

Effect of Energy and Number of Sessions of Extracorporeal Shock Wave Therapy on Nerve Regeneration

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Introduction

Extracorporeal shock wave therapy (ESWT) has been recognized as an effective treatment for neurological disorders. However, despite its promise, there remains significant debate regarding the optimal ESWT protocols, particularly concerning energy density, treatment duration, and session frequency. This study aims to explore the impact of energy density and the number of sessions of ESWT on the regeneration of nerves in rats with sciatic nerve damage, seeking to identify the most effective protocol and approach.

Method

Forty rats were utilized and randomly allocated into five experimental groups and control (each n=5). The experimental groups underwent treatments with varying energy densities (low-energy, 0.098 mJ/mm² and high-energy, 0.229 mJ/mm²) of ESWT, administered either in a single or multiple sessions (1 or 3 sessions at 1 week interval) after sciatic nerve injury. The control group (sciatic nerve injury, no treatment) was used to evaluate the influence of ESWT on nerve repair. ELISA, immunofluorescence staining, toluidine blue staining were used to assess nerve regeneration at 9 weeks after nerve injury. The recovery of nerve damage was evaluated through behavioral analysis by analyzing the expression levels of NGF, BDNF, S100 β , GAP43, and NF200. Functional recovery was evaluated via sequential sciatic function index (SFI) measurements and electrophysiological parameters for a duration of 9 weeks.

Results

NGF exhibited increased expression levels, especially in groups III and IV, in comparison to the control group across the 9-week period.

Results

- When comparing the experimental groups to the control group, groups III and IV demonstrated higher expression levels of S100 β , GAP43, NF200, BDNF, and NGF compared to groups I and II.
- Immunofluorescence images, and toluidine blue staining showed that groups III and IV achieved significantly successful nerve regeneration results (increased myelination and axonal density) compared to groups I and II.
- The SFI and compound muscle action potential (CMAP) amplitude indicated significant improvement in group III & IV compared to group I & II, and the results of group I & II.

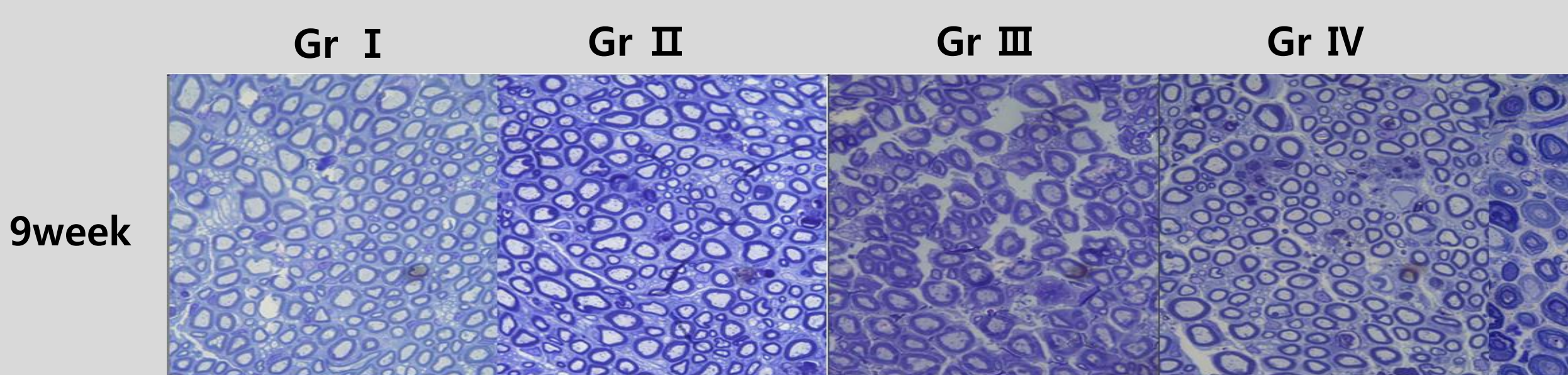


Figure 1. Effects of Extracorporeal shock wave therapy on axonal regeneration and myelination by toluidine blue imaging(nine weeks post nerve injury)

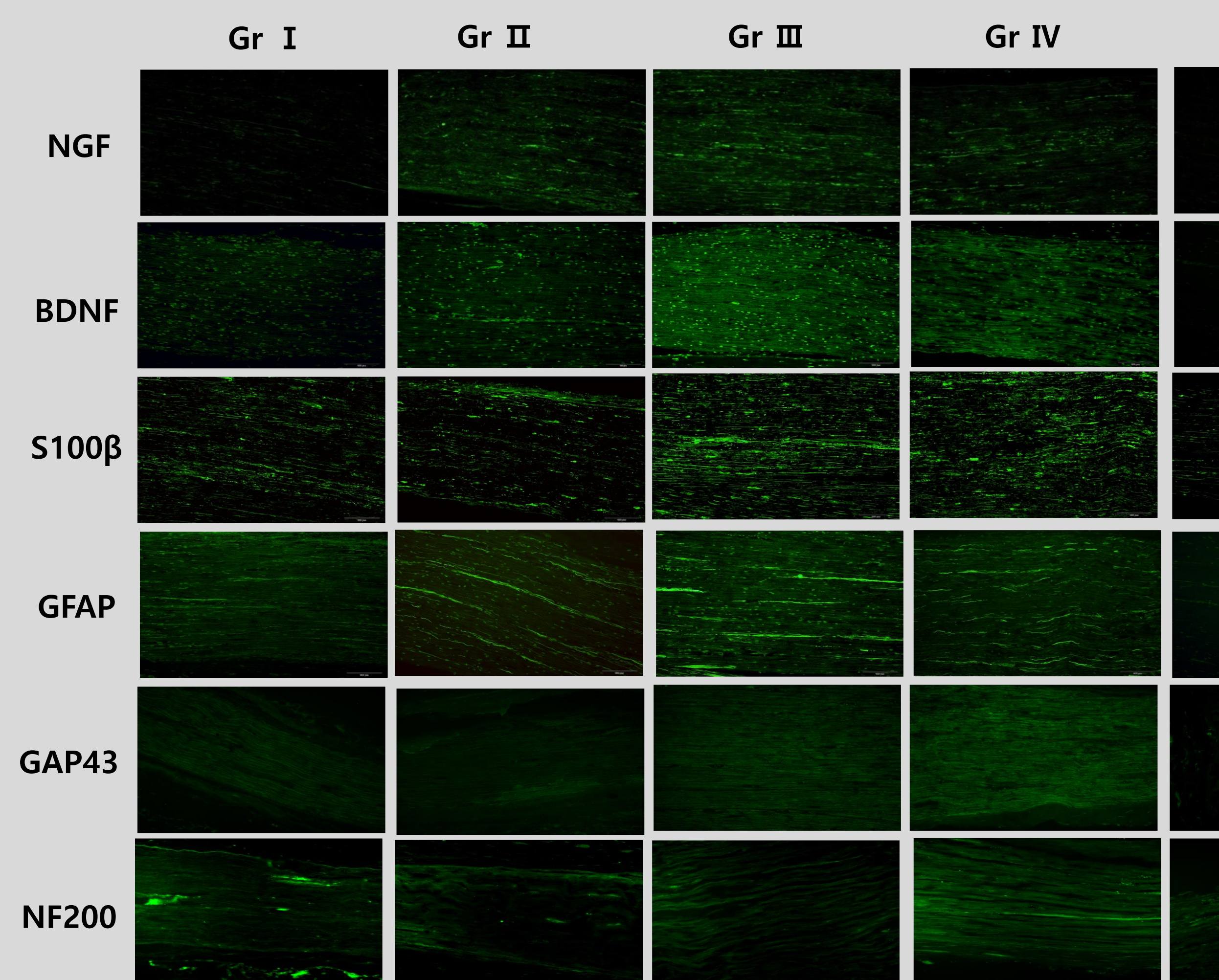


Figure 2. Effects of Extracorporeal shock wave therapy on NGF, BDNF, S100 β , GFAP, GAP43, and NF200 expression of injured sciatic nerve by Immunofluorescence image (nine weeks post nerve injury)

Conclusions

- This research established that Extracorporeal Shock Wave Therapy (ESWT) facilitates the recovery of damaged nerves, with high-energy treatments across any number of sessions being more efficacious in addressing nerve injuries.
- Further investigations are imperative to ascertain the long-term impacts of ESWT on nerve regeneration and to formulate precise guidelines for its application in clinical settings.

Reference

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