

CASE STUDY

“SU JOK” THERAPY AND SCLEROLOGY PROFILE MONITORING FOR MANAGING CHEST PAIN AT HOME WHILE AVOIDING HOSPITAL ADMISSION DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC: A CASE STUDY

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Abstract

Background: The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in people avoiding hospital admission for non-COVID patients and forcing people to seek help via telehealth or alternative medicine.

Case study: A 30-year-old man from Solo, Indonesia, complained of left chest discomfort with an irregular heartbeat. This man sent an inquiry and his left eye sclera profile through WhatsApp on July 20, 2020 to a researcher, who is a nurse and “Su jok” therapist. Protocol for “Su jok” therapy was sent back through WhatsApp, and after applying the treatment for 30 minutes, the patient felt better, and symptoms were less severe. The full protocol to be applied for the following days was then sent to the patient. After three weeks, there was a less sharp red line in the sclera area of the vessel blockage, and he only experienced mild symptoms.

Conclusion: The case study shows that “Su jok” therapy may become an alternative therapy for managing chest pain at home. Sclerology can be a complementary choice to monitor a patient’s heart condition. Visiting the hospital, however, is still necessary when the symptoms become worse.

KEYWORDS

Su jok therapy; chest pain; COVID-19; complementary alternative medicine

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INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused nearly all resources to focus on managing patients infected with the virus. Because of this pandemic, many cases other than COVID were not handled in a timely way or were too late; for example, new bariatric and metabolic procedures were postponed worldwide during the current pandemic ([Rubino et al., 2020](#)). In addition, in one hospital in Italy, 12 cases were late in getting access to health care during March 23-27 in 2020 ([Lazzerini et al., 2020](#)).

Other publications show that during the COVID-19 pandemic in Italy, visitation to the emergency room dramatically dropped for non-COVID conditions such as appendicitis, heart attack, and stroke. Patients may avoid seeking medical help for fear of contracting COVID-19 ([Ciacchini et al., 2020](#)) and also because of orders to stay at home ([Masroor, 2020](#)). This delay can ultimately lead to increased morbidity and mortality. This situation is called “collateral damage” and is caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Data showed that a 2-day delay in seeking help related to myocardial infarction causes more dangerous conditions for patients ([Masroor, 2020](#)).

Regarding the decrease in visits to hospitals, this trend may indicate some of the reasons for the results of a study in the United States that found an increase in telehealth use ([Hong et al., 2020](#)). The increase in telehealth can be interpreted as part of the efforts of patients to avoid visiting hospitals and finding solutions to health problems through the help of Internet networks.

This case study discusses how a complementary alternative medicine using “Su jok” was applied through Internet networks. “Su jok”, originally from the South Korean language meaning hand and foot, was designed by Prof Park Jae Woo in 1987 ([Park, n.d.](#)). Therapy in “Su jok” is done by manipulating the skin on the hands or feet using different methods, such as massage, applying color, seeds, and other treatments ([Park, 1987](#)).

In this case study, therapy was performed without direct contact between the practitioner and the patient because the contact was made using social media (WhatsApp). The patient applied the “Su jok” therapy independently. The confirmation and monitoring of the problem experienced by the patient were done using the method of checking through certain points based on the “Su jok” map for the heart organ in the patient’s hands, and also by using eye photo reading (sclerology). Sclerology is a science to interpret a person’s health and

body condition by checking the blood vessels in the sclera ([Berret, 2010](#)).

The use of sclerology to diagnose is usually paired with iridology, but in this case study, the iris profile was hard to obtain without a specific tool or method. Currently, there are different opinions regarding the accuracy of the diagnosis using sclerology and iridology since they are not yet fully accepted as accurate diagnostic tools. While iridology has been called nonsense ([Berret, 2010](#)), other researchers claim that iridology and sclerology offer accurate assessments related to a patient's body condition ([Wagester, 2018](#)). In this report, sclerology was considered as the easiest choice of monitoring and checking the status of the patient through telehealth. This case study aimed to describe how to manage chest pain using "Su jok" therapy and how sclerology was used to monitor the patient's heart condition.

CASE PRESENTATION

A 30-year-old male from Solo, Indonesia, on July 20, 2020, complained of discomfort in his left chest, stating that his heartbeat was irregular and he felt like it stopped several times a minute. Since during the pandemic COVID-19, it is recommended to stay at home because of the risk of transmission of COVID-19 in the hospital, the patient then sought help from the researcher through social media (WhatsApp). The researchers used the method of checking his condition by asking the patient to search for pain points corresponding to the heart in both of his hands and to share his sclera photos to verify his complaints. The history of symptoms and therapy applied are shown in **Table 1**.

Table 1 The History of "Su jok" Therapy

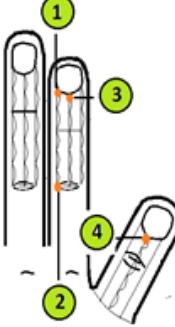
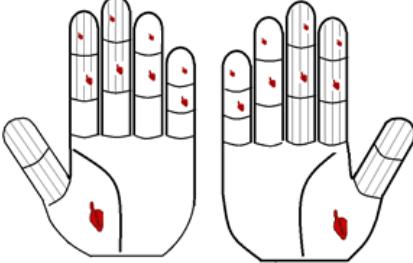
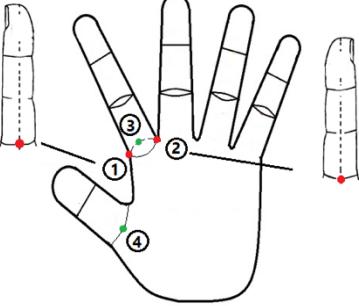
Date	Type of "Su jok" therapy	Explanation	How to do the therapy	Results
July 20, 2020 at 15.50	Energy therapy using (Six Ki's method).	This is therapy to manipulate energy in the body. This energy therapy was done by using color in fingers on the left hand. The goal is to open the blockage in the artery vessel.	 Put orange dot color following the sequence (number 1-4)	After 20 minutes, no improvement
July 20, 2020 at 16.42-17.01	Correspondence therapy	This is therapy to manipulate organs – in this case, is heart organ. The correspondence of heart organs located in a different area in the hands. This therapy was conducted using massage on the pain point on the hand (where the heart correspondence point is located) and put red color. The goal is to open the blockage in the artery or heart organ.	 Find pain point in the red mark (heart correspondence) on the hand above, then massage until pinkies and then put red color	After 4 minutes of therapy, the chest felt less tight. The patient was asked to do the therapy by himself for the next day.
July 21, 2020 at 09.43	Correspondence therapy	Idem as above	 Put dot color in the area above in sequence (1-4)	

Table 1 (Cont.)

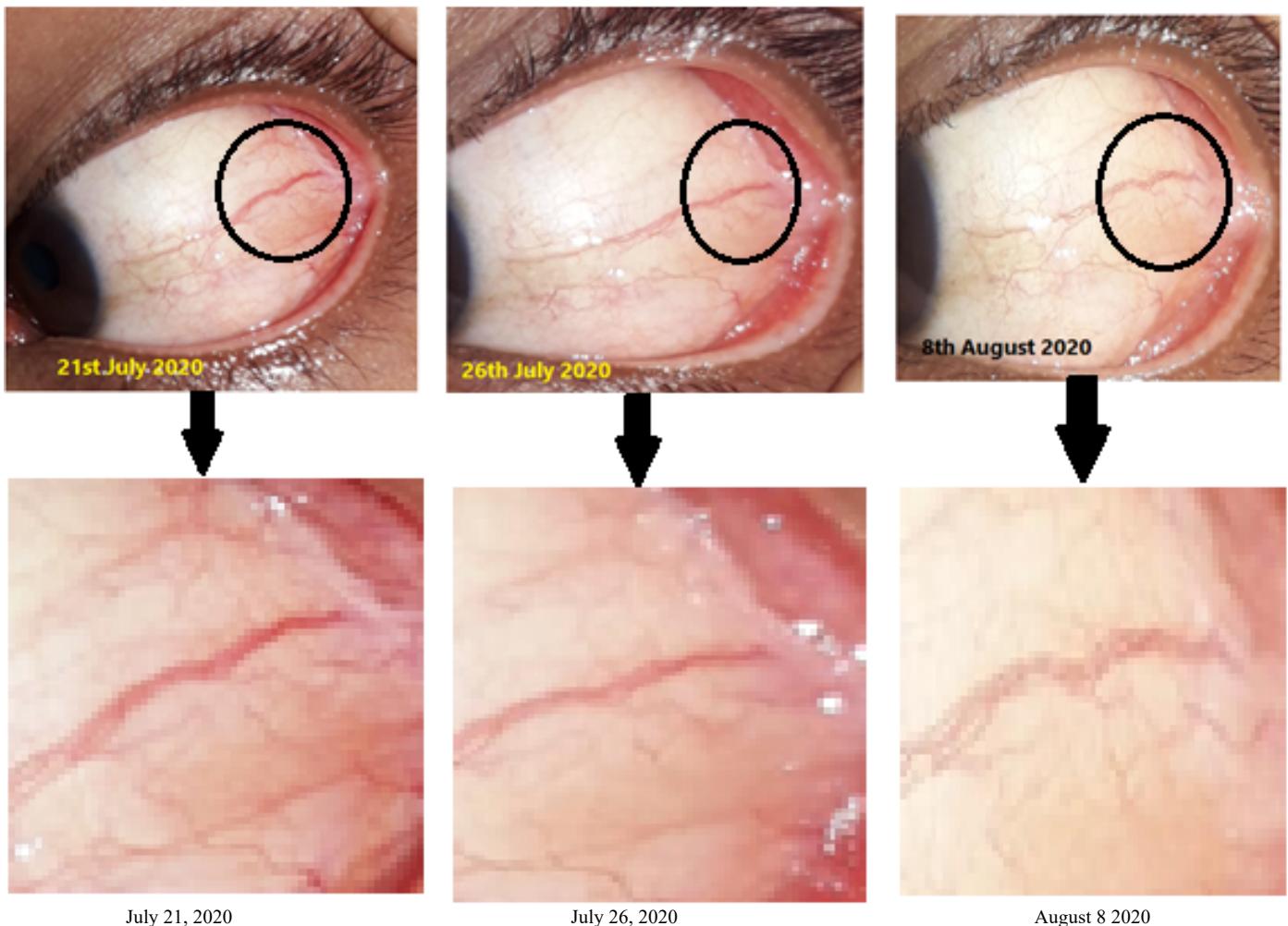
No communication from July 22 to July 25, 2020

July 26, 2020	The patient contacted the researcher and said that therapies still have been done but not regularly (at least once a day)
July 26, 2020	No communication between researcher and patient.
July 28, 2020	The patient contacted the researcher and said that therapies still have been done but not regularly (at least once a day)

The eye profile showed a problem in the area of the aorta, heart valves and the heart itself. Since the irregular heart rate often stopping in one minute is considered dangerous and potentially life-threatening, the researchers then provided the protocol of “Su jok” therapy for the patient to perform at home. The researchers offered therapeutic suggestions with energy therapy because it can provide a faster effect ([Park, n.d.](#)), if done correctly. But in the next 20 minutes, there was no change in the patient’s heart rate condition; so then, the researcher provided another therapeutic suggestion, namely correspondence

therapy. This strategy worked successfully, and the patient felt better in his chest, although the symptoms persisted but were less severe.

The researcher then sent the full protocol to be applied regularly, but the researcher found that the patient did not adhere to applying it regularly. After three weeks, it was found that he only experienced mild symptoms, and the sclera’s profile showed progress (see **Figure 1**).

**Figure 1** The comparison of the sclera profile between July 21, July 26, and August 8, 2020

DISCUSSION

The focus of “Su jok” therapy is weakening (sedation) the coldness energy (or homo energy) in both the corresponding points and the coldness (or homo energy) sedation in the heart meridians. Coldness (or homo) energy is chosen for sedation because this coldness (or homo) energy is a characteristic of a blockage condition of the heart or blood vessels (Park, 2002).

Based on the case presentation, energy therapy initially did not have any effect on the patient’s symptoms. The therapy may not have had an immediate impact because the patient did not put the color dots for energy therapy in an accurate location. Although this energy therapy usually has an immediate effect, the therapeutic effect will not be obtained if the dots are not placed accurately. The proper application of this energy therapy eventually becomes difficult for those who have never studied the location of these energy points.

The correspondence therapy, which is easier to be applied by the patient, however, showed a quick result. The massage and red color were used to reduce (to sedate) the blockage in the blood vessels and to increase the blood flow. The researchers could also check whether the therapy was done correctly in the corresponding area of the target (heart point) through photos of the patient’s hands since the instructions were carried out independently by the patient. Even though the symptoms decreased, this outcome still did not reach the optimum goal, since the patient could not apply therapy regularly.

One aspect that caused the patient to stop the therapy was the fact that he already started to feel better and more comfortable. This result shows that even though when “Su jok” therapy was applied irregularly; it can reduce symptoms. The eye sclera profile also showed a progressive change for the better, and the patient felt improvement in his symptoms. The examination using an eye profile, however, has drawbacks. Some disadvantages are that the eye photo is affected by light and the use of different tools when taking pictures of the eyes’ sclera. In this regard, the researchers could not directly confirm the use of the same equipment and light conditions since the eye’s photo was sent by the patient.

Because the “Su jok” therapy is easier and can be done without any invasive procedures, this therapy can be very useful for nurses to be applied to patients. The implication of this study for nursing is this therapy will be considered as an alternative method to be taught in the nursing curriculum for improving nurse’s skills to help their patients. This “Su jok” therapy can also help nurses avoid virus transmission from patients they are caring for remotely via telehealth.

CONCLUSION

“Su jok” can be considered as an alternative therapy for chest pain, and sclerology can be used in monitoring symptoms. Research with more

rigorous methods needs to be conducted to gain more benefits from “Su jok” therapy.

Ethical Consideration

Participant agreed to be published without any identification (anonymous).

Declaration of Conflicting Interest

There is no conflict of interest in this publication.

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