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The Times of India (TOI)

August 15, 2016 Monday

**Indians try cupping as Phelps boosts this pain relieving technique**

**BYLINE:** Aishwarya Kumar & Shobita Dhar

**SECTION:** HEALTH NEWS

**LENGTH:** 581 words

Long before the purple bruises on swimmer Michael Phelps's body hit the head lines, Mumbai doctor Sahil Sheikh was a fan of **cupping**. Nagged by a chronic shoulder problem, the 35-year-old decided to try this alternative therapy. "Apart from mild dizziness immediately after the session, there were no side-effects," he says. But he did report relief from pain.

Like Sheikh, many Indians have become **cupping** devotees. The therapy, which has its origins in **traditional Chinese medicine** and the unani system, involves placing small cups, often heated, on the body part that needs healing. A partial vacuum is created inside the cups and when these are lifted after a few minutes, it sucks out disease-causing fluids and energy (qi), resulting in localized healing.

The therapy has many celebrity followers like Gwyneth Paltrow, Jennifer Aniston, Victoria Beckham, Justin Bieber and most recently athlete Michael Phelps sported the red round marks left by the cups at Rio Olympics.

There's no scientific proof on the efficacy of cupping but that hardly gets in the way of its popularity. Mohammad Shahid Malik, a Unani doctor, runs cupping clinics in Delhi and Aligarh and reports that ever since the Phelps news came out, enquiries have spiked. "People have also been calling to find out how to become a cupping practitioner," says Dr Malik, who does 25-30 cupping sessions per month. Dr Syed Izharul Hasan, who works under the AYUSH ministry and has a clinic at Rashtrapati Bhavan, says the practice is already quite popular in India. "The Olympic story might have given cupping more space in the public eye but people already knew about it. We have treated lakhs of people till now," he claims.

Cupping therapists claim it's an effective pain reliever and also improves overall wellbeing and energy levels. Dr Madhu Sudan Aggarwal, a popular Delhi acupuncturist, says that cupping is, in fact, a form of acupuncture. "It's an age-old way of treating sprains and muscular pains but it also provides relief in neuro and muscular problems to a certain extent, and has some impact on fertility. Skin ailments also respond well to cupping."

And now therapists recommend it for anti-ageing. Facial cupping is said to be a natural face lift, resulting in greater blood flow to the face, reduced puffiness and tightened skin. The suction effect of the cups also helps in decreasing cellulite. Cosmetic cupping services are available in India.

Despite its popularity, cupping re mains controversial. In June, a Chinese man in Chengdu suffering from frozen shoulder had to be hospitalized after a faulty cupping session at a massage par lour. The therapist did the procedure too many times and on the same locations, severely infecting those areas. Dr Malik cautions that it is best to undergo this therapy at a registered clinic and by a practitioner who has a recognized degree in allopathy, homoeopa thy or ayurveda.

DOTS FOR KNOTS

Dry cupping

Cups that have been heated or have an attached pump are placed on the affected part. Vacuum created by heat or manually by the pump, lifts the skin, expands blood vessels and creates a bright red mark.

Wet cupping

Suction created like dry cupping but after 3 min cup is removed to reveal swollen, red patch of skin. Small incisions are made on this patch to draw out `diseased' blood

Massage cupping

Skin is oiled and the cups are then moved over the skin in a gliding motion. This removes knots and provides relief from inflammation

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New Indian Express

May 24, 2014 Saturday

**Wonders of Pestle Needle in Cervical Pain**

**LENGTH:** 569 words

**DATELINE:** Chennai

Chennai, May 24 -- Cervical spondylosis is a common problem among the middle-aged and the elderly. However, in recent years, increasing number of cases has been observed in the younger population. Since 1996, we have chosen pestle needle to treat the patients with cervical spondylosis and keep comparing its effectiveness with regular **acupuncture**.

A comparative study between regular and special **acupuncture** was done by Jiang Zhenya and Li Chengdu at the Affiliated Hospital of Chengdu University of **Traditional Chinese Medicine.**Total 60 patients were randomly divided into the pestle needle group (treatment group) and the regular **acupuncture** group (control group) with 30 patients in each group.

Treatment Methods

Treatment Group

Points: Dazhuibazhen, C4-C7 Jiaji (EX-B2), Jianyu (LI15), Quchi (LI11), Waiguan (SJ5). The location of Dazhuibazhen: 1 cun, 2 cun, 3 cun lateral to the Dazhui (GV, DU 14).

Manipulation: The patients were seated with their upper limbs loosened and heads hanging slightly. The pestle needle is made of ox horn, jade, and metal of 10 cm length. It comprises a tip, a handle, and a body. The needle was held in the same manner as a pencil is held. The pestle needle was pressed on Dazhuibazhen from shallow to deep in the skin repeatedly. The pestle was manipulated for 30 minutes.

The patients were treated once daily, one course of treatment consisted of six sessions with a one-day interim between the courses. Fili form needles (diameter: 0.38 mm, length: 50 mm) were used on the other points. Jiaji (EX-B2) was needled bilaterally to a depth that caused numbness and distension or an electrical sensation. The points on the attacked limbs were needled to a depth that caused numbness or distension. The needles were retained for 30 minutes and manipulated once every 10 minutes. The patients received the same treatment once each day. One course consisted of six sessions. Traction was used as a supplementary treatment.

Control Group

Except for Dazhuibazhen, the points needled and the manipulation were similar to those used in the treatment group. A comparison of the curative effect was given after three courses.

RESULTS

Comparison of score between groups: before treatment, the scores of the treatment group and the control group are 12.37 +/- 3.26 and 12.24 +/- 3.18, P>0.05. After treatment, the former is 6.40 +/- 1.82 and the latter is 6.52 +/- 1.96. By comparing before-treatment with after-treatment, there was a significant improvement in two groups (P 0.05) but there was a statistical difference with the cured rate (P < 0.05).

DISCUSSION

Cervical spondylosis, is a syndrome whose characteristics are cervicodynia, omalgia, numbness of upper limbs, vertigo, fatigue, cataplexy, abnormal sweating, staggering gait and paralysis due to degeneration of the intervertebral disc of the neck and hyperosteogeny of the cervical vertebrae. The pestle needling therapy, as a special form of acupuncture, was first adopted by the well-known practitioner Li Zhongyu. It relaxes the cervical anatomy tissue, enhances blood circulation, facilitates absorption of local inflammation to relieve the pressure on the nerve fiber and enables the patient to return to his or her normal activities.

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New Indian Express

October 6, 2013 Sunday

**Puncture rising blood pressure**

**LENGTH:** 578 words

**DATELINE:** Chennai

Chennai, Oct. 6 -- Hypertension is classified as dizziness or headache in **traditional** **Chinese** **medicine.** Hypertension is caused by the imbalance of body's yin and yang. It is also caused by the functional disorder of Zang-Fu (anatomical) organs, qi and blood circulation. **Acupuncture** usually helps regulate qi and blood, and adjust Zang-Fu functions. Modern studies have shown that **acupuncture** plays a regulatory role in vegetative nervous function including cardiovascular function, or strengthening the body's physical mechanism. With no side effects and as a useful no-drug therapeutic method, **acupuncture** has proved effective in treating hypertension.

Huanqiu Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) Hospital in China carried out a study to assess how effective is acupuncture in treating hypertension. It took a sample of 70 patients suffering from hypertension, 43 were male and 27 female, two patients were less than 38 years of age; 14 were in the age group of 40-49; 24 were in the 50-59 years age bracket, and 30 were above 60 years of age. The span of illness varied from 25 days to 15 years.

Therapeutic method

Acupuncture points were selected and needled. Needles were retained for half an hour. The treatment was given once a day. One therapeutic course comprises ten treatments.

Criteria

Cure: Symptoms like headache and dizziness disappear, and blood pressure drops to within a normal range. A follow-up period of 6 months shows that the therapeutic effect is stable.

Excellent: Symptoms like headache and dizziness vanish and the blood pressure drops to a normal level. However, there is a possibility of a relapse within 6 months requiring further treatment.

Effective: Symptoms are less after the treatment; blood pressure varies between the normal and the critical hypertension level.

Failure: The symptoms may be less after the treatment, but the blood pressure remains high or above the normal range.

Therapeutic result

All 70 patients were under observation for three years. Thirty-three were cured, 26 obtained excellent therapeutic effect, six were effective, and five failed. The total therapeutic effective rate reached 90 per cent. Of the 33 cured cases, hypertension relapsed with four, but were cured after further treatment.

Typical case

A 56 year old male patient, visited the hospital, complaining of headache, dizziness and distending pain in the head, bitterness in the mouth and dry throat complicated by deafness and tinnitus. The symptoms were frequently sporadic. His blood and urine samples were tested and his chest X-rayed, with no abnormalities found. His case was diagnosed as hypertension of degree I. Treatment with traditional herbal and modern medicines showed no effect. His blood pressure was 200/160 mm Hg with exaggerated heart beat. Acupuncture points were selected and was given treatment once daily and after two treatments the patient began to feel better. After one therapeutic course ( of 10 treatments), there were no longer any subjective symptoms. Blood pressure was 140/90 mm Hg. The patient was advised to avoid eating pungent food and getting upset. He was completely cured after two therapeutic courses.

Follow-up observations for two years subsequent to the treatment showed no relapse whatsoever.

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The Times of India (TOI)

August 22, 2016 Monday

**A cup of good health?**

**SECTION:** CHENNAI

**LENGTH:** 510 words

CHENNAI: At the Rio Olympics, when Michael Phelps literally rose head and shoulders above his competitors, what struck viewers was not just his prowess, but the purple bruises that covered his shoulders and back. The much celebrated swimmer had brought **cupping**, which has its origins in **traditional Chinese medicine** and the unani system, under the Olympic spotlight, but the therapy has long had its fans in the city.Advocate H C Manoharan, for instance, was willing to give the alternative therapy a shot after battling chronic back pain for years. "I couldn't walk properly or even stand for more than five minutes.

And none of the doctors I met over the years were able to offer relief," says Manoharan, who went to a clinic in Koyambedu, which offered cupping therapy, about nine months ago. "Though I still have problem when I have to stand for long, my backache is better and I am able to climb stairs," he says.In cupping therapy, small cups, usually made of glass, are placed on the body part that needs healing. Though there various types including dry, wet, and massage cupping, the technique is similar. Usually cotton, dipped in spirit, is lit in the glass cup. Since the flame burns away the oxygen in the cup, it creates a vacuum and a suction effect, which sticks the cup to the body. The cups are pulled away after a few minutes, leaving behind reddish purple bruises that fade with time.Earlier, Hollywood celebrities like Gwyneth Paltrow and Jennifer Aniston have flaunted their cupping marks. While athletes often use it to ease aches and pains, practitioners in the city say they use it to treat everything from migraine and body ache to stress and depression.T N Parimala Selvi, therapist at Jayanth Acupuncture, Koyambedu, has been offering cupping in the city since 2014. "I use it in combination with acupuncture," says Selvi, who learnt the technique from Korean Dr Kim Daewon."We do wet cupping, which involves making small incisions on the skin to remove 'harmful' blood, and also dry cupping," says Selvi, adding that while they don't get sportspersons, they get many patients suffering from arthritis and obesity.M A Fenazir, who runs AL-Shifa Acupuncture Clinic in Pallavaram, has been offering cupping for the last four-and-a-half years. "It works well for emergency pain relief. For instance, it gives instant relief to people with migraines," she says, adding that they offer various kinds of cupping. Sessions can range from 30mins to an hour.After the Olympic attention the therapy has received, city practitioners say they are getting more clients. "Usually, I get 100 patients a month, now every day I am handling about a dozen clients," says Fenazir.But doctors have a word of caution, Dr Madhu Thottappillil, who specialises in sports medicine, says he wouldn't recommend it to athletes or anybody else. "There is not enough scientific empirical evidence to show that cupping helps. Right now it is more of a fad, almost like a placebo. I don't think it is totally without harm," he says.

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New Indian Express

May 23, 2015 Saturday

**A Point to Perfect Blood Count**

**LENGTH:** 505 words

**DATELINE:** Chennai

Chennai, May 23 -- Chronic idiopathic thrombocytopenic purpura (ITP), a condition of isolated low platelet count with normal bone marrow, is an immune thrombocytopenia with unclear pathology. So far, no particularly effective therapy has been discovered. On the basis of **Traditional Chinese Medicine** (TCM) theory and the clinical manifestations of the disease, the author Yin Zhifang treated 74 patients with **acupuncture** only or with a combination of **acupuncture** and medication. Another 24 patients were treated with medication only, and they were considered as the control group.

Of the 98 patients, 29 were males and 69 were females. The age ranged from 19 to 58 years. The course of the disease varied from 3 months to 18 years. The 98 patients were divided into three groups at random, for example, acupuncture only group (36 cases), acupuncture and medication group ( 38 cases), and medication only group ( 24 cases). The 98 patients were diagnosed on the basis of their clinical symptoms and a laboratory examination. There were no obvious differences in sex, age, course of disease, and the patients' condition among the three groups. One week before the treatment , patients were instructed to stop taking any medication.

It was found that the acupuncture plus medication group recorded better results than the other two groups, and there was a significant difference between the groups. The acupuncture only group recorded better results than the medication group. This suggests that acupuncture is more effective than Western medication in the treatment of the disease.

According to TCM theory, ITP is caused by an insufficiency of vital essence and blood in the Zang-fu organs, and can be categorized as a 'Deficiency syndrome'. Dysfunctions of the spleen and the kidney are the cause of symptoms such as dizziness, lassitude, insomnia, soreness in the loins, bleeding and ecchymosis, and threadlike and weak pulse. As a consequence, the therapeutic principle should be to invigorate the kidney and activate the spleen, enhance Qi, and regulate blood. The points to be used during treatment are Dazhui-at the intersection of the Governor vessel and the three Yang meridians, as well as three other points that can increase the platelet count, namely, Zusanli-the He (Sea) point of the stomach meridian, Sanyinjiao -at the intersection of three foot Yin meridians, and Taixi-the Yuan (primary) point of the kidney meridian. The observation and study of the indices in this report suggest that acupuncture therapy is likely to promote the maturation of the myeloid megalocaryocyte, and restore the function of the hematopoietic system. When acupuncture therapy is combined with Western medication, the curative effect can be even more remarkable and the clinical symptoms are more effectively controlled.

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The Times of India (TOI)

September 29, 2013 Sunday

**Acupuncture checks excess weight gain**

**BYLINE:** Debarati S Sen

**SECTION:** FITNESS

**LENGTH:** 583 words

Obesity is caused by a multitude of reasons. Chief among them are hormonal imbalance, lack of exercise, overeating, bingeing on junk food, sedentary lifestyle, slow metabolism, stress and depression.

While there are as many remedies on offer to lose that excess weight, there's one which isn't just part of **traditional Chinese medicine** but is also endorsed by the World Health Organisation and The United States National Institutes of Health: **Acupuncture**, a science that is able to address almost all the factors associated with being overweight. It does so by providing a multi-pronged approach to the weight-gain problem by restoring bodily functions to normality so to bring about an equilibrium and thereby, control the factors leading to obesity.

Reduces appetite, enhances energy

Obesity consultant Dr Amrapali Patil says that acupuncture can bring about weight loss by different mechanisms. "It can blunt craving for food, bringing about 'homoeostasis' in the body, thereby adjusting the 'milieu int�rieur' of the body to normality."

For instance, blood sugar dips are known to cause hunger pangs. The doctor explains, "When the blood sugar level is normal, there is no unhealthy increase in appetite. Acupuncture achieves this by enabling one to eat less by reducing requirement of food while enhancing the body's ability to effectively utilise the energy obtained from food consumed. This means that though appetite and food requirement decrease, one feels highly energetic and refreshed at all times."

Metabolism boost

The basal metabolic rate (BMR) of the body can be upped with the help of acupuncture. "So, while appetite decreases, energy is replenished and the body's metabolism actually increases. This creates a negative caloric balance and the weight gets yanked down," says Dr Patil.

More effective digestion

Acupuncture enables the digestive system to process food effectively.

Hormone regulation

Acupuncture regulates ghrelin and leptin, hormones associated with being overweight and obese.

Stress-buster

Being overweight causes stress, leading to wrong choices that lead to weight gain. Acupuncture releases endorphins ('happiness hormones') present in the body, resulting in a calming, tranquilising effect that brings about a feeling of well-being and positive mood elevation.

Aids liver function

It promotes functioning of liver to its optimal level. The liver is an organ that doesn't just aid metabolism but also is imperative to glycogen storage, decomposition of red bloof cells, plasma proteing synthesis, hormone production and detoxification. Dr Patil states,

"A regulated liver function means a proper metabolic rate and health at its best. This aids enormously in weight loss."

Acupuncture claims to:

- Reduce cravings

- Increase metabolism

- Reduce abdominal fat

- Improve insulin resistance

- Detox body

Opposing opinion

Weight-loss clinics in our city that use acupuncture, also have nutritionists who prescribe a low-cal diet that aids weight loss. Others use electro-muscular stimulation and procedures that need follow-ups, wherein excess weight is taken care of by an in-house dietician. Since there are no scientific studies, in my knowledge, to study the impact of acupuncture on weight-loss in isolation, I don't think it has an effect. We have operated many patients who have lost weight through these means but their weight always came back. Despite these procedures, weight re-gain possibility is very high.

-- Dr Ramen Goel, Bariatric surgeon

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New Indian Express

May 10, 2014 Saturday

**Be Up and About With Acupuncture**

**LENGTH:** 528 words

**DATELINE:** Chennai

Chennai, May 10 -- Ankle sprain is a common condition of the motor system. It occurs when the balance of the body is broken, causing a sudden change in the center of gravity of the ankle joint. When the ankle joint is at the state of planter flexion, a slight movement of both sides of the tarsomegaly causes the ankle joint to become unsteady. As a result, a sprain occurs. A study was conducted by the **acupuncture** department, Henan College of **Traditional Chinese Medicine,** Zhongzhou, China to evaluate its effectiveness in treating ankle sprains.

Of the 126 cases, 70 were males and 56 females; the oldest was 56-years-old and the youngest 15-years-old; the shortest course was three hours and the longest course was one year. Most patients were treated within two days of a sprain. The main acupuncture point was Qiuxu (GB40) in the non-affected leg. Filiform needles (diameter: 0.38 mm, length: 40 mm) were used. For patients with serious sprain; combination of cold therapy, massage, and TDP helped to obtain excellent results. Treatment was given once a day; one course consisted of seven days of treatment.

Observation of curative effect

Cured: The ankle joint recovered its normal functions, pain disappeared, the patient could walk as before. Marked effect: The clinical symptoms almost disappeared, pain was relieved significantly, there was minimal pain when walking. Moderate effect: The clinical symptoms were improved, pain was relieved, ankle joint function improved after treatment. No effect: Symptoms and physical signs showed no improvement.

Results

Of the 126 cases, 98 cases (77.78 per cent) were completely cured, 17 cases (13.49 per cent) showed a marked effect, eight cases (6.35 per cent) showed a moderate effect, and there was no effect in three cases (2.38 per cent).

Typical case

A 21-year-old male student, was first seen on December 10, 1993. He had sprained ankle joint going down the stairs. Examination showed red swelling and tenderness in the lateral malleolus; he could not walk without aid. He was referred to the department of acupuncture and was treated with the above method. Pain was relieved significantly after 10 minutes. The needles were retained for 30 minutes, and the treatment was given once a day. After four treatments, the red swelling and tenderness disappeared, and he was cured.

Discussion

Qiuxiu(GB40), which has a powerful analgesic effect, is located at the starting point of the extensor digitonimbrevis where the lateral anterior malleolar artery and vein are distributed; the branches of later dorsal cutaneous nerve of the foot and the superficial peroneal nerve are also located there. Puncturing this point diverts the focus of excitation of pain in the cerebral cortex, or directly stimulates the afferent nerves and blocks afferent pain fibers. The opposite needling method, which involves the selection of points contralateral to the affected side, is often used to treat patients with pain and dysfunction.

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New Indian Express

October 25, 2014 Saturday

**Beat Post-traumatic Stress with Needle**

**LENGTH:** 442 words

**DATELINE:** Chennai

Chennai, Oct. 25 -- **Traditional Chinese Medicine** (TCM) has been used to treat mental illnesses. Yet there are no extant clinical or research models in contemporary psychiatry for using **acupuncture** to treat post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). A few preliminary clinical studies utilising various designs and clinical methods have, however, reported reductions in anxiety.We conducted a pilot study with the following objectives:

(1) To develop a TCM-acupuncture diagnostic and treatment protocol for PTSD

(2) To evaluate the potential efficacy of acupuncture for treating PTDS in a randomised controlled trial (RCT).

Our design to evaluate the potential included a no-treatment wait-list group to control the natural history of PTSD in the recruited population and a standard treatment control for testing relative intervention efficacy.

Design: Individual acupuncture sessions were conducted twice a week for one hour, and group CBT was conducted once a week for two hours. After a three-month follow-up, maintenance of treatment effects was assessed.

The standard acupuncture point prescription combined front and back treatments to avoid point fatigue. The front treatment used 11 needles and the back treatment used 14 needles along with bilateral at different points. There were 15 other points from which up to three flexibly prescribed points could be added to the 25 prescribed needles. Different needling techniques for standard points could also be used to address a participant's specific diagnosis or constitution.

Individual treatment sessions were conducted for one hour twice per week, and included a standard TCM interview about symptoms, pulse and tongue evaluation, needle insertion, manipulation, and retention, and ear-seed placement .

Lifestyle advice was limited and given only in response to direct questions by participants or if a behaviour was seriously affecting symptoms related to diagnosis and constitution.

Discussion: This randomised controlled pilot trial indicates that acupuncture may be efficacious for reducing symptoms of PTSD, depression, anxiety, and impairment in people diagnosed with DSM-IV PTSD. Acupuncture provided treatment effects similar to a group CBT intervention, and both interventions were superior to a wait-list control condition for all outcome measures. Furthermore, treatment effects of both acupuncture and group CBT were maintained for three months after the end of treatment.

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