



ACUPUNCTURE TECHNIQUES

Temperatures Are on the Rise—Points for Clearing Heat

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In my last column I discussed some important ideas for clinicians to consider when helping patients stay in dynamic balance in the Spring season. In this installment, I would like to touch upon some key acupuncture points to consider when treating patients in the Summer season. One of the most important concepts for clinicians to consider is the relationship of the seasons to the pattern presentations of the respective patient. In the Summer season, particularly in regions where temperatures regularly peak in the 90s-100s, it is imperative for clinicians to consider the impact such climates have upon the pattern presentations of patients.

Point Combinations for the Summer

In the Summer season I always keep two key ideas in mind when treating patients with acupuncture: clear underlying constitutional heat issues and prevent stagnation of Qi and Blood. These two concepts are intimately related as any underlying stagnation of Qi and Blood will eventually lead to heat issues such as depressive heat, vacuity heat, or damp-heat.

In my past "On Point" column I discussed using the combination of Sp6 and Ren 6 as an alternative for the "Four Gates" combination of LI4 and Liv 3. Either of these combinations can be effectively used during the Summer season to course the Qi and invigorate Blood to prevent stagnation issues, which may contribute to or cause underlying heat issues.



The following points can be combined with Sp6 and Ren 6 and / or LI4 and Liv 3 to target specific types of pattern presentations which may be aggravated during the hot and potentially humid months of Summer.

GB 34

This is one of the most important points to use in combination with the traditional Four Gates, or the alternative Four Gates of Sp6 / Ren 6 to effectively clear issues of heat in combination with Qi / Blood stasis. GB 34 resolves Damp Heat, courses the Liver Qi, removes obstructions from the GB channel, subdues rebellious Qi, and relaxed the sinews and muscles. In environments where humidity is a common characteristic of the summer months, GB 34 is essential.

ST 44

The Ying Spring point of the Stomach channel, ST44 is one of the most important points for clearing heat from the Stomach viscus and Stomach channel. Most commonly used for issues of excess heat, ST44 is also extremely effective for clearing heat which manifests in the upper regions of the body such as the head, eyes, and mouth as well as the entire gastrointestinal system. The combination of GB34 and ST44 is an extremely powerful duo which clear excess heat and damp-heat throughout the entire body especially when combined with the Four Gates / alternative Four Gates.

LV2

The Ying Spring point of the Liver meridian, LV2 clears Liver Fire, Subdues Interior Wind, Subdues rising Liver Yang, and cools Blood. These actions have extremely important clinical implications during the summer season. An important combination is LV2 + GB34 particularly when heat symptoms are causing mental / emotional issues as well as heat manifestations in the upper part of the body.

SP10

SP10 known as the "Sea of Blood" is an essential point during the hot summer months. Its action includes cooling the Blood, clearing Heat, and invigorating the Blood. Commonly used for heat issues manifesting in as dermatology syndromes as well as gynecological syndromes. SP10 is an essential point to use with the traditional Four Gates or alternative Four Gates combination of SP6 + Ren 6.

SJ 2

The Ying Spring point of the San Jiao meridian, this point is extremely effective for clearing out issues of heat which manifest in the upper areas of the body such as headache, red eyes, sore throat and pain along the channel. I find the formula of SJ 2 + Du 20 + Four Gates / Four Gates alternative to be extremely effective in issues of excess heat, depressive heat and damp heat which are recalcitrant during the hot months of summer.

KD2

The Ying Spring point of the Kidney meridian, this point is extremely important in patients with constitutional Kidney Yin Vacuity which manifests symptoms during the summer months. This point cools Blood and clear vacuity heat and is an important point for patients who easily sweat or exercise excessively during the hot summer months. In particular, I find the combination of KD1 + KD2 to be an extremely effective combination for issues of excess and vacuity heat which manifests in the upper regions of the body and also effect the Shen / mental state of the patient.

LI11

The He-Sea point of the Large Intestine meridian, this point is one of the most important point for clear heat of all types and in all areas of the body. LI11 clear heat, cools the Blood, resolves dampness, and benefits the sinews and joints. I find the combination of LI11 + GB 34 very important for chronic recalcitrant heat patterns with underlying issues of Qi Stagnation / Blood Stasis. I also find the formula of LI11 + Yin Tang + Du 20 + GB 34 to be highly effective for a diverse array of heat issues manifesting as excess heat, damp heat or vacuity heat syndromes.

I hope this short discussion of heat clearing acupuncture points helps inspire clinicians to consider how acupuncture can help patients more comfortably navigate the hot months of summer. Always keep in mind that pattern presentations can be complex regardless of the season. Clinicians must not ignore the relationship of the Five Elements and the seasonal influences on the respective pattern presentation of patients. Hopefully this short article inspires practitioners to implement these points to more effectively treat patterns of heat manifesting during the Summer months, and help patients to feel more comfortable as the Spring season fades away.

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