

# Medical Acupuncture

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*"Aurum Nostrum Non Est Aurum Vulgi"*

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## ABSTRACT 6

### ACUPUNCTURE TREATMENT OF CHRONIC MIGRAINE HEADACHES: A CASE REPORT

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#### INTRODUCTION

A 40-year-old white male presented with a 5-year history of daily, incapacitating headaches. Neurologists diagnosed him with cluster migraines. He had been poorly responsive to numerous medications, cervical manipulation, oxygen, and rest. The patient received 8 acupuncture treatments over 8 weeks. He cancelled his 1-month follow-up visit, and reported doing well, with only rare and mild cephalgia.

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#### PRESENTING COMPLAINT

Headaches initially presented as cervico-occipital; unresponsive to chiropractic manipulation. Pain had progressed in frequency, severity; alternating in laterality, temporal, and supraciliary in presentation. Associated symptoms included generalized muscle pain, irritability, fatigue, photosensitivity, bitemporal swelling, GI distress, vomiting, diarrhea, visual disacuity, confusion, nightmares, and impaired cognition. Headaches were described as "vicious, skull -splitting, like a red-hot drill bit in my temples." Past history was significant for similar onset and symptoms. Numerous neurology consultations had failed to achieve reasonable control of headaches.

#### PRIOR MEDICATIONS

Elavil, Inderal, Vicodin, Darvocet, Sansert, Imitrex IM, Cafergot, Verapamil, Doxepin, Midrin, Motrin, Roxicet, Neurontin, Lidocaine Nasal

Spray, Oxygen.

### **CURRENT MEDICATIONS**

Neurontin (12/day), Vicodin, Percocet, ibuprofen, Sudafed, Centrum, ginger.

### **PRIOR DIAGNOSTICS TESTS**

MRI, CT Scan, skull and sinus series, LFTs, blood profiles, allergy tests (all negative).

### **PMHX**

Bilateral carpal tunnel release, 1987; left inguinal hemorrhaphy, 1967; tobacco 1 -2 ppd x 24 years, NKDA.

### **ROS**

Vertigo, tinnitus, dental caries, photosensitivity, "sinus stuffiness," nausea, diarrhea, vomiting, hemorrhoids, Type 11 DM, urinary frequency, neck pain, low back pain, joint pain, and depression. Specifically, the patient had withheld numerous foods in the past, but was unable to identify triggering agents for headaches.

### **TREATMENT**

Patient was treated with an integrated approach of acupuncture models. Energetic approach included Jue Yin/Shao Yang circuit, with Yin tonification. Supplemental points from a neuroanatomic model, or for classical indications, were included at each treatment. Auriculotherapy points were included at the end of the first 4 treatments.

### **PATIENT RESPONSE**

This individual had a prompt decrease in frequency and severity of headaches. The first several treatments reduced frequency to 1-2 headaches per week. Patient reported 2 weeks without a headache after the fourth treatment. He received 8 acupuncture treatments over 8 weeks. His 1 -month follow-up visit was cancelled; he reports doing well, with only rare and mild cephalalgia.

### **DISCUSSION**

Migraine cephalalgia is a common and often debilitating illness. Treatments, as with this patient, may include numerous diagnostic procedures, different classes of medications, lifestyle alterations, and still, continued suffering. Acupuncture may often lead to significant clinical improvement.

In this case, the energetic axis of Jue Yin/Shao Yang was chosen. The Shao Yang region includes the lateral head, neck, trunk, and legs, and is traditionally responsible for the territory and functioning of musculature and movement. Jue Yin serves as a hinge between Yin and Yang. The Liver assures smooth flow of Qi; the Gall Bladder, for

nourishing the muscles with Qi, and allowing them to move. Pericardium (Master of the Heart), and Triple Heater, are associated with sympathetic and parasympathetic function, respectively.

### **Shao Yang**

myalgias  
well-built  
headache, occipito-  
frontal  
biliary symptoms  
cholinergic  
affinity for Spring  
aggressive anger

### **Yin Shao Yang**

likes silence  
migraines  
affinity for dark  
chocolate  
depression  
periorbital shadows

### **Yang Jue Yin**

anxious  
easily annoyed  
dark chocolate  
coffee  
bilious

### **Yang Shao Yang**

lumbosacral pain  
myalgias

### **Jue Yin**

vision problems  
carpal tunnel  
adrenergic  
tension, stress  
anxiety

### **Yin Jue Yin**

sensitive eyes  
migraines  
weight gain  
irritability

Migraines are considered flash symptoms associated with Yin Shao Yang and Yin Jue Yin. Other flash symptoms consistent with this patient follow.

Numerous authors have discussed myofascial problems, which may serve to trigger or aggravate migraines. Points chosen for their classical indications, local and regional sphere of influence, or their function as "sympathetic switches," are often useful from a neuroanatomic model.

Auriculotherapy and auricular medicine may be valuable in either the overall acupuncture treatment plan, or used as a separate system. Points useful to consider for migraine treatment are presented.

### **FOR ADDITIONAL READING**

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