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Immunotherapy with *Tinospora cordifolia*: a new lead in the management of obstructive jaundice.

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Abstract

OBJECTIVE: Immunosuppression associated with deranged hepatic function and sepsis results in poor surgical outcome in extrahepatic obstructive jaundice. The effect of an ayurvedic agent, *Tinospora cordifolia* (TC), which has been shown to have hepatoprotective and immunomodulatory properties in experimental studies, on surgical outcome in patients with malignant obstructive jaundice was evaluated. **METHODS:** Thirty patients were randomly divided into two groups, matched with respect to clinical features, impairment of hepatic function (as judged by liver function tests including antipyrine elimination) and immunosuppression (phagocytic and killing capacities of neutrophils). Group I received conventional management, ie vitamin K, antibiotics and biliary drainage; Group II received *Tinospora cordifolia* (16 mg/kg/day orally) in addition, during the period of biliary drainage. **RESULTS:** Hepatic function remained comparable in the two groups after drainage. However, the phagocytic and killing capacities of neutrophils normalized only in patients receiving *Tinospora cordifolia* (28.2 +/- 5.5% and 29.47 +/- 6.5% respectively). Post-drainage bactobilia was observed in 8 patients in Group I and 7 in Group II, but clinical evidence of septicemia was observed in 50% of patients in Group I as against none in Group II ($p < 0.05$). Post-operative survival in Groups I and II was 40% and 92.4% respectively ($p < 0.01$). **CONCLUSION:** *Tinospora cordifolia* appears to improve surgical outcome by strengthening host defenses.

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