

Distal Acupuncture: Theory and Practice

A systems based approach to complex patterns

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Steven Malins, DOM



Who am I?

My Experience

- Licensed for 10 years
- Community acupuncture for 3 years, 20+ patients per shift
- Community acupuncture for indigenous elders 2x month

References

- Deadman, P., Al-Khafaji, M., & Baker, K. (2007). A manual of acupuncture. Journal of Chinese Medicine.
- Kuwahara, T. K. (2003). Traditional Japanese Acupuncture: Fundamentals of Meridian therapy. Paradigm Publications.
- O'Connor, J., & Bensky, D. (1981). Acupuncture: A comprehensive text. Editora Roca.
- Tan, T. (2007). Acupuncture 1, 2, 3.

Why Distal Acupuncture?

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- ① Distal acupuncture works!

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- ③ Wide range of conditions treated

Why Distal Acupuncture?

- ① Distal acupuncture works!
- ② Patients with mobility issues
- ③ Wide range of conditions treated
- ④ Systems based, treat patterns not symptoms

How does acupuncture work?

Endorphin Acupuncture Analgesia (AA)

- AA Works much better than placebo
 - 55% to 85% of cases
 - Morphine 75% of cases!
 - Placebo 30% of cases

In summary, acupuncture stimulates nerve fibers in the muscle, which send impulses to the spinal cord and activates three centers (spinal cord, midbrain, and hypothalamus-pituitary) to cause analgesia.

Stux, G., & Pomeranz, B. (2012). Basics of acupuncture. Springer Science & Business Media.

Ling Shu

When there is a perverse disease with pain which goes along both sides of the backbone to reach the top of the head, and the head nods with heaviness, the eyes are blurred, and loins and spine are stiff and rigid, treat the Leg Major Yang at the point in the middle of the crease of the knee.

Jing-Nuan, W. (Trans.). (2011). Ling Shu: Or the spiritual pivot. The Taoist Center.

Diagnosis

TCM Diagnosis

TCM diagnosis, eg “spleen qi vacuity” works for herbs but is not useful for acupuncture

What is your diagnosis? Spleen Qi Deficiency?!

When to use Distal Acupuncture?

What Can Distal Acupuncture Treat?

Distal Acupuncture can treat (almost) any pattern/condition!

- Distal Acupuncture affects cells in Mid-Brain and Pituitary Hypothalamus
- All 5 shu points are distal on all 12 meridians
- Treating patterns and not symptoms reduces number of needles and increases effectiveness!

When NOT to use Distal Acupuncture

When to avoid Distal Acupuncture

- Open wounds near points needed
- Chronic pain not responsive to DA
- Medical Emergencies!

Case Study

MC: abdominal pain, progressively worse past 24h; rebound tenderness; temperature 100.0

Case Study 0.1

65F MC: Neck pain

Subjective

HPI: Neck pain started “a few days ago” worse with neck flexion; patient describes pain as “stiff”; radiates to whole head; severity 6 out of 10

Objective

P: vacuous; deep; rapid

PE: BP 110/76, PR 87, T 99.7; patient is slow to answer questions; otherwise unremarkable

Case Study 0.1

65F MC: Neck pain

Diagnosis

Suspected Meningitis!

Plan

Refer to ER for lumbar puncture to confirm or rule out Meningitis

Discussion



Ten Needle Technique

When the stomach and spleen, the central jiao, are attacked by emotion, pure qi cannot ascend to the brain, and the evil qi, the waste, cannot descend. It will remain stuck in the stomach.

Lee, M. (1992). Insights of a senior acupuncturist. Blue Poppy Enterprises.

Miriam Lee Magic 10

- ML treated up to 17 patients per hour!
- Many clinical applications
- “never fails” says Miriam Lee

| | | |
|-------|---------------------------------------|----------------------|
| LI-11 | Pool at the Crook (Qu Chi) | Disperse |
| LI-4 | Joining Valley (He Gu) | Disperse |
| LU-7 | Broken Sequence (Lie Que) | Disperse |
| ST-36 | Leg Three Miles (Zu San Li) | Tonify (Or Disperse) |
| SP-6 | Three Yin Intersection (San Yin Jiao) | Tonify |

Broken Sequence

Lung 7 :: Broken Sequence

- Luo Connecting point of Lung Hand Greater Yin
- Confluent Point of the Conception Vessel
- Gao Wu Command Point (head and neck)
- Ma Dan -Yang Heavenly Star Point

If we think of the alternative name Broken Sequence we can see how this point is good for breaking patterns of grief and loss.

Pool at the Crook

Large Intestine 11 :: Pool at the Crook

- Earth of Metal and Uniting Point of Large Intestine
- Sun Si-Miao Ghost Point
- Ma Dan-Yang Heavenly Star Point

Clears heat, cools the blood, eliminates wind, drains damp, relieves itching

Joining Valley

Large Intestine 4 :: Joining Valley

- Source point of the Large Intestine Hand Greater Yin
- Gao-Wu Command Point (face)
- Ma Dan-Yang Heavenly Star Point

Points on the thumb and big toe (eg LI-4 and LR-3) show greater response in the subcortex than other points on fingers and toes. Reflexology also recognizes these areas as having an effect on the head and master regulatory endocrine glands in the head.

Leg Three Miles

Stomach 36 :: Leg Three Miles

- Earth of Earth and uniting point of Stomach Foot Yang Brightness
- Gao-Wu Command Point (abdomen)
- Ma Dan-Yang Heavenly Star Point
- Point of the Sea of Water and Grain

Earth of Earth Leg Three Miles tonifies and adjusts the qi and blood of the entire body!

Three Yin Intersection

Spleen 6 :: Three Yin Intersection

- **Spleen**

- Drains Damp; improves T & T
- Reverses sinking Qi (eg uterine prolapse)
- Improves Spleen's ability to hold blood

- **Kidney**

- Harmonizes Lower Burner
- Regulates urination

- **Liver**

- Soften and harmonize Liver
- Nourish Liver blood

- Tonify all five Zang by tonifying Spleen

ML Magic 10

- **Primary Treatment**
 - Allergies
 - Auto-immune disorders
 - Depression
- **Can Also Treat**
 - Hypertension
 - Asthma
 - Pneumonia (ML says tx Q4H)
- **Too many main complaints** eg: “everything hurts!”

Case Study 1

67F MC: Back pain; and knee pain; and migraines...

Subjective

HPI: Patient states “everything hurts, I can barely get out of bed” progressively worse for many years but much worse the past six months; “nothing seems to help”; “like dragging my self through molasses”; whole body pain; severity 8 out of 10 today up to 10 out of 10

Objective

P: vacuous; deep; rapid; minute pulse weak in all positions

PE: A&O x4, vitals unremarkable, no focal neurological deficits, skin slightly cool and dry

Acupuncture 1,2,3

- Dr Richard Tan
- Three Steps:
 - **Step 1:** Diagnose the Sick Meridian
 - Inspection
 - Auscultation
 - Inquiry
 - **Step 2:** Determine Treating Meridians
 - 5 Systems
 - **Step 3:** Point selection

An affected meridian may indicate solely a physical pain, or may be an indication of an internal issue

Meridian Name-Sharing

| Meridian 1 | Meridian 2 |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Lung Hand TaiYin | Spleen Foot TaiYin |
| Large Intestine Hand YangMing | Stomach Foot YangMing |
| Heart Hand ShaoYin | Kidney Foot ShaoYin |
| Small Intestine Hand TaiYang | Bladder Foot TaiYang |
| Triple Burner Hand ShaoYang | Gallbladder Foot ShaoYang |
| Pericardium Hand JueYin | Liver Foot JueYin |

Needle Side

Opposite Side

Branching Meridians

| Meridian 1 | Meridian 2 |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Lung Hand TaiYin | Bladder Foot TaiYang |
| Large Intestine Hand YangMing | Liver Foot JueYin |
| Heart Hand ShaoYin | Gallbladder Foot ShaoYang |
| Small Intestine Hand TaiYang | Spleen Foot TaiYin |
| Triple Burner Hand ShaoYang | Kidney Foot ShaoYin |
| Pericardium Hand JueYin | Stomach Foot YangMing |

Needle Side

Either Side

Interior Exterior

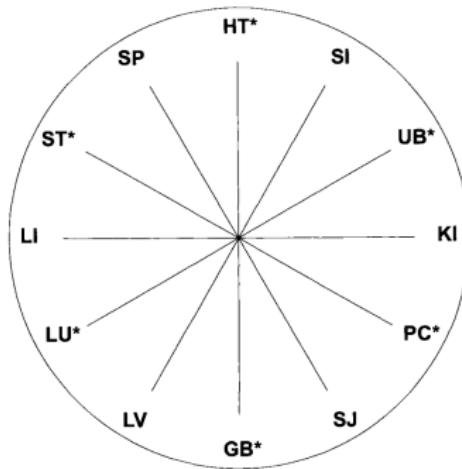
| Meridian 1 | Meridian 2 |
|-------------|-----------------|
| Lung | Large Intestine |
| Heart | Small Intestine |
| Pericardium | Triple Burner |
| Spleen | Stomach |
| Kidney | Bladder |
| Liver | Gallbladder |

Needle Side

Opposite Side

System IV

Clock Opposites



Needle Side

Either Side

Clock Neighbors

| Meridian 1 | Meridian 2 |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Lung | Liver |
| <i>Large Intestine</i> | <i>Stomach</i> |
| Spleen | Heart |
| <i>Small Intestine</i> | <i>Bladder</i> |
| Kidney | Pericardium |
| <i>Triple Burner</i> | <i>Gallbladder</i> |

Needle Side

Opposite Side

Imaging I

| <u>Needled Area</u> | <u>Image</u> | <u>Sick Area</u> | <u>Reverse Image</u> |
|---------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Finger | Genitals anus | Top of head | |
| Hand | Coccyx, sacrum | Base of head | |
| Wrist | Bladder L-S | Neck | |
| Forearm | Low AB and Back | Upper ab and back | |
| Elbow | Umbilicus, L-2, waist | Umbilicus, L-2, waist | |
| Upper arm | Upper ab and back | Low AB and Back | |
| Shoulder | Base of head | Coccyx, sacrum | |
| Top of shoulder | Top of head | Genitals anus | |

Imaging II

| <u>Needled Area</u> | <u>Image</u> | <u>Sick Area</u> |
|---------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| | | <i>Reverse Image</i> |
| Toe | Genitals anus | Top of head |
| Foot | Coccyx, sacrum | Base of head |
| Ankle | Bladder L-S | Neck |
| Lower Leg | Low AB and Back | Upper ab and back |
| Knee | Umbilicus, L-2, waist | Umbilicus, L-2, waist |
| Upper Leg | Upper ab and back | Low AB and Back |
| Hip | Base of head | Coccyx, sacrum |
| Top of Hip | Top of head | Genitals anus |

Acupuncture 1,2,3 Example

Back Pain

Area of Discomfort: Paraspinal pain from L3 to L4, left side

1,2,3

Diagnose the Sick Meridian

Bladder meridian, left side

Determine Treating Meridian

System 1 & 5: Small Intestine

System 2 & 4: Lung

System 3: Kidney

Point Selection

SI 7 to SI 8 right side

LU 5 to LU 6 either side

KI 8 to KI 10 right side

Acupuncture 1,2,3 Example

Bell's Palsy

Area of Discomfort: Facial paralysis and pain, with difficulty moving the eye, cheek, and mouth, right side.

Step 1 and 2

Diagnose the Sick Meridian

Gallbladder, Stomach, Large Intestine, Triple Burner, right side

Step 2: Determine Treating Meridians

| | GB | ST | LI | TB |
|-----|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| I | TB | LI | ST | GB |
| II | HT | PC | LR | KD |
| III | LR | SP | LU | PC |
| IV | HT | PC | KD | SP |
| V | TB | LI | ST | GB |

Whole Back Pain

Dr Tan balance method for whole back, from his book
Acupuncture, 1,2,3

| Left | Right |
|--|---|
| LU-5, PC-3, HT-3, HT-7 GB-41, UB-65 | Ling Gu, Da Bai, Zhong Bai KI-3, KI-10, SP-6, LR-5 |

5 Transport Points

The bloood pulses are widely distributed at the shu points. They are clear to see and strong to touch

| | Well Wood | Brook Fire | Stream Earth | River Metal | Uniting Water |
|-----|--------------|---------------|-----------------|----------------|------------------|
| LU | 11 | 10 | 9 | 8 | 5 |
| SP | 1 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 9 |
| HE | 9 | 8 | 7 | 4 | 3 |
| KID | 1 | 2 | 3 | 7 | 10 |
| PC | 9 | 8 | 7 | 5 | 3 |
| LR | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 8 |

5 Transport Points

The six bowels have six shu points each. Six times six is thirty six.

| | Well | Brook | Stream | River | Uniting |
|----|-------|-------|--------|-------|---------|
| | Metal | Water | Wood | Fire | Earth |
| LI | 1 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 11 |
| ST | 45 | 44 | 43 | 41 | 36 |
| SI | 1 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 8 |
| UB | 67 | 66 | 65 | 60 | 40 |
| TB | 1 | 2 | 3 | 6 | 10 |
| GB | 44 | 43 | 41 | 38 | 34 |

Well Points

Well Points

When the disease is at the viscera, needle the well point

- Fullness below the heart
- Diseases of the viscera
- Channel disorders

Also used to restore consciousness.

Brook Points

Brook Points

If the disease manifests as a change in color, needle the brook point

- Heat in the body
- Changes in complexion
- Diseases of the Yang channels

SI-2 strongly clears heat from the head, mumps, tinnitus, swelling of the cheek, pain of the neck, nosebleed.

Stream Points

Stream Points

When disease attacks intermittently, needle the stream point

- Diseases manifesting intermittently
- heaviness of the body and pain in the joints
- disorders of the viscera (with Brook points)

Yin channels **Stream** points are also *Source* points. Because of this *they are the most important point on their respective channels.*

River Points

River Points

When the disease manifests as changes in the patient's voice, needle the river point

- Dyspnoea, cough, chills, and fever
- Diseases manifesting in the patient's voice
- Diseases of the sinews and bones (yin channels)

HE-4, PC-5, SJ-6 for sudden loss of speech. GB-38 lumbar pain "like a small weight in the middle of the back"

Uniting Points

Uniting Points

If there is disease of the stomach and irregular appetite, needle the uniting point

- Rebellious qi and diarrhoea
- Diseases of the bowels
- Diseases of the king (yang channels)

SP-9 for sudden turmoil disorder due to dampness; UB-39 (lower uniting point of the bladder) for retention of urine or difficult urination.

Global Balance

- **First Circuit**

- Lung -> Large Intestine -> Stomach -> Spleen

- **Second Circuit**

- Heart -> Small Intestine -> Bladder -> Kidney

- **Third Circuit**

- Pericardium -> Triple Burner -> Gallbladder -> Liver

Stream Points

*On Yin Channels **increase qi, blood, fluids** and treat **joint pain***

Uniting Points

*Subdue counterflow; on Yang **treat the skin** and on Yin **firming kidney qi***

Greater Yin - Yang Brightness

Greater Yin - Yang Brightness

| Left | Right |
|-------------|--------------|
| LI-3; LI-11 | LU-9; LU-5 |
| SP-3; SP-9 | ST-43; ST-36 |

LI-3 overlaps with Master Tung point *Da Bai*

Greater Yin - Yang Brightness

Pulse

Floating; distal position significant; slippery or middle vacuous (SP vacuity)

- Any problems on front of body
- Sinus HA
- Allergies, cold or flu with sore throat
- Constipation or Diarrhea
- Digestive or metabolic disorders

Case Study 2.1

42F MC stress and nausea

Subjective

HPI: Always had stress at work, but especially bad this year; digestion worse when at work; feels like she won't make it to the bathroom; happens every day at work the past week

Objective

P: vacuous; deep; slow; vacuous in right distal and middle positions

PE: unremarkable; no ab tenderness

Lesser Yin - Greater Yang

Lesser Yin - Greater Yang

| Left | Right |
|-------------|--------------|
| SI-3; SI-8 | HT-3; HT-7 |
| KD-3; KD-10 | UB-40; UB-65 |

If Liver Vacuity Pattern; can add **LR-8** on same side as KD-10

Pulse

Deep; faint or no proximal pulses; distal position “bouncy”

- **Any problems on the back**
- Accute, chronic, injury, overuse of back
- Chest along KD channel
- Sciatica if down UB&KD channels
- Leg pain or knee pain

Case Study 2.2

70M MC knee pain and nocturia

Subjective

HPI: Knee pain for 10 or more years; worse with kneeling or overuse; gets up 4 times per night to urinate, patient reports diagnosis of BPH; shoulder pain on scapula; pain 6 out of 10

Objective

P: Vacuous; deep; slow; left middle and proximal positions vacuous

PE: both knees tender to palpation but normal ROM; otherwise unremarkable

Returning Yin - Lesser Yang

Returning Yin - Lesser Yang

| Left | Right |
|-------------|--------------|
| TB-3; TB-10 | PC-3; PC-7 |
| LR-3; LR-8 | GB-34; GB-41 |

Can add **GB-38** on GB side for sciatica / low back pain.

Returning Yin - Lesser Yang

Pulse

Wiry; tight

- Any problems on sides; or one sided problems
- Holds emotions in; anger, frustration, resentment
- Sleep disorders, emotional stress
- HA lateral and above eyes
- Bi polar, mental problems due to **excess**

Case Study 2.3

70F MC Left sided neck pain and headache

Subjective

HPI: MVC 17 years ago, entire left side of body was crushed; worse with rotating neck and lifting arm; patient describes pain as “severe” and “aggravating”; entire left side of body pain; severity 7 out of 10 today

Objective

P: Vacuous; deep; slow; wiry

PE: Patient states “I need help” upon presentation; A&Ox4; cannot lift left arm more than 80 degrees; voice is soft

Bell's Palsy

Area of Discomfort: Facial paralysis and pain, with difficulty moving the eye, cheek, and mouth, right side.

Returning Yin - Yang Brightness 1:4

Left

PC-9; PC-6

ST-45; ST-42

Right

LI-1; LI-4

LR-1; LR-4

Magic 12 Points

Any western heart problems. Use 12 magic strategy to treat all 12 meridians or when symptoms are hard to diagnose or pain that moves around frequently.

12 Magic Points (V)

Left

LI-3; TB-3; SI-3

KD-1; SP-1; LR-1

Right

PC-6; LU-8; HT-5

ST-36; GB-34; UB-40

NB: can sub KD-2 instead of KD-1

EV Global Balance

| | | |
|------------------------------------|-------|-------|
| EV 1 | TB-5 | PC-6 |
| Meniere's; floating pulse; Gyn Sx | KD-6 | UB-62 |
| EV 2 | LU-7 | SI-3 |
| All back pain; HA occiput; asthma | UB-62 | KD-6 |
| EV 3 | TB-5 | PC-6 |
| Side HA; Spleen/Pancreas; shingles | SP-4 | GB-41 |
| EV 4 | LU-7 | SI-3 |
| Phlegm; menses w BP or digestive | GB-41 | SP-4 |

