

## Treatment of Imbalance and Urinary Incontinence with Acupuncture

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### ABSTRACT

Urinary incontinence and imbalance are common problems, especially in elderly population. Acupuncture is a minimally invasive therapy, with minimal known side effects. Several studies have shown acupuncture's effectiveness for managing urinary incontinence<sup>[1,2,3]</sup> and imbalance.<sup>[4,5]</sup> A clinical case in our clinical practice was another proof of such efficacy.

**Keywords:** Head acupuncture; Auricular therapy; Master Tung acupuncture; Incontinence; Imbalance

### CASE INTRODUCTION

JP is a 72-year-old female with primary complaint of unsteady gait for the past 2 years. She had to walk with a cane, with a tendency to fall on the right side. She also reports urinary incontinence and nocturia, wakes up 7-8 times every night to go to the bathroom. She uses 8 diapers throughout the day.

Head CT and MRI showed no anatomical abnormalities. Malignancies were ruled out.

Initial assessment showed pale red tongue with thin white coating. Cracks in Upper Jiao area; Overall moderate pulse, wiry at Guan on left side. BP: 172/66 mmHg HR: 68 BPM.

Initial pattern identified as Kidney Qi Deficiency,

### Treatment Intervention

Patient has been coming to the Teaching Clinic of New York College of Traditional Chinese Medicine for acupuncture treatment on a weekly basis for the past 6 months. We applied Jiao Head Acupuncture and ear seeds on auricular points. In addition, we also applied body acupuncture, alternated between protocols with the patient lying in prone and supine positions. Master Tung Acupuncture points were also applied. The protocols focus on improving Kidney and Lower Burner function, and improve motor function for the patient.

For point selection, we worked on Motor (Upper 1/5), Sensory (Upper 1/5), Foot Motor Sensory, Reproduction and Balance zones (Balance zone was later discontinued due to patient discomfort) based on Jiao Head Acupuncture; For auricular points, ear seeds were applied on Liver, Kidney, Bladder, Ear Shenmen points, bilaterally.

In addition, we also applied body acupuncture, alternated between protocols with the patient lying in prone and supine positions. Prone protocols include points: Waibaliao (Ex., located 0.5 cun lateral to BL32), BL32, BL28, BL25, BL23, BL40, BL57, GB34, SP6, KI6, KI3, BL60, LU9, HT7, PC6; Supine protocols include points: Yintang (Ex.), CV12, CV6, CV4, CV3, KI12, KI13, ST36, GB34, SP6, KI6, KI3, BL60, LR3, LI4, LU9, HT7, PC6.

Master Tung points also applied for both prone and supine sessions, including points: Shenguan (T77.18), Tian Huang (T77.17), Ren Huang (T77.21), Di Huang (T77.19). These points are to improve Kidney and Lower Burner function.

## RESULTS

After treatment for 1 month, the patient started reporting noticeable improvement in both balancing and urination, and continued to improve steadily. She is now able to walk steadily, without cane assistance or falling toward sides. We asked her to walk in the clinic hallway back and forth without cane under our supervision, and she was able to walk straight, without tilting toward one side or falling, and she walked without cane. Motor function was more coordinated as well.

She now uses just 2-3 diapers per day, in contrast 8 diapers a day before treatment. She is now able to sleep through the night for 7 straight hours, without getting up to go to the bathroom. She does report the urge to go to the bathroom at times, but is able to hold urine better than before, with less incontinence incidents.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The results show promising potential for acupuncture management of various conditions, with combination of ear therapy, head and classic body and Master Tung Acupuncture being efficacious treatment protocol. In clinical practice, we've observed that such a combination can provide quick relief for people with physical pain, but in this case we noticed the combination can also provide noticeable improvements in other conditions, more specifically imbalance and urinary incontinence.

Jiao Head Acupuncture was invented by Dr. Shunfa Jiao in China in 1971. Dr. Jiao utilized the neuroscience representative areas of the cerebral cortex, believing that acupuncture would stimulate the cortex of corresponding areas and enhance corresponding functions. Based on Traditional Chinese Medicine theory, the scalp is where Yang meridians meet together. Treating scalp will regulate the organs and the circulation systems. Therefore, Head Acupuncture is considered a powerful treatment protocol for various conditions.<sup>[6,7]</sup>

In the case we treated, we applied Head Acupuncture on Motor and Sensory zones, areas that correspond to motor and sensory cortex. We also applied a Balance zone, which is near the cerebellum that regulates our balance and coordination. Combination of treatment of these zones, alongside ear seeds on auricular points and body acupuncture helped achieve the desired treatment effect of improving balance and coordination.

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Auricular acupuncture has been used in China in history, and in the late 1950s, French doctor Dr. Paul Nogier developed a phrenological method of projection of a fetal homunculus.<sup>[8]</sup> For auricular points, there's hologram within the ear, with different areas of the ears corresponding to different parts or regions of the body. This gives people a clearer concept of how auricular therapy works, and how it can be applied to treat different conditions.

In our practice experience, acupuncture protocol with combination of different systems (Head Acupuncture, Auricular therapy and body acupuncture points) have proved great efficacy in treating different conditions, such as pain management, post stroke rehabilitation, etc. In the patient we mentioned in this article, we once again proved acupuncture's efficacy in treating urinary incontinence and balance problems. We believe that combinations of different systems (Head Acupuncture, Auricular therapy and body acupuncture points) have synergistic effects on treatment efficacy.

Patient continues to be under our care on a weekly basis. We consistently monitor her clinical changes and improvements.

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