

Effectiveness of Acyclovir on Meniere's Syndrome III Observation of Clinical Symptoms in 301 Cases

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ABSTRACT Despite a variety of proposed causes, the real etiology of Meniere's disease (MD) is still unknown. Since no effective treatment has been established yet, the patients with this disease usually suffer from the uncomfortable symptoms for a long period and repeated recurrences. The symptoms and pathologic changes reported to date, led the author to the idea that the majority of MD is caused by viral infection to vestibulocochlear area, probably herpesvirus infection. The author attempted to administer acyclovir (ACV) to patients with MD and obtained a dramatic therapeutic effect. Between October 1990 and October 1997, 301 patients were administered ACV with the dose of 2,000 mg/day for the average period of two weeks. The effectiveness was evaluated by objective and subjective symptoms of patients with MD under a definite criteria comparing features between pre- and after-ACV administration referring to AAO-HNS criteria. Special attention was paid to the patients followed more than three years after the treatment (about 150 cases) for the detailed evaluation of effectiveness.

Out of 250 evaluatable cases 89 cases showed "marked effect" and 116 cases were "effective", indicating total 205 effective cases (82.0%). There were 24 unclear cases (9.6%). Only 21 cases (8.4%) showed "no effect". No side effect was observed in this series of the study.

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Key words: Meniere's disease, Acyclovir, Vestibul cochlear nerve, Herpesviridae infection

1 Introduction

The definite cause of MD is not clear yet but endolymphatic hydrops has been recognized. Several causes have been suggested such as allergy, disorder of the autonomic nervous system and stress. Viral infection has also been implicated¹⁻⁸⁾, however, no trial of anti-viral treatments has been reported to date except the author's two papers^{1,2)}.

More than ten years, the author has suspected from clinical experiences that MD would be a viral infectious disease. In many cases patients recover from the disease after the acute stadium but they encounter repeated exacerbation. This process resembles that of a latent infection and recurrence in herpes labialis, herpetic gingivostomatitis. As for Bell's palsy and Ramsey-Hunt syndrome, ACV is commonly used, because they are considered as viral infectious diseases. Before the use of antiviral medicine for Bell's palsy, it took approximately three to six months to recover from the disease and in some cases only partial recovery was seen, which made it difficult to predict the prognosis at the early stage of the disease. Many doctors have observed the similarity in the process of MD and Bell's palsy.

If, in fact, MD is a viral infectious disease, and judged from how many the cases are commonly found, it is quite possible to surmise that the cause of the disease to be some common virus, such as herpesvirus. Based on this idea, the author has administered ACV to patients with MD and obtained a dramatic effectiveness.