



Case Report

Eye blinking and throat clearing constantly for over three months

Patient's Details:

Male 6 years old. First visit 30 Feb 2016.

Treatment: No acupuncture or herbal medicine treatment is given. Psychological, daily habits and diet adjustment are advised.

Chief Complaint:

Eye blinking and throat clearing constantly for over three months

Complaint history and Characteristics on day of visit:

He started to blink his eyes constantly from early November last year after watching a firework show. The symptoms are getting worse in the last 3 months. Some days, he clears his throat very often. There is no phlegm and no running nose. He can not control it and he can't stop them. He has seen his GP but GP referred him to have his vision checked. The vision is absolutely fine after seeing an optometrist. He also has the habit of biting his nails at night in the last few months. His mum doesn't need to cut his nail in the last three months. His mum doesn't notice him biting nails in day time. The habit he keeps biting his nails at night telling me he may feel nervous or scared before bedtime. I started ask him and his parents questions regarding details of his daily life, activities and emotional health. He is scared at night and is very difficult to fall asleep. He usually wakes up two or three times a night and would like to sleep with his parents. But most of the time, he has to go back to his own room and sleep on his own. He usually wakes up really early about 5 or 5:30 am but he has to stay in his room till 7:00 to come downstairs. He goes to his best friends' house for play days very often. Sometimes, they watch movies really scary like Jurassic World, Star Wars and his friend always says there are invisible monsters around them which make him really scary even at day time.

Medical History:

Asthma.

Initial Pulse/Tongue:

Tongue: white thick tongue coating.

Pulse: Moderate pulse

Diagnosis:

This little boy has kept making involuntary sounds and movements called tics, which is a typical symptom of Tourette's syndrome. However, he can NOT be diagnosed with Tourette's syndrome at this stage because literally you can only be diagnosed with Tourette's syndrome if you've had several symptoms for at least a year. Tourette's syndrome usually starts during childhood, but the tics and other symptoms usually improve after several years and sometimes go away completely.

One of the basic Traditional Chinese Medicine concept is the holistic concept. It mainly has two points:

The body communicates with the external environment constantly, factors such as weather, geographic location, working and family environments can all affect our health. When changes occur in external environment, and the body fails to adapt to the changes, diseases are likely to occur. The body itself is an organic whole, all the component parts are interconnected, they dependent and restrict each other physiologically, influence each other pathologically.

The symptoms of Tourette's Syndrome usually are related to congenital factors, diet, environmental and social factors. In terms to congenital factors, in this case it is easy to understand that this little boy is scared after watching a scary movie while some other children are absolutely fine after watching the same movie. In other words, some children are more sensitive than others. Being a sensitive kid, watching moves not appropriate for his age, playing with a friend making up invisible monsters and sleeping alone at night all make him have constant and chronic worrying, nervousness, and tension. All of these emotional factors contribute to his abnormal behaviors including involuntary eye blinking, throat clearing and nail biting. His parents are also too worried about the impact of his tics disorder, taking his illness too seriously and forming a psychological shadow.

Advices:

Parents are advised not to worry too much. Do not criticize and blame the child's tics disorder, and do not always remind the child to control. The symptoms can be alleviated by rationally arranging the child's life, learning, and diverting attention. Try to encourage him make new friends at school and speak to his best friend's parents if possible regarding watching movies and the made-up monsters. Less screen time including TV, ipad, computer games, xbox etc and more outdoor activities. Try to explain to him about the process of making a movie or animation, the visual effects of movies, who the actors are, the behind-scene stories. Eat less sweet, deep-fried food and more fresh vegetables and fruit. Last but not least, move his bed to his parents' room and sit next to him before his bedtime. Read some lovely stories before he falls

asleep to divert his attention and thoughts about the scary things in his mind. Make sure someone is always around when he wakes up at night.

Progress

He blinked his eyes less frequently after one month especially in the morning. In the second month, there were some days that he had no blinking eyes or clearing throat at all. He also sleeps much better. The symptoms were on and off for another 3 months with less frequency and shorter time. After 5 months, the symptoms have completely gone and his nails start to grow again.

Note:

Tourette's syndrome is usually diagnosed after having tics for over a year. Currently on NHS web site, it clearly says there's no cure for Tourette's syndrome, but treatment can help manage symptoms. By writing this case report, I am not arguing against NHS that TCM can cure Tourette's syndrome. This little boy's parents started to make changes to their son's school and social life, daily activities and also their way of being parents after their son having tics for THREE MONTHS rather than 1 year or even longer.