

## Acne

"The Treatment of Acne with Acupuncture Point Poking Treatment" by Shen Hong, *Zhe Jiang Zhong Yi Za Zhi (Zhejiang Journal of Chinese Medicine)*, # 3, 1995, p. 126

Acne is a commonly seen disease of adolescents. In the last 10 years, the author has treated 125 cases of acne using the poking method of treatment. Of these 125 cases, 75 were male and 50 were female. Their ages ranged from 15-39 years old. Sixty-two cases were between 17 and 25 years of age, while 63 were above 25. The shortest course of disease was 2 months and the longest was 3 years.

### Treatment method

The point treated was located 5 *fen* lateral and 5 *fen* below the spinous process of the 7th cervical vertebra. First this area was disinfected. Then the point was pierced with a three-edged needle to a depth of 0.3-0.5cm. After that, the practitioner skillfully moved the needle up and down for 1-2 moments. An adhesive plaster was then secured over the place that was needled. This was done 1 time each week. Typically, a cure was achieved in 3-5 times.

### Outcome

Of the 125 patients so treated, all were cured and the itching and pain completely went away. Twenty-five cases were cured in 1 treatment, 75 in 3 treatments, and 25 in 4-5 treatments.

### Case histories

Female, 25 years old, worker. She was first examined by the author on May 6, 1988. She

had developed a rash on her face for no obvious reason which had gradually gotten worse. Initially, it was small and itched. After that, the itching and pain grew difficult to bear. She would scratch it with her fingernails and squeeze and press it. She had tried a number of medications, all without success. She was treated with the above method 1 time and her symptoms mostly disappeared. After 3 treatments, her condition was healed. On follow-up, there had been no recurrence.

Male, 37 years old, cadre. This patient came for initial examination on July 11, 1993. Because of family disputes, he had begun smoking and drinking alcohol. His emotions were tense and agitated and he easily became angry. Eventually he developed a rash on his face which was composed of blackheads and pimples. The itching was so bad, he could hardly bear it. When the weather was hot, this would become infected and would transform pus. He had taken tetracycline for 20 days without result and he had undergone treatment with external medicated washes at the hospital for 1 month also without marked improvement. After 2 treatments with the above protocol, his symptoms began to disappear and he was cured after 4 treatments. On follow-up, there had been no recurrence.

### Discussion

The *Wai Ke Zheng Zong (Correct Ancestral*

*External Medicine*) says:

Acne pertains to the lungs. Residue from the nose (*i.e.*, snivel) pertains to the spleen. They both result from blood heat and depression and stagnation which are not scattered.

The *Yi Zong Jin Jian (Golden Mirror of Ancestral Medicine)* chapter titled "The Essential Heart Methods of External Medicine", speaking of acne, says, "This is due to lung channel blood heat." Treatment by poking and pricking the points 5 *fen* lateral and 5 *fen* below C7 clears depressive heat from the lung channel and courses and frees the blood in the channels and network vessels.

**"The Treatment of Acne by Applying Pressure to Ear Points" by Jiang Xi-cai, *Shan Dong Zhong Yi Za Zhi (Shandong Journal of Chinese Medicine)*, #3, 1995, p. 137**

Based on an analysis of the clinical signs and symptoms, when treating this disease based on pattern discrimination, lung channel wind heat pattern should be treated by coursing wind and clearing the lungs; spleen/stomach damp heat pattern should be treated by clearing heat and transforming dampness; irregularity of the *chong* and *ren* pattern should be treated by regulating and restraining the *chong* and *ren*; while liver depression should be treated by resolving depression. According to the author, when treating this condition with pressure applied to points on the ears, the main points are Lung, Heart, and Internal Secretion. If there is spleen/stomach damp heat, add Spleen, Stomach, Large Intestine, and Constipation points. If there is irregularity of the *chong* and *ren*, add Uterus, Ovaries, Kidney, and Liver.

First disinfect the ear points using a 75% solution of alcohol. Next use adhesive tape to tape in place 1 piece each of Semen Vaccariae

Segetalis (*Wang Bu Liu Xing*) over the selected points. Treat only one ear at a time. Each day, press each seed 5 times for 1 minute each time. Leave the seeds in place for 5 days. Then switch ears. Thirty days equal 1 course of treatment.

The author has treated 66 cases with this protocol. Thirty-nine cases were cured in 1-2 courses of treatment, 16 were markedly improved, 8 got some improvement, and only 3 got no results. Thus the total amelioration rate was 95.45%. There was no recurrence in those who were cured when followed up after ½ year.

***Xian Zai Nan Zhi Bing Zhong Yi Zhen Liao Xue (A Study of the Chinese Medical Treatment & Diagnosis of Modern, Difficult to Treat Diseases)* by Wu Jun-yu & Bai Yong-bo, Chinese Medical Ancients Books Press, Beijing, 1993, p. 606-607**

## **Treatment based on pattern discrimination**

### **1. Lung heat, blood heat**

**Discriminating symptoms:** Acute or recent onset acne, flushed red face, bright red pimples, aching and pain or pussy and swollen, a yellow tongue coating and red tongue substance, and a fine, rapid pulse

**Treatment principles:** Cool the blood and clear heat

**Commonly used formulas:** *Pi Pa Qing Fei Yin* (Eyrobotrya Clear the Lungs Drink), *Fei Feng Fen Ci Tang* (Lung Wind Acne Decoction)

### **2. Intestine & stomach damp heat**

**Discriminating symptoms:** Acne which is swollen initially and which typically gets worse having eaten acrid, peppery foods, oily, greasy

foods, or having drunk alcohol. These foods and drinks easily cause damage and detriment to the intestines and stomach. Damp evils depressed and transforming into heat may also easily cause this pattern. Red, swollen, aching and painful lesions accompanied by constipation and reddish urine, torpid intake, abdominal distention, a slimy, yellow tongue coating, and a slippery, rapid pulse

**Treatment principles:** Clear heat, transform dampness, open the bowels

**Commonly used formulas:** *Yin Chen Hao Tang* (Artemisia Capillaris Decoction) plus *Bai Tou Weng Tang* (Pulsatilla Decoction), *Ping Wei San* (Level the Stomach Powder) plus *Gan Lu Xiao Du Dan* (Sweet Dew Disperse Toxins Elixir), *Mei Rong Qian* (Beauty Flourishing Decoction), *Zhi Zi Jin Hua Wan* (Gardenia & Lonicera Pills)

### 3. Spleen vacuity, phlegm dampness

**Discriminating symptoms:** Acne in its later stage. Spleen vacuity does not transport and water dampness stops internally, turning into phlegm. Enduring depression transforms into heat. Damp heat phlegm evils thus ensue. The lesions are pussy blisters, nodules, or cysts and there are scars. This is accompanied by torpid intake and loose stools, a slimy tongue coating, and a slippery pulse.

**Treatment principles:** Fortify the spleen and transform phlegm, disinhibit dampness and clear

**Commonly used formulas:** *Si Jun Zi Tang* (Four Gentlemen Decoction) plus *Er Chen Tang* (Two Aged [Ingredients] Decoction), *Liu Jun Zi Tang* (Six Gentlemen Decoction) plus *Xiao Xian Xiong Tang* (Minor Sink the Chest Decoction), *Shen Ling Bai Zhu San* (Ginseng, Poria &

*Atractylodes Decoction*) plus *Qing Qi Hua Tan Wan* (Clear the Qi & Transform Phlegm Pills)

### 4. Chong & ren not regulated

**Discriminating symptoms:** This refers to women's acne and is mostly due to liver depression, qi stagnation. The menses are thus irregular and coursing and discharge lose their smooth flow. The disease typically reappears before each menstrual period, thus its severity and occurrence are closely related to the menstrual cycle. It is accompanied by menstrual irregularity or painful menstruation, a dark red tongue with a thin, yellow coating, and a wiry, fine, rapid pulse.

**Treatment principles:** Regulate and contain the *chong* and *ren*, course the liver and resolve depression

**Commonly used formulas:** *Xiao Yao San Jia Jian* (Rambling Powder with Additions & Subtractions). For instance, one can add Cortex Radicis Moutan (*Dan Pi*), Flos Carthami Tinctorii (*Hong Hua*), uncooked Radix Rehmanniae (*Sheng Di*), Herba Leonuri Heterophylli (*Yi Mu Cao*), Flos Pruni Mume (*Lu O Mei*).

### 5. Blood stasis

**Discriminating symptoms:** This mostly appears as late stage acne and is mostly due to lung/stomach accumulation of heat, cold congealing stasis and stagnation, or qi stagnation enduring for many days resulting in blood stasis. This then struggles in the skin. The skin detriments, *i.e.*, lesions, are pussy blisters, cysts, and scars. the lesions are dark red in color and are simultaneously itchy and painful. After the pus is expelled, they leaves scars and markedly obvious keloids. The tongue is red and

scarlet with a white coating and the pulse is wiry and slippery.

**Treatment principles:** Quicken the blood and transform stasis while simultaneously clearing heat and resolving toxins

**Commonly used formulas:** *Tao Hong Si Wu Tang* (Persica & Carthamus Four Materials Decoction), *Liang Xue Xiao Chuang Yin* (Cool the Blood & Disperse Sores Drink) plus *Xue Fu Zhu Yu Tang* (Blood Mansion Dispel Stasis Decoction), *Da Huang Zhe Chong Wan* (Rhubarb & Eupolyphaga Pills). Externally, one can also use *Hei Bu Gao* (Black Cloth Ointment).

Method of making additions & subtractions: Regardless of the pattern, if the throat is dry, the mouth is thirsty, and the lips are parched, add Radix Scrophulariae Ningpoensis (*Xuan Shen*), Tuber Ophiopogonis Japonicae (*Mai Dong*), Tuber Asparagi Cochinchinensis (*Tian Dong*), and Radix Trichosanthis Kirilowii (*Tian Hua Fen*). If there are cystic nodes which are difficult to disperse, add Rhizoma Curcumae Zeodariae (*E Zhu*), Spica Prunellae Vulgaris (*Xia Ku Cao*), Herba Sargassii (*Hai Zao*), and Concha Ostreae (*Mu Li*). If the menses are irregular, add Radix Angelicae Sinensis (*Dang Gui*), Radix Albus Paeoniae Lactiflorae (*Bai Shao*), and Herba Leonuri Heterophylli (*Yi Mu Cao*). If there is chronic liver disease, add Herba Ardesiae Japonicae (*Ping Di Mu*), Rhizoma Polygoni

Cuspidati (*Hu Chang*), and Caulis Camelliae Theae (*Cha Shu Gen*). If the stools are dry, add uncooked Radix Et Rhizoma Rhei (*Da Huang*). If intake is torpid, add scorched *San Xian* (literally, Three Immortals; identification unknown; possibly a form of Massa Medica Fermentata), Endothelium Corneum Gigeriae Galli (*Ji Nei Jin*), and Fructus Germinatus Oryzae Sativae and Hordei Vulgaris (*Gu Mai Ya*). If there is clear, watery vaginal discharge, add Os Sepiae Seu Sepiellae (*Hai Piao Xiao*) and Radix Rubiae Cordifoliae (*Qian Cao*). If the face is flushed red for many days without receding, add uncooked Gypsum Fibrosum (*Shi Gao*) and Rhizoma Anemarrhenae (*Zhi Mu*). If infection is heavy, add Fructus Forsythiae Suspensae (*Lian Qiao*), Flos Chrysanthemi Indici (*Ye Ju Hua*), and Herba Viola Yedoensis (*Di Ding*). If the skin is oily and greasy, if there is a bitter taste in the mouth, the urine is reddish yellow, and there is a slimy, yellow tongue coating and a slippery, rapid pulse, this is categorized as exuberant damp heat. In that case, add Radix Sophorae Flavescens (*Ku Shen*), Herba Artemisiae Capillaris (*Yin Chen*), Sclerotium Rubrum Poriae Cocos (*Chi Fu Ling*), and Rhizoma Alismatis (*Ze Xie*). If the lesions are cystic and obviously inflamed with a white, slimy tongue coating and a slippery, soggy pulse, phlegm dampness is gathering and binding. In that case, add Bulbus Fritillariae Thunbergii (*Zhe Bei Mu*) or Fructus Bulbostemmae Paniculati (*Tu Bei Mu*).

Functionally translated by Bob Flaws © Blue Poppy Press Inc.. 1995

For information about other research reports or to receive a Blue Poppy Press catalog, call 1-800-487-9296