

The Importance of Shen in Cosmetic Acupuncture

Life expectancy continues to increase among the World population and in the U.S., as such our desire for a good quality of life in those *golden* years is of utmost importance.¹ A good quality of life isn't measured by just being alive, it includes the ability to do normal day-to-day tasks, be free of pain, have nourishing, healthy relationships, and most importantly having a nourishing and healthy relationship with ourselves. The beauty industry is booming more than ever before, and with it the demand for anti-aging and youth enhancing products and treatments.²

Research continues to favor the effects of cosmetic acupuncture, showing noticeable, results after a short series of treatments.³⁻⁴ However, in most studies regarding cosmetic acupuncture the function of the full body acupuncture treatment and the importance of the Shen, and its effect on the face and appearance is often overlooked. A person who lacks their Shen showing through their eyes and face is often seen as looking dull, tired, or even unattractive. This property of beauty has no correlation with the physical structure of the face and is based solely in the person's true self, or spirit, being expressed through the eyes and facial appearance.

The Shen, in Chinese medicine is one of the five spirits or souls of every person, Shen is considered one of the vital substances of the body and is a subtle, yet incredibly important form of qi. There are many ways to translate the word 'Shen' including - spirit, mind, consciousness, vitality, God, soul, expression or energy; with such a vast and encompassing meaning it's no surprise that the Shen is a critical element to how we look and appear to others in life.



In addition to these internal qualities of the Shen, another translation and interpretation of the Chinese character Shen means to express and extend. The Shen, quite literally, is the outward expression of our internal consciousness, this vital life-force plays an important role in how we present ourselves to the World, and when we can clearly express our Shen through our lives and bodies, our true beauty and nature is seen by others. Beauty, in this holistic sense is far more encompassing than just reducing wrinkles, it's in the expression of our spirit that we can be truly seen by others.⁵

The Key Component to Beauty

This presence of the Shen is a key component to beauty and attractiveness and is a factor that needs more focus and attention while we are seeking out beauty treatments, because if we are only addressing our exterior physical appearance, very little is actually changing in our system. With the inclusion of treatment of the whole person, we often find that external, physical interventions for beauty are needed less frequently, because in the act of treating the whole person from the spirit-mind-body approach we are assisting our patient to access a deeper level of their higher spirit self.

With this new light, the Shen, will show externally, adding to the perceived beauty of the person, and most importantly to the patient's own sense of beauty, self-confidence and self-esteem. A person whose Shen and spirit is truly showing through their face, body and energy is accessing the highest level of beauty possible, no matter how many wrinkles are present on their face. True beauty is not in the physical form of the face, but in the spirit showing through it.

Clearing & Cleansing Shen

Accessing and cleansing or clearing the Shen can be done through acupuncture and other methods of energetic medicine including meditation, massage, exercise, acts of healthy living such as healthy conscious eating, engaging in healthy relationships and work and especially partaking in joyful activities.

The youth enhancing effects of meditation have been documented, showing that meditation contributes to lower oxidative stress, decreased levels of stress hormones and increased cell longevity.⁶ When stress is managed, quality of life improves, and a side benefit of improved quality of life and decreased stress levels is an improved physical appearance.

Acupuncture triggers dopamine release, reduces pain, improves sleep, regulate hormones, can increase the body's own natural ability to slow down cellular death, decrease stress and pain levels and improve our ability to deal with stressors when they occur. Every effect of acupuncture can play a positive role in improving the physical appearance of a patient, merely by mitigating the stress response.⁷ Acupuncture in and of itself is an anti-aging treatment when we look at the entire picture of benefits received by the treatments.

Healing Holistically

In the act of healing on all levels of body, mind and spirit we embark on a holistic approach to beauty and anti-aging, we release the patient's Shen to shine through their appearance into the World. True beauty lies in the person's ability to let their truth and spirit release into the world through every encounter and interaction in life. It becomes increasingly difficult to engage in that task while the body is overrun with stress, pain and disease, and thus taking a holistic approach to beauty treatments, whether 100 percent natural or integrative in nature is paramount to providing a treatment that is a catalyst for true change and growth in addition to physical beauty.

Through every acupuncture treatment, whether for cosmetic purposes, or simply a pain management treatment, we are helping our patients clear their blockages to fully embracing the whole nature of their Shen and Spirit. When any person takes a step forward in their growth and releases more of their Shen into the world through the act of expansion, the side benefit is always an improved appearance.

An increased glow in the face, brightness in the eyes, and color to the skin are all factors that contribute to a youthful appearance, and as such, we can say that bringing out our patient's Shen is fundamentally one of the most important aspects of a cosmetic acupuncture treatment.

References

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