

Improve Your Brain With Qi

Yin Lo, PhD

Several years ago, I saw Nancy Reagan, the wife of former President Ronald Reagan, on television. She was very sad and lonely. Her husband, in the final phase of Alzheimer's disease, had lost much of his memory. A man known for remembering small facts and long-ago acquaintances, now did not recognize close friends, relatives or even his own wife. While still physically capable, the president's loss of brain function cost him the life-giving contact with the world around him.

Our brain is one of the most vital organs in our body and one of the least-understood. In our society, more and more people have problems with their brain, and many problems come with the aging process. There are mental problems, which increasingly are associated with malfunctioning of the brain. Depending upon the source, experts say as much as 10 percent or more of our population does not have sound, healthy brains.

Is there any remedy? Is there a way to reduce this problem of the brain? Can *qi* improve your brain? Can *qi* help you to slow down this part of the aging process? Can *qi* help you retain your memory? Many practitioners in Chinese medicine believe *qi* can indeed do all of these, and more.

But is there any scientific evidence based on *qi*'s positive effect on the brain?

Let us look at the evidence of both internal *qi* and external *qi*. Acupuncture changes the internal *qi* circulating around the meridians in the body. There are many scientific experiments that show acupuncture at acupoints of the body that do affect the brain. The most notable of these experiments is from acupuncture anesthesia where insertion of needles at various acupoints of the body causes the secretion of endorphin in the brain. One of the most recent experiments involving internal *qi* was done with functional MRI. Upon inserting a needle on the acupoints GB38 in Gallbladder meridian on the leg, one finds measurable effects in the vision center in the brain.

Now what is the effect of external *qi* on the brain? From a purely scientific point of view, the effect of external *qi* emitted by a *qigong* practitioner on the brain is harder to recognize, but once shown, it is easier to see that it's due to *qi* and not to other physiological phenomena within the patient's body.

Here are some preliminary results of a study I conducted several months ago with three professors of medicine at UC Irvine, including Dr. James Fallon, professor of anatomy and neurobiology and director of neuroscience; Dr. Daniel Amen, a best-selling author, psychiatrist and the medical director of Amen Clinics, Inc.; and Dr. Yi Jin, an assistant clinical professor of psychiatry and human behavior and director of the behavioral EEG laboratory.

The study reported the effect of external *qi* on the brain measured by three kinds of precision instruments: infrared camera, EEG (electroencephalogram), and SPECT (single-photon emission computed tomography), which scans the activities of the brain.

This study involved seven volunteers with varying degrees of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), which is regarded as being due to a malfunction of the brain. Dr. Tatsuo Hirano,

the *qigong* master, emitted external *qi* 1 meter from the back of the patient, in order to nullify influences from any wishful thinking or placebo effect. Only the researchers, not the subjects, were kept abreast as to when the treatment truly was being provided.

An infrared camera was used to map the distribution of the subject's skin surface temperatures before and after each treatment. EEG readings were used to monitor and record changes in activity of the subjects' brain waves before, during and after the treatments. SPECT scans were taken prior to, and then 24 hours after the treatments, in order to capture detailed anatomical and physiological profiles of the subjects' brains.

The resulting diagnostic measurements, regarded as indicators of various bodily functions, were tabulated, compared and interpreted by the respective experts with the collaboration of Dr. Chris Hanks, director of research and information systems at Amen Clinics, Inc. All the experts agree that the results are consistent and show changes, sometimes quite dramatic, in all seven subjects studied by external *qi*.

Pictures from SPECT and EEG are direct evidence of brain changes from external *qi*. Infrared camera pictures of the face are indirect evidence for some change in the brain because according to the meridian theory of Chinese medicine, the internal structure of organs is reflected via meridians to the surface of the body.

For extensive detail on how the experiment was done, there is a short documentary done in high-definition digital format, with the help of film professionals. In October 2006, the documentary was shown to an international film festival audience at the Egyptian Theater in Hollywood and received a very favorable response. To see the documentary, visit our Web site www.qluni.org.

From a practical point of view, can one improve his/her brain with *qi*?

It is difficult to get a *qigong* master to pump *qi* to your brain day after day. And it's painful to have needles inserted into your body. The best way to improve your brain is through the practice of *qigong*. There are many claims that certain *qigong* exercises improve brain function. We do not have sufficient scientific evidence, yet. But, I believe that *qigong* improves the brain. We wait in hope and continue to practice in the belief that they will come one day.

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