

Inflammation and Acupuncture

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Perhaps one of the most common conditions which patients bring to our doorsteps, is pain associated with an inflammatory process. Even though inflammation can be virtually anywhere, we as chiropractic practitioners often see it in the musculoskeletal realm.

Throughout the course of history, people have known the benefits of a variety of plants to relieve pain and suffering which upon investigation, have shown to be anti-inflammatory in nature. One of the most infamous herbs for pain and inflammation, which plays a major role in one of history's highlight moments, is known to the Chinese as mo yao, or known to us as myrrh. I believe you probably know the rest of the story.

Acupuncture, and I use that word as a philosophy, not as a technique, has also been used for centuries to control inflammation with startling response. One of my favorite case histories concerns itself with an elderly lady who sought care in my office after dealing with a disabling sciatic condition for months. She had exhausted the usual and customary medical treatment, which had failed, and now sought alternative treatment. She had already been under the care of a better than average DC, who she said aggravated the situation. She now wants to try acupuncture.

During the examination, she made the comment, "My leg is on fire, if I could just throw a bucket of water on it, it would be better." This emotional response was often repeated throughout each treatment which she received from me. This particular patient received approximately 18 treatments consisting of low force chiropractic and acupuncture, however her response to treatment was virtually none. Finally, I understood what she had been saying. It was as if there before me stood an angel disguised as a patient who was there to teach me a lesson in life.

In acupuncture, there are a number of different points which have very specific characteristics, one may tonify while the other sedates. There are points of fire, earth, metal, wood, and water. In what is referred to as the law of five elements, water extinguishes fire, or as she said: "Doctor, my leg is on fire, if you could just throw a bucket of water on it I know it will be okay."

The patient's pain was a combination of sciatic and femoral neuralgia according the location which was distinctly down the back of the leg and radiating into the side of the leg. Realizing the gallbladder and bladder meridian corresponded exactly where the pain and paraesthesia was located, I selected the water point of each of these two meridians. Electronically stimulating GB43 and BL66 bilaterally as an adjunct to her treatment, I was shocked when she exclaimed to the entire office that her pain had vanished. If this makes no sense to you, then welcome to the world of acupuncture.

I personally had given her close to 20 treatments, not counting the four or five orthopedic, neurologist and chiropractors she had seen previously. Now in one instant, her pain was not just diminished, but gone. She followed up on my advice with several more treatments, however, she really didn't need anything as far as the pain was concerned. She now comes in once a year for a routine treatment, and refers scores of patients. I am convinced she was really an "angel," as I relate this case history to the entire chiropractic profession worldwide.

Learning from this experience, we should be aware of the water points of each of the meridians. If you do not have a background in clinical acupuncture, than get one. If it's been forever that you glanced through your notes, refamiliarize yourself with the meridian pathways. Understand that a meridian affects what it is named after or where it courses through.

Really confused about how to use these? Suffice it to say that anytime anyone has any inflammatory condition in the body, these points are paramount. If you see a patient with inflammation (fire) in the shoulder use the water points of the upper extremity. The same logic would be true of the lower extremity. The best part is, if you really don't know which point to use, use a combination of all of the water points as a general treatment. This should only be used however with electrical stimulation and not with a needle. Why? If you really don't know what point to use, you have no business using a needle!! Electrical stimulation will not cause extreme disruption to occur by driving perverse energies deeper in the body.

In essence, the water points are dynamic, powerful points to relieve inflammation anywhere in the body. They are perhaps best used with simple electronic stimulation, rather than needles by the nonexpert. The water points are quick, easy, and incredibly effective. They are all located at the elbow, inside of the knee or the point right next to the tsing point (fingertip). Disregard the he-sea points on this graphic. We will discuss them at another time. In the meantime, begin using the water points often throughout your practice day, they are truly dynamic.

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