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Abstract

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Clinical effects of far-infrared therapy in patients with allergic rhinitis.

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Abstract

Allergic rhinitis (AR) is the sixth most common chronic illness worldwide, which has a significant impact on patients' quality of life. The actual cost of AR is staggering, approximately $5.6 billion being spent annually in direct medical costs and other indirect costs. Therefore, it should be taken seriously upon its evaluation and treatment. AR is an IgE-mediated inflammation, which symptoms are likely due to increased vascular permeability. Current therapeutic options such as avoidance of allergen, medication and immunotherapy are unsatisfactory. Far-infrared (FIR) is an invisible electromagnetic wave with a wavelength longer than that of visible light. It has been used to treat vascular diseases as a result of an increase in blood flow. The objective of this study was to evaluate the clinical effects of FIR therapy in patients with AR. Thirty-one patients with AR were enrolled in this study. A WS TY101 FIR emitter was placed to face the patient's nasal region at a distance of 30 cm. The treatment was performed for 40 min every morning for 7 days. Every day, patients recorded their symptoms in a diary before and during treatment. Each symptom of rhinitis was rated on a 4-point scale (0-3) according to severity. During the period of FIR therapy, the symptoms of eye itching, nasal itching, nasal stuffiness, rhinorrhea and sneezing were all significantly improved. Smell impairment was not improved until after the last treatment. No obvious adverse effect was observed in the patients during treatment and follow-up. We concluded that FIR therapy could improve the symptoms of AR and might serve as a novel treatment modality for AR.

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