

Acupuncture Treats and Preserves Mental and Emotional Health

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Background

Both energetic medicine (acupuncture) and allopathic medicine recognize more and more the effect of the mental and emotions in physiology. We live in times full of fear, worry, stress, depression, anxiety and exhaustion. Often these emotions contribute to or even cause the patient's illness. Moreover, the pervasive use of mood-stabilizing drugs further complicates diagnosis and treatment. Energetic medicine inherently explains the impact of emotional imbalance on overall health. Now more than ever, it is imperative to understand how to include the emotions in the diagnosis and to incorporate the mental in the treatment for all patients.

Mental health is not a new concept in acupuncture and energetic medicine. Thousands of years ago, the ancient medical texts, as taught by Tran Viet Dzung, MD, world renowned expert on translating and teaching the wisdom from the ancient medical texts, referred to the integral connectedness of the mental and the physical. In describing the importance of the mental in physiology, the ancient medical doctors in the Neijing (consisting of the Su Wen and the Ling Shu), some of the earliest medical texts thousands of years ago, illustrate: "... If you see a man, of a robust constitution, with a strong muscular structure, but you may observe he does not have a solid mental, you've only got to blow on him..., however if your mental is strong, if your mental is well-balanced, you can move mountains;" they include the mental in etiology: "... (when man) is full of worries internally, and overworked externally (stress)... the energies of the body (nutritional, mental, defensive) are insufficient and the perverse energies can take advantage of this emptiness to attack the body and trigger mortal diseases;" they further describe the mental in disease prevention: "The moment when the mental spirit of man is solid internally, perverse energy of external origin, cannot penetrate into his body," and in prognosis they elaborate: "if the disease is weak, and the mental is weak, the prognosis is bad; if the disease is strong, and the mental is strong, the prognosis is good." Throughout the ancient texts, they teach us that when we treat an organ system in health and disease, we must preserve and consolidate its mental aspect, to ensure and protect the organ's functioning and prevent illness.

Many acupuncture physicians know that "calming the Shen" will bring some results. Similarly, physicians observe that prescribing Celexa, Prozac or other mood-altering drug seems to reduce a variety of physical and emotional symptoms. Although "calming

the Shen" is important, it is not always enough. Recognizing the inherent relationship of the mental energy in physiology, the Ling Shu summarizes: "The mental is to man as precious stones are to the earth." Energetically diagnosing and treating the mental captures the heart of energetic medicine, maximizing its unique healing potential and capacity to prevent illness.

The mental is immaterial; it cannot be seen, felt, touched or observed under a microscope as it is energy. Allopathic medicine represents the material; energetic medicine represents the immaterial. One does not exist without the other. Dr. Tran Viet Dzung illustrates the complementary synergy of allopathic and energetic medicine in his 2002 and 2004 seminars on Mental and Emotional Health: "You can see the leaves moving on the tree, but you can't see the wind that moves the leaves... but that does not mean that the wind doesn't exist. The wind is the energy that moves the leaves; the leaves are the matter that proves the wind exists: one does not exist without the other. There is one medicine and it is the fusion of both the material and immaterial. Allopathic medicine demonstrates the 'how' and energetic medicine explains the 'why'. Taking responsibility for someone's health requires knowing both the 'why' and the 'how.' This is what makes the practice of energetic medicine so exciting: it explains the 'why' of medicine. The mental and immaterial are a key part to understanding the 'why.'" In today's mentally wrought society, it behooves acupuncture physicians to thoroughly understand how to diagnose, preserve and treat the immaterial energetic aspect of health: the mental. The mental energies are the purest of energies and therefore offer great potential in the overall treatment.

Origin of Jing-Shen

In the ancient texts, when they refer to the "Shen," they say "Jing-Shen." Jing-Shen is described as "the quintessence energy susceptible to transform into mental." When the Ying energy passes through an organ, it transforms into material and immaterial Jing, a more pure form of energy than the Ying. For example, the material Jing transformed in the spleen is anatomical (dermis and lips) and sensorial (taste). The immaterial Jing transformed in the spleen is the mental energy (Jing-Shen) of Thinking, the Yi. The mental energy and Jing-Shen of the Liver is Creativity (Hun); the Heart is Spirit/Consciousness (Shen); the Spleen is Thinking (Yi); the Lungs are Sensitivity (Po); and the Kidneys are Will (Zhi). These mental energies are critical to allow the proper functioning of each organ system and to overall health. Moreover, the relationship

between each Jing-Shen is paramount. “Thought propels will (Yi-Zhi); sensitivity excites creativity (Po-Hun).” This relationship and movement between the Jing-Shen interiorizes and exteriorizes through the Heart. The Heart is the sovereign and houses all the mental activities. This partly explains why treating the Heart by “calming the shen” is critical when treating the mental.

Taking a closer look at the proper functioning of the digestive system further exemplifies the close relationship between the Jing-Shen and its related organ system. A large portion of the pathology we see today relates to a hypo functioning of the Spleen/Stomach system. Excess thinking is an increasingly contributing factor to this pathology. We wake up thinking of all we have to do and we go to bed thinking of all we have not accomplished. ‘Thinking’ must be energetically metabolized and transformed just as food must be metabolized and transformed. This daily un-metabolized thinking manifests into the emotional imbalance of worry, rumination and preoccupation, which then impairs the Yi from aiding the proper functioning of the spleen and the digestion.

For example, the energy of the Stomach, which usually descends, is susceptible to become blocked, counter flow and ascends, creating an energy afflux and bloating. Both undigested food and undigested thinking can contribute to bloating, which is a common phenomenon in our society. Although bloating may be common, it is not physiology and must be treated to prevent the development of malformations, such as tumors, which indicates a pathology of the Spleen/Stomach system. Understanding this intimate relationship between the thinking (Yi) and the digestive system (Spleen/Stomach system) becomes increasingly imperative in today’s times in which tumors, including cancer, have become an epidemic.

Jing-Shen Interrelationships

The ancient texts further describe the integral fluidity between thought (Yi), representing the Acquired (post-natal) energy of the Spleen/Stomach system and will (Zhi), the Innate (pre-natal) energy of the Kidneys. The texts illustrate, when treating the Acquired energy (Spleen/Stomach), one must always remember to treat the innate energy (Kidneys): the student must always remember the teacher; the child grows older and takes care of its parents; when eating an apple from the tree remember the person who planted the tree. These analogies illustrated in the ancient texts exemplify the fundamental relationship between Acquired energy and Innate energy. Further demonstrating the Jing-Shen relationship between the Acquired and Innate energy (Yi/Zhi), a healthy thought (Yi) is obligated to remain fluid, entering to the heart to make a solid decision, and exiting to action (Zhi). To facilitate this fluidity, the ancient texts provide acupuncture points to thereby prevent preoccupation and worry and move the thought toward action: SP1, the wood point on the Spleen meridian moves the thought, as wood corresponds to wind, which enables movement. Once you move the thinking, to help the patient make a decision, GB40 provides clarity to aide in decision making. The Gallbladder, the purest of the organs, represents the final step in the purification of organic liquids. From GB40, the Source point on the Gallbladder meridian, a San Jiao channel travels directly to the Gallbladder to strengthen its function and role as the Judge, to make decisions. To strengthen the will and motivation to take action KD3 (being careful to avoid bleeding the tibial artery), the source point, is the earth point on the Kidney meridian: Earth controls Water to alleviate fear and self-doubt, thereby strengthening the will (Zhi) and providing motivation

to act. This point combination, when needled correctly, (SP1, GB40, and KD3) has the potential to allow profound transformations as it alleviates the interference of the negative psychological emotional elements of worry and stress to thereby enable the restoration of the energetic physiological homeostasis between the mental aspects of the Yi and the Zhi that allow the organs to function.

Jing-Shen Entry/Exit Points

Another therapeutic means to reinforce the mental aspect (Yi, Zhi, Po, Hun, and Shen) and their interrelationships is via the Jing-Shen entry/exit points. Moxa the entry/exit points for the Yi/Thinking (located between thoracic vertebrae 4 and 5), Zhi/Will (located between thoracic vertebrae 7 and 8), Po/Sensitivity (between cervical vertebrae 3 and 4), Hun/Creativity (between cervical vertebrae 7 and thoracic vertebrae 1), and Shen/Spirit (between cervical vertebrae 5 and 6). All these points can be needled but may have a better effect with moxa, to strengthen the mental aspect, which enables the functioning of the related organ system.

In the above example of assisting the patient’s thinking, it is indicated to moxa, or less preferably needle, the entry/exit point of the Yi (located between thoracic vertebrae 4 and 5) and also to moxa UB49 (the concentration point of Yi), and UB20 and UB21, the Back Shu points of the Spleen and Stomach to strengthen their function. This treatment technique is indicated when treating a patient who wants to lose weight, for example to aid their digestion and metabolism as well as treat their thinking (which could include cravings, obsession, excess thinking) about food. Remembering the intimate fluidity between the Yi and Zhi, also strengthen the will and intention to lose weight by treating (preferably with moxa) the entry/exit point of the Zhi/Will (located between thoracic vertebrae 7 and 8), moxa UB52 (the concentration point of Zhi) and UB23, the back Shu point to reinforce the organ’s function, and needle Kidney Yin in the ear to reinforce the Zhi and the Will. When treating the Kidneys to further support the will, tonify Kidney Yin (needle KD3 the Source point, KD7 the notification point deeply toward KD8 touching the bone, Ren4 “Barrier of the Source” deeply to the peritoneum, and moxa UB23 and 52 the back Shu and outside Shu points), Kidney Yang (Ren4 and Du4), and to go further, treat the marrow (needle GB39 and LI16, both deeply, and Du20 and Du15), the bones (UB11) and the Jing (UB43.) In addition, as the ears and the brain relate to the Kidneys and the Kidneys relate to Jing, use auricular and scalp therapies to augment treating the Kidneys and especially the will, as the will is the mental and the mental is Jing.

The Control Cycle in the Law of Five Movements

When treating a specific emotion, often immediate results may be obtained by using the control cycle in the law of 5 movements. The ancient medical text the *NanJing* offers to apply the control point on the channel relating to the emotion, to help alleviate and put into perspective the emotional experience, in order to restore homeostasis. For example, to treat worry and preoccupation, which corresponds to earth and the spleen, use the wood point to control excess earth (worry) by needling SP1 to put the thinking into perspective. To calm anger and frustration (corresponding with the liver and wood), tonify the metal point (metal controls wood) on the Liver channel, LV4. To treat anxiety, needle the water point (water controls fire) on the Heart channel, HT3. To treat sadness, needle the fire point on the Lung channel, LU10. And to put stress (the common term for fear) in perspective, needle the earth point on the Kidney channel, KD3, to alleviate stress and strengthen the

will. These points are effective to treat and prevent psychological emotional imbalances commonly seen in the clinic, and to allow the mental aspect of each organ system to function.

Curious Points and Curious Meridians

Curious Points and Curious Meridians are also indicated when treating the mental as they carry Jing energy, and the mental is an acquired Jing. For example, in the case of a patient who wants to quit smoking, to strengthen the will, auricular therapy (such as Kidney Yin) can be helpful, as the ears correspond to the Kidneys, and the Kidneys relate to the will and to Jing. Likewise, when treating a digestive disorder, utilizing the Stomach and Spleen points in the ear, along with Shenmen can enhance the overall treatment. In addition, opening the curious meridians, which transport Jing energy, can augment the treatment, so treating digestion use PC6 and SP4. These opening points must be needled deeply, as Jing relates to the Kidneys, which is the Source, and the Source is deep. There are 100's of curious points offered in the ancient texts and the specialty offering the most curious points is psychiatry [1-9].

Summary

A requirement of the acupuncture physician is to understand the purest energy, the Jing Shen mental. Utilizing this inherent strength of acupuncture will provide a greater service to patients by employing the truth and heart of energetic medicine to the maximum.

In summary, put the emotions in perspective to allow physiological homeostasis and preserve the Jing Shen mental to help the organ systems function and prevent disease.

- Treat the mental aspect (Jing-Shen) of the effected organ system (Hun, Shen, Yi, Po, Zhi) by applying moxa to the specific **entry/exit points** and outside back shu points.
- When indicated (signs include bloating, a scalloped and swollen tongue, and inability to stop thinking), **move the thinking, help in decision-making and strengthen the will to take action** with SP1, GB40, and KD3.
- **Treat the partnering Jing-Shen and the Heart.** When treating the Yi (thinking), treat the Zhi (will); when treating the Po (sensitivity), treat the Hun (creativity). Always treat the Shen as the Heart is the sovereign.
- When treating emotions, utilize **the control cycle in the law of 5 movements**: for anger, LV4; anxiety, HT3; worry, SP1; sadness, LU10, and fear, KD3.
- Consider **Curious Points** and Curious Meridians to treat the Jing-Shen, as the they relate to Jing and the mental is an acquired Jing.
- Always **“calm the Shen”** whenever treating the mental common points are Ren17, Du20, HT7, and YinTang; an advanced technique mentioned in the ancient texts is the “2 Dragons,” which involves threading needles from UB4 to UB7, to irrigate the brain as from UB7 there is an internal branch to DU20, which penetrates the brain.
- **Consolidate the will.** The ancient texts insist upon consolidating the will for disease treatment and prevention. Tonify the Kidneys, especially Kidney Yin, corresponding to water. There are several techniques offered to tonifying the Kidneys, such as auricular, scalp and curious points
- Suggest patients keep their emotions in perspective by actively choosing to **limit stress, irritations, and over-thinking**. To help with this Dr Tran Viet Dzung applies the information

revealed in the ancient medical text by recommending *“In life, either think or don't think. if you think then you must make a decision and take action, otherwise it's best not to think.”*

The LingShu encourages throughout: “Do all that is possible to preserve the mental activities.”

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