STUDY THE EFFICACY OF THE TOPICAL CHINESE MEDICINE, ANGELICA ALOE VERA GEL, ON THE TREATMENT OF RADIATION DERMATITIS

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(Received 20th February 2012, accepted 28th June 2012)

Radiotherapy is the main method for the treatment of head and neck cancer; however, patients suffer from substantial side effects of radiation dermatitis that may affect the course of treatment. There is no consistent medical treatment program for the management of radiation dermatitis. Nonetheless, topical steroids have proved effective in the treatment of radiation dermatitis; however, several side effects from steroid use have been reported. This study proposes using the Chinese herbal medicine “Angelica aloe vera gel” as a possible alternative treatment for radiation dermatitis. In this study, 70 patients were enrolled and randomly divided into 2 groups of 35 patients each. The 35 patients in the first group used Western medicine as the treatment for radiation dermatitis, whereas the patients in the second group used Chinese herbal medicine as the treatment. Seven patients dropped out of the study because of personal reasons 3 from the group using Western medicine and 4 from the group using Chinese medicine. During the study, patients were evaluated using the Criteria for Adverse Events Version 4.0 (CTCAE v4) of the National Cancer Institute Common Terminology, and skin symptom including pain, itching, tightness, comfort, peeling, and quality of life were evaluated. The study findings showed that CTCAE results from the group of patients using Chinese medicine compared to the group of patients using Western medicine were significant ($P = 0.012$). Further comparison of the skin symptoms using 54 Grays to 68 Grays of radiotherapy showed a lower rate of desquamation in the group of patients using Chinese medicine with a significant difference compared to the group of patients using Western medicine. In conclusion, using Chinese medicine is not inferior to using topical steroids in the treatment of radiation dermatitis.

Key words: radiation dermatitis, Chinese medicine, Angelica aloe vera gel, cancer diseases

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