



ACUPUNCTURE TECHNIQUES

Scalp To The Rescue

We all want to become excellent practitioners of Chinese Medicine and provide the best treatments for our patients. Our patients come to us from different walks of life with a single hope - to get better. They do not care what acupuncture technique is used as long as they get relief. As we all know there are many techniques to choose from. I would like to talk about the benefits of scalp acupuncture.

There are many different techniques available to an acupuncture practitioner. There is regular TCM acupuncture, Japanese acupuncture, Korean acupuncture, Auricular, Five elements, Channel balancing from Dr. Tan and many other variations. Our preferences depend upon the school we attended and the main styles it taught. I hear a lot about these different styles, yet scalp acupuncture is one of the least utilized styles. I do not hear from practitioners about their success with patients using scalp treatments. Many times it may be a technique added to a TCM treatment to enhance the overall effect. For some unknown reason scalp acupuncture remains somewhat of a black sheep of the acupuncture world.

Scalp acupuncture is a therapy where the needles are applied to parts of the scalp to produce a healing response to a specific problem. Each scalp system is based on a different micro system. The traditional scalp acupuncture we all learned in acupuncture school comes from *Jiao Shunta*. This is a system which was created after analyzing the functions of MU points and channel theory. The *Huang Di Nei Jing* also contributed channel information to scalp acupuncture. The Mu points on the body are about at the same location where the organ it is named after is located. Taking this mapping correspondence of the overlaying scalp areas located near or at the brain areas that are responsible for different functions will treat problems with these brain functions. As if these functions act as the MU points on the scalp. For example the Motor Area of brain and the Motor area on the scalp correspond. If you look at the brain area where the motor line traverses the scalp it will be right on the brain's motor area just in front of the Central Sulcus. This area is involved with control of voluntary muscles. In the back of the Central sulcus is a sensory area. This is the same sensory area we needle over if there is a sensory problem with a patient. Therefore there is similarity of MU point locations on the body to the location of the brain responsible for a specific

function.

The other scalp system was developed by Dr. Yamamoto. It is called YNSA. This style of scalp acupuncture deals with somatotopes on the scalp. Looking at Dr. Yamamoto's book these somatotopes look like a silhouette of a man sitting on the ground reading. This is a very gentle form of scalp acupuncture however, it requires a lot more testing and retesting while using it. There is also some palpation to be done prior to needling. The benefit is painless needling, and almost immediate response if done correctly. There are many benefits to YNSA acupuncture because it also has Ypsilon points. These points represent 12 regular channels. So there are 12 points. By using these points practitioner may address a wider range of problems than with traditional scalp acupuncture. Some newly discovered points allow treatments for severe dysmenorrhea.

Another system of scalp acupuncture was developed by Dr. Zhu as a different microsystem. It overlays the body and different parts of it onto the scalp. Very thin small needles are used for a treatment. Needles may be left in the scalp for a couple of days without causing problems for a patient. The effects of the needling may be seen right away. The system works on the acute as well as very chronic problems. The problems include musculo-skeletal issues due to many causes, internal medicine, gynecology and psychiatry.

All these systems allow a practitioner to address problems that sometimes may not be helped when using TCM or any other acupuncture style. Since the main issue is to treat a patient quickly and effectively one should not dismiss scalp techniques simply because these are difficult to do or were never taught. Here is an example from my practice - A 59-year-old female comes in to be treated for neck and back pain that has been bothering her for the past 15 years. Allopathic medicine did not provide much relief at all. TCM acupuncture performed for 20 times provided relief for 1 maybe 2 days then the problem returned to about the same level. Moxa, Cupping, and E stim did not make a difference in the way this patient felt. One treatment using Dr. Zhu scalp technique made a huge difference. The treatment lasted 30 minutes but the patient had a 50% relief from pain for more than one week. You may imagine the joy this patient experienced.

We are constantly given opportunities to take CEU courses to better our understanding of Oriental medicine. There are many courses to choose from. I have been using scalp acupuncture for the past 8 years. The results are truly worth the effort of learning scalp techniques. One more benefit to the scalp acupuncture is no need to move a patient to a table. Let's assume a patient is in a wheel chair or can not be easily transferred to a table for a specific reason. A wheel chair patient is difficult to undress or to access some of the TCM frequently used points. Ren 4 or 3 is a good example. Scalp acupuncture makes it a lot easier to treat a patient like that. There are almost no contraindications to scalp acupuncture. When using YNSA or Zhu's scalp acupuncture the side effects are not as dramatic as traditional Chinese scalp acupuncture. I have a 97-year-old patient previously treated with TCM acupuncture for medically diagnosed peripheral neuropathy. This patient felt like she was wearing "socks" from a foot up to a knee. The TCM based treatments did not change much of these feelings. Usually, two days after treatment her legs and her feet were improved but then the "sock" sensation crept up to the knees again. I used Dr. Zhu's scalp system and after just two treatments this patient forgot about the socks on her legs. I have followed up on her three weeks later and the legs were still good. So next time if you have a choice of CEUs, do yourself a favor take a scalp course. Your patients will thank you and your self esteem will thank you as well.

