage to individual’s social functions leading to chronic functional impairment when it is untreated. The objective of this study is to report a new finding of a possible subtype of social phobia according to a case survey and study of sufferers found via online support group.

Methods: A single case review using survey and interview on patient was employed. Following a no-treatment baseline period for examination and interview, biweekly acupuncture treatment with interview for in-depth examination was delivered for 6 months. Also, for in-depth investigation of peripheral vision phobia, survey questionnaire was done by the members of a Korean support group on on-line social group forum.

Result: A new type of social phobia which has not yet been reported nor mentioned in any journals, namely called ‘peripheral vision phobia’ has been identified. Biweekly acupuncture treatment reached a comfort state of mental status on one case of patient with social phobia.

Limitation: Due to the shift of environment on patient’s part, the termination of the school session at where the phobia occur the most, the reoccurrence of the phobia is yet to be examined. Also, the generalization of the new type of phobia as a subtype only by reviewing one case alone with survey interview of on-line social group has limitation.

Conclusion: The result of the case review suggests that ‘peripheral vision phobia’ is strictly concentrated on malfunctioning of peripheral vision without functional or organic hindrance of pupils or of any parts of eyes including eye muscles due to peripheral vision phobia. PVP is similar to social phobia and it may be a subtype of social phobia, however, since etiology, diagnosis, medical treatment methods are under researched, investigation is yet to be done.

Key words: Peripheral vision phobia; Social phobia; Acupuncture; Korean medicine

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I. Introduction

Social phobia is a nervous anxiety characterized by one or more constant fear in social activity or specific situation which causes serious damage to individual’s social functions leading to chronic functional impairment when it is untreated. At some stages of a lifetime, many may come across some types of social phobia. It is one of the most common psychiatric disorders with a lifetime prevalence of 12%. Medical encyclopedic definition of social phobia is a persistent and irrational fear of situations that may involve scrutiny or judgment by others. Aside from social phobia, a new disorder under the tab of social phobia is a new finding especially focused on the eye vision, more specifically, peripheral vision. As a young curious kid, one may have purposely tried to blur out the central vision and see through peripheral vision. One may have experienced movements and actions going on on both left and right side of space where one is spaced. This peripheral vision phobia is a symptom found by case review of peripheral vision phobia (PVP). The purpose of this study is to introduce a new finding of a disorder yet unknown and the acupuncture treatment that has been used to relief symptom.

II. Case

A single patient at a clinical setting, 27 year old Korean female medical school student with a venerable emotional state with unknown disorder was assessed in 2011–2012 for 6 months (Aug 11, 2011– Feb 20, 2012) by a Korean medical doctor. She was not diagnosed with DSM–IV social phobia criteria and because the case was not yet seen at any other journals, investigator–administered questionnaire was used to sensitize symptoms of so-called ‘peripheral vision phobia’ at the baseline period. The survey questionnaire is comprised of demographic questions, way of managing stress and types of stress situation one may be in kind of personal stressful situation question, and 27 questionnaires of physical, psychological, and emotional symptoms on peripheral vision phobia in Korean language. At the first visit, physical examination was undergone. Thereafter, hourly personal interview/counseling and acupuncture treatment on patient following the interview was employed biweekly for six months for in-depth examination and investigation under patient’s consent. For the acupuncture treatment, disposable acupuncture needles (H.L. SEO WON ACUP. NEEDLES, DIA 0.25 mm LENGTH 30 mm) were used, The patient was in supine position, The following acupuncture points LI2, LI3, PC7, SI2, GV20, SI6, BL4, LI4, LR3, HT7, PC6, PC8, LI11, CV17, ST1, ST4, BL4, BL2, TE25, GB1, GV20, EX–HN3, 4, 5 were manually manipulated for 15 minutes followed by another set of points of scalp acupuncture points SI1, 2, 3, 12, and 13 for 15 minutes in prone position, Treatment sessions lasted for 30 minutes every visit, The treatment ended at 14 sessions with no remarkable side effects. Minor side effects such as brushes, blood let–out disappeared after 4 weeks from the treatments. For assessment of acupuncture treatment, we used visual analog scale (VAS) for symptom change. At the initial stage of the treatment, the patient was asked to rate the severity of the symptom by making a mark on a horizontal 100 mm visual analog scale bounded by the words "least severe" on the left and "most severe" on the right. At the end of 6 month treatment, patient was again asked to compare the current severity of the symptom on a new form, without reference to the previous mark. Patient was also asked to compare the current symptom severity to the previous measurement by choosing from 5 qualitative descriptors: “no change (0),” “a little less (−1),” “a little more (−2),” “a lot less (−3),” or “a lot more (−4).” Also, in a further search for similar cases to fully understand her complaints, an anonymous support group forum already formed on–line for those with peripheral vision phobia was found at a Korean portal sites, www.naver.com and www.daum.net. As a member of the anonymous forum, the same investigator–administered questionnaire was utilized for more of