

Contemporary Asian Healing

ACUPUNCTURE ANALGESIA

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Even though acupuncture has been practiced throughout Asia for more than 4,000 years, acupuncture analgesia for surgical procedures was only developed and first used in 1958. This was a meaningful interaction between traditional acupuncture procedures and modern Western theories of neurophysiology and neuroanatomy.

The first reported surgery employing acupuncture as the analgesia was a tonsillectomy utilizing the acupoint He Gu (LI4). By as early as 1980 as much as 25 percent of all surgery in the major hospitals of China employed acupuncture analgesia as either an adjunct or as the sole analgesia.

Acupuncture analgesia offers a safe and simple alternative to chemical analgesia which Western surgeons and anesthesiologists use exclusively, despite the many adverse effects which may be encountered. Acupuncture analgesia is easy to perform and requires no elaborate equipment. The patient is conscious during the procedure and can cooperate with the surgeon. It is safe to use in the debilitated, elderly or seriously ill patient. Postoperative complications are rare and convalescence is quickened. The patient is historically ambulatory much quicker than with conventional anesthesia. They are able to eat and drink earlier following surgery and very seldom require extended intravenous feeding. Cardiorespiratory, pulmonary and electrolyte complications are seldom reported compared to patients having received general chemical analgesia.

Apprehensive, tense, anxious patients are much less likely to be candidates for acupuncture analgesia. This procedure produces "analgesia", not "anesthesia." In other words, with acupuncture, the patient's pain threshold is diminished, but they can still experience and feel pulling, tugging, pressure and various other paraesthesias, just not intense pain from the surgery. Obviously the proper selection of the patient makes all the difference in the world for the success of this procedure.

In selecting patients for acupuncture analgesia, it is recommended the patient be described the actual surgical procedure to avoid suddenly developed apprehensions. Acupuncture points used in surgery are primarily based on three factors:

- previous experience, such as Tsu San Li (ST 36) for gastrointestinal and abdominal surgery and Nei Guan (P 6) for thoracic surgery;
- anatomical region by utilizing local points in the area of the surgery.
- according to meridian theory, meaning the selection of powerful points on the meridian(s) which course through where the surgery is being performed, which may be far removed from the actual surgery site. According to tradition, "Wherever the Ching mo pathway passes, there lies places amenable to treatment."

Once the proper point is selected, the needle can be either manually or electrically stimulated. In manual stimulation, the needle is inserted until the Teh Chi sensation is obtained. The needle is then rotated and twirled with a frequency of 120-150 twirls per minute. An up/down motion is also used varying between 0.5 and 1.0 tsun (human inch). Induction of the analgesia depends on the individual patient and varies considerably, but as a general rule it can expect to take place in 15-20 minutes from the time needling begins to the time of the initial incision.

In electrical application to the needle, the intensity varies from patient to patient according to the comfort level of the patient and is continued throughout the surgical procedure. Generally, the electrical current is a biphasic spike wave with a frequency in the endorphin-producing range of 2-5 pulses/second.

One of the most significant rewards of reading this article is that the formulae which follow are classic formulae which are used in surgical interventions. But bear in mind, if these points can alleviate the pain of surgery, what do you think they can potentially do as just a treatment approach to pain?

Even though there are other formulae, these are some of the most classic. The majority of people reading this article are not going to employ these in surgical interventions, but they are always good to know or use for painful afflictions.

Tooth extraction:	LI4 - Tai Yang - ST7	Ear Points: tooth extraction points
Thyroidectomy:	LI4 - P6 -- GB20 - ST6	Ear Points: Shen Men, lung, subcortex
Nasal polypectomy:	LI4 - LI20 - SI3	Ear Points: nose, apex of tragus, lung, sympathetic
Tonsillectomy:	LI4 - P6 - TH6	Ear Points: throat, tonsil, Shen Men, sympathetic
Laryngectomy:	LI4 - TH6	Ear Points: adrenal to throat, Shen Men to sympathetic lung, kidney
Splenectomy:	ST36 - LI3 -- SP6 CV15 - LI13	Ear Points: spleen, lung Shen Men, sympathetic
Caesarean section:	STE6 - GB26 - SP6	Ear Points: uterus, abdomen, Shen Men, sympathetic, lung
Nephrectomy:	GB38 - SP6 - BL60 LI3 - SP3 - TH5 - LI4 - P4	Ear Points: kidney, Shen Men, sympathetic, spleen, liver, bladder, abdomen, lung
Hysterectomy:	CV2 - CV4 - ST36 SP6 -- GB26	Ear Points: uterus, Shen Men
Appendectomy:	ST36 - GB26	Ear Points: appendix, abdomen Shen Men
Gastrectomy:	ST36 - ST37 - TH17	Ear Points: Shen Men, sympathetic, stomach
Ligation of hemorrhoids:	BL30	Ear Points: lung, lower rectum

Internal fixation of fracture of neck of femur:	ST36 -- BL59 -- ST40 GB36 -- GB34 -- LI5	Ear Points: hip, ankle,
		lung sympathetic, kidney, adrenal
Knee:	ST36 - SP12 - ST31	
Leg (posterior):	ST36 - BL57 - BL54 - ST40	
Leg (anterior):	ST36 - LI5 - LI3	
Ankle:	ST36 - KI3 - SP6 - GB39	
Sole of foot:	BL60 - SP4 - KI3	
Dorsum of foot:	ST36 - ST41 - BL60 - GB39	
First three toes:	ST36 - ST41 - SP6 - SP4 - LI3	
Fourth & fifth toes:	ST36 - BL54	
Thigh (anterior):	ST36 - GB29 - SP12	
Thigh (posterior):	BL51 - BL54	
Buttock:	BL51 - Huo To Chia Chi - GB30	
Inguinal region:	ST36 - SP4	
Small finger:	LI4 - SI3 - HT5	
Ring finger:	LI4 - TH3 - HT5	
Thumb, index, middle finger:	LI4 - LU10 - LI10 - P6 -- TH9	
Neck:	LI4 - SI3 - P6 - GB20	
Shoulder:	LI4 - LI15 - TH5	
Spine:	ST36 - LI4 - Hou To Chia Chi -- BL57 - GB38 - TH5 - P6	
Elbow:	LI4 - LI11	
Lip:	LI4 - ST6 - ST4	
Ear:	LI4 - TH5	
Face:	LI4 - ST6 - ST4 -- SI18 -- ST2 - ST7	
Frontal sinus:	GB14 - BL2 - ST2 - TH6 - LI4	
Eye:	LI4 - SI3 - TH6 - TH5	
Eyebrow:	LI4 - GB14 - Yu Yao - Tai Yang	
Forehead:	LI4 - GB14 - Yu Yao - Tai Yang - BL2	
Occiput:	LI4 - GB20 - P6	

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