A Case Report of a Chronic Schizophrenia Treated with Combined Treatment of Korean and Western Medicine

Na-Eun Park, Jun-Hyun Park, Dae-Eok Kim, Young-Min Seo, Sang-Ho Kim, Dae-Kyoo Chung
Department of Oriental Neuropsychiatry, College of Korean Medicine, Daegu Hanny University

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Objectives: Schizophrenia is difficult to treat effectively and the antipsychotics used have many side effects. However, few studies have focused on the combined treatment of Korean and Western medicine as an alternative. In this study, we reported an inpatient with chronic schizophrenia who was treated by a combination of Korean and Western medicine.

Methods: We experienced a case of a diagnosed schizophrenia patient as whose chief complaint was avolition, diminished emotional expression and hallucination. The patient was treated with Western medicine and Korean traditional treatment including acupuncture, moxa and herbal medicine. The Brief Psychiatric Rating Scale (BPRS) and the Positive and Negative Syndrome Scale (PANSS) were used for assessment.

Results: After treatment, symptoms involving avolition, diminished emotional expression and hallucination were improved; furthermore, the scores of the BPRS and the PANSS were decreased by approximately 50%, respectively. In addition, there were no notable side effects.

Conclusions: The combined treatment of Korean and Western medicine can be an effective and well-tolerated treatment modality for patients with chronic schizophrenia.

Key Words: Chronic Schizophrenia, Combined treatment of Western and Korean medicine, Herbal medicine, Acupuncture.
I. INTRODUCTION

About 1% of people around the world suffer from schizophrenia which usually attacks people in teens or early twenties and becomes chronic. It dose not only make patients to have difficulties in personal living but also impose the burden of support to the families of patients and the society\(^1\). The number of patients treated with the code “F20”, which means schizophrenia, had constantly increased from 2012 to 2014\(^2\).

According to the 5th version of Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, at least two or more of the following symptoms are necessary to diagnose schizophrenia and each symptom has to present for a significant portion of time during a one month period: Delusions, hallucinations, disorganized speech, grossly disorganized, catatonic behavior, or negative symptoms. Moreover continuous signs of the disturbance persist for at least six months. This six month period must include at least one month of symptoms\(^3\).

Although antipsychotic drugs are the mainstay of treatment nowadays, they are associated with serious adverse effects such as tardive dyskinesia and tremor. Also about 20% of people do not respond adequately to treatment\(^4\). So there are some increasing attentions about Korean traditional treatment on schizophrenia for alternative.

In previous studies carried out in Korea, Ha\(^5\) reported a case study of combination therapy of psychosocial treatment and oriental medical treatment on schizophrenia and Lee\(^6\) reported a case study of a schizophreniform disorder treated by oriental medical treatment and emotional freedom techniques. But the domestic studies on schizophrenia are not as active as the international studies. Furthermore, there are only a small number of studie available on the combined treatment of Korean and Western medicine.

With this background, the author reports a case study of application of the combined treatment of Korean and Western medicine on schizophrenia.

II. CASE

1. Patient: Male/20 years old

2. Chief complaints
   1) Avolition, diminished emotional expression and hallucination
   2) Hallucination

3. Onset of symptoms
   July 15, 2015 (12 days before admission)

4. Past medical history
   1) Rhabdomyolysis: diagnosed in 2012
   2) Complex regional pain syndrome: diagnosed in 2013
   3) Allergic rhinitis: diagnosed in 2000

5. Family history
   None

6. Current medication
   1) Olanzapine 10 mg IT#1 (antipsychotic)
   2) Sertraline hydrochloride 111.9 mg IT#1 (antidepressant)
   3) Milnacipran hydrochloride 50 mg IT#2 (antidepressant)

7. Current medical history

   This 20-year-old male patient experienced his first hallucination episode when he was 17 years old. After then he was diagnosed as schizophrenia and started to antipsychotic drugs. His symptoms worsened after he lost his puppy in July 15th, 2015. He increased the quantity of medication but his symptoms including hallucination and negative symptoms did not improve. He lied on the bed all the time so he visited our