Results

Idiopathic taste disorder was the most common cause (168 cases, 22.2%), followed by drug-induced (139 cases, 18.3%), zinc-deficiency (124 cases, 16.3%), post-common cold (98 cases, 12.9%), psychogenic (91 cases, 12.0%), iron-deficiency (39 cases, 5.1%) and others (Figure 1). The improvement rate of symptoms was 60/107 (56.1%) in idiopathic, 49/90 (54.4%) in drug-induced, 53/95 (55.8%) in zinc-deficiency, 46/67 (69.2%) in post-common cold, 26/32 (81.3%) in iron-deficiency, and 19/49 (38.8%) in psychogenic. The effective rate was 22/77 (29.0%) in idiopathic, 13/39 (33.3%) in drug-induced, 12/17 (70.6%) in zinc-deficiency, 11/67 (16.4%) in post-common cold, 5/32 (15.6%) in iron-deficiency, and 6/49 (12.2%) in psychogenic (Figure 2). There was no deteriorated case.

Psychogenic taste disturbances tended to be improved by comparison with others.

Figure 3 shows the recovery rate of the EGM threshold. In some cases, despite patients complained of taste disorder, EGM showed normal range from the beginning. The improvement rate of the EGM threshold in idiopathic, drug-induced, psychogenic, iron-deficiency and post-common cold was 27.7% (88/318), 20.0% (29/145), 36.1% (23/63), 15.6% (26/166) and 12.2% (5/41) respectively.

Results of EGM were not always associated with the severity of symptoms.

In patients who improved their symptoms, we analyzed the recovery period for each causes (Figure 4). The average amount of recovery period was 21.2 weeks in idiopathic, 39.6 weeks in post-common cold, 19.5 weeks in zinc-deficiency, 17.8 weeks in psychogenic, and 18.9 weeks in iron-deficiency, and 12.5 weeks in post-common cold. The recovery period in drug-induced was longer than that in other causes.

The patients were divided into two groups according the duration between the onset of the symptoms and the treatment, and recovery rate of symptoms were compared between the two groups (Figure 5). The improvement rate of symptom was 57/119 (48.3%) in less than 6 months, 60/142 (42.1%) in 6 months or over. In the compared cases, the recovery period for 20.0 weeks (x±s.d) in the group of less than 6 months, and 29.5 weeks (x±s.d) in that of 6 months or over. They were significantly different (p<0.05) (Figure 6).

Conclusions

This study clarified the recovery rate and period of patients who consulted a taste clinic. Drug-induced taste disorders tended to take a long time to recover. Which means that zinc supply may be useful for taste disorder.