

Fire and Thunder Moxibustion Combined with the Twelve Points of Tianxing to Treat Clinical Symptoms

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Abstract: This article elucidates the origin and therapeutic principles of moxibustion, as well as the differences between ancient and modern modified techniques for fire moxibustion. It also provides a detailed discussion on the twelve celestial points, explaining the origins of these acupoints and their names, and offers an essential understanding of the conditions each point treats. Furthermore, it describes the method of selecting and adjusting moxibustion therapy based on the symptoms of the twelve meridians.

Keywords: Lei Huo Jiu, Tian Xing, twelve points

1. Overview of Thunder-Fire Moxibustion

As history has progressed, moxibustion techniques have also evolved, maintaining a significant place in the traditional Chinese medical treatment system. Lei Huo Moxibustion, as a distinctive member of the moxibustion family, inherits ancient methods while incorporating innovations. With its unique herbal formulas and application techniques, it has gained prominence in disease prevention and health maintenance, attracting considerable attention. This article will delve into the principles, applications, and future prospects of Lei Huo Moxibustion, providing theoretical foundations and practical references for further exploration and promotion of this traditional Chinese medical practice.

"Coffin official" said[1]: needle is not, moxibustion is appropriate. The Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States Period of the moxibustion method is called the attack method. In the Eastern Han Dynasty, Zhang Zhongjing, the medical sage, involved twelve moxibustion methods in his theory on typhoid fever, and proposed that "Yang disease is suitable for acupuncture, and Yin disease is suitable for moxibustion". Song Dynasty "urgent moxibustion" that: warehouse pawn rescue, only burning first. "Taiping Shenghui Fang" and "Sheng Renji General Record" both included a large number of moxibustion therapy, making moxibustion one of the first aid measures at that time. Liu Wansu, a famous doctor in the Yuan Dynasty, and Zhu Danxi also established the theory of febrile moxibustion. The Qing Dynasty's Divine Moxibustion Classics is a monograph on moxibustion therapy, which comprehensively summarizes the achievements of moxibustion in the past dynasties.

Thunder fire acupuncture is also called thunder fire acupuncture or thunder fire divine acupuncture, which was first seen in Li Shizhen's Compendium of Materia Medica in the Ming Dynasty[2]. It is also recorded in other medical works such as Acupuncture and Moxibustion, The Authentic Surgery, and Selected Good Prescriptions of Zongfu Hall.

Prepare the following materials before acupuncture: mugwort, agarwood, saussurea, frankincense, Yinchen, Qianghuo, dried ginger, pangolin, musk, mulberry bark paper, raw egg, matches or lighter, ash box, etc.

Incense stick preparation: 100 grams of mugwort wool, 15 grams each of agarwood, saussurea, frankincense, yinchen, qianghuo, dried ginger, and pangolin scales. Place the mugwort wool outside, and grind all other herbs into an extremely fine powder. Add a small amount of musk, mix well [3]. Use one sheet of mulberry bark paper, about one foot square, spread it flat, first weigh 40 grams of mugwort wool and evenly spread it on the paper, then weigh 10 grams of herb powder and evenly mix it into the mugwort wool. Roll it tightly like a firecracker, then knead it tightly with a wooden board, apply egg white on the outside, and cover with another layer of mulberry bark paper, leaving about one inch at both ends open. Knead tightly to form the stick. Store in a cool place to avoid air exposure.

Place over ten layers of paper or five to seven layers of cotton cloth on the acupoint to be treated. Then, place the moxa stick directly on the paper or cloth, pressing firmly against the acupoint for about 1 to 2 seconds until the heat penetrates deeply. When the patient feels the heat unbearable, slightly lift the moxa stick and wait for the heat to subside before pressing again[4]. Each session involves pressing about 7 to 10 times to ensure continuous heat penetration. Treatment can be performed daily or every other day, with a course consisting of 10 sessions.

2. Detailed Explanation of Tianxing Twelve Acupoints

"Twelve Acupoints of the Sky" was written by Ma Danyang, a famous Taoist and acupuncture practitioner in the Jin

Dynasty. It means that the twelve most common acupoints are used every day, whether it is internal or external, women or children, five senses or bone injuries, skin diseases, and minor skin diseases[5]. There are thousands of changes in these twelve acupoints, and they can treat thousands of diseases.

Tsusanli: According to the "Six Microscopic Principles" of the Suwen, the upper part of the Tianshu point is governed by the weather, and the lower part of the Tianshu point is governed by the earth. The division of qi interaction, human qi follows it, and all things follow it. This acupoint governs various symptoms in the upper, middle and lower parts of the abdomen.

Lieque: According to the Great Achievement of Acupuncture by Xi Hongfu, it is said that qi should be stimulated in two holes to seek Taiyuan, and when it is not appropriate, Lieque should be sought. Lieque causes headache and deviation, and heavy draining of Taiyuan should not be ignored. Therefore, the function of Lieque lies in the chest.

He Gu: He means to gather and to connect. The Inner Canon says, "The large gathering of flesh is called the valley; this point is located between the thumb and the index finger, in the large depression, hence it is called the valley. There is also a small valley point, which intersects with the intervalley point, hence it is named He Gu."

Qu Chi: The acupoint is located on the outer side of the elbow crease, at the depression along the inner edge of the elbow bone. It is named "Qu Chi" because it is found in the elbow crease when the arm is bent and the hand covers the elbow. This point has the same meaning as "Qu Ze." It treats conditions such as lateral wind, sore throat, and ailments affecting the elbow, arm, shoulder, and wrist, due to its location along the meridians.

The inner court: the inner door is called "court", the main room of the house, also called "court". The diseases it treats are mostly not near the acupoints, but in the head, abdomen and heart. This is related to its function.

Tongli: This point is the collateral of the Hand Shaoyin, which can connect horizontally with the Hand Taiyang meridian. It treats conditions such as eye pain, sweating cessation, sore throat, heart heat, palpitations, and abdominal distension or uterine bleeding. These conditions often arise from stagnation and depression, and this point can effectively address them. In summary, this point treats by promoting circulation, hence it is named "Tongli."

Wei Zhong: Wei, meaning to be weak or bent, and also to be deformed[6]. Touching this point causes the lower limbs to become weak and immediately kneel down. The *Ling Jiu* states: "Take Wei and treat it; since this point is located at the center of the knee crease, where it is bent, hence named Wei Zhong. It treats pain in the waist, spine, and back, hemiplegia, wind paralysis, enuresis, and cramps. Any condition similar to Wei Bi can be treated with this point. Acupuncturists often use the Wei Zhong point for bloodletting or the Qu Ze point for treating surface stasis and body pain."

Chengshan: The acupoint is located at the seam of the pectoral muscles, where the protrusion of the tendon is likened to the peak of a mountain. Originally situated in the valley between the foot of the mountain, it carries the momentum of the high mountain down to the valley, hence the name "Chengshan." This acupoint also supports the tendons, thus treating tendon disorders such as headache, nosebleeds, hernia, abdominal pain, hemorrhoids, bloody stools, cholera-induced muscle cramps, and stagnation pain.

Kunlun: The outer side of the ankle is higher than other ankle prominences. The ancients regarded Kunlun as the highest peak, so this acupoint is called "Kunlun". This acupoint is located behind and below the outer ankle, and it is most effective in treating headache, which means that the disease above is treated by taking it below. The force of this acupoint flows down and pours down.

Huan Tiao: The acupoint is located in the groin, at the insertion point of the femur. Lie on your side and bend your knee slightly while lifting your leg slightly to locate this point. When people jump, they often crouch down first, bending their hips and knees, which creates a semi-circular depression here, hence the name "Huan Tiao." It treats conditions such as hemiplegia, lower back pain, wind paralysis, and foot qi. Its function is to promote circulation.

Yanglingquan: The acupoint is located on the outer side of the knee, above the upper end of the fibula and below the condyle. The hole is very deep and can penetrate the Yin Lingquan. This acupoint is also known as "Yang Lingquan" in the Inner Canon, and is abbreviated as Yanglingquan.

Taichong: This point is close to Chongyang point, and when you lift your foot forward, it will hit the point first. Therefore, it is called "Chong". The point is located between the big toe and the little toe of the foot, because it is close to the big toe, so it is called "Taichong". Taichong means "big".

The Suwen: Water Heat and Acupoints states: The three yin meridians intersect and converge at the foot[7]. Each row above the ankle consists of six points, which are the lower branches of the kidney meridian, named Taichong. Wang notes: "The kidney meridian and the Chong meridian run together downward along the foot, merging to form a grand channel," hence it is called Taichong. In clinical practice, it can be used in conjunction with various points of the kidney meridian.

3. Clinical Treatment Application

When treating the symptoms of the twelve meridians, one, two or three of the twelve points of the sky star are selected to identify the meridian and the symptoms. Then, according to the person and the disease, the amount and type of moxibustion ointment are adjusted as appropriate, and then the fire moxibustion is applied, and the disease will be cured.

Based on the theories of TCM "syndrome differentiation and treatment" and "meridian-based acupoint selection", single, double, or multiple acupoint combinations from the Tianxing Twelve Acupoints are flexibly selected according to the meridians and visceral pathogenesis of patients' specific syndromes. For example, for abdominal pain due to spleen-stomach deficiency-cold, Zusanli (ST36, the He-sea point of the Stomach Meridian of Foot-Yangming, regulating the spleen and stomach) and Neiting (ST44, the Ying-spring point of the Stomach Meridian, clearing stomach heat) are selected; for exogenous headache, Lieque (LU7, the Luo-connecting point of the Lung Meridian, promoting lung qi and releasing exterior) is combined with Kunlun (BL60, the Jing-river point of the Bladder Meridian, dredging collaterals and relieving pain). Additionally, integrating the interior-exterior relationships of the Twelve Meridians and the theory of "root and knot", distal acupoint selection is combined with local acupoint selection to achieve precise treatment of "where the meridian passes, it governs the diseases there".

Thunder-Fire moxibustion is applied in conjunction with moxibustion ointment for synergistic treatment. Thunder-Fire moxibustion exerts the effects of warming and dredging meridians, promoting qi and blood circulation through the thermal stimulation and medicinal penetration generated by the combustion of moxa wool and Chinese herbs (such as agarwood, costus root, etc.); moxibustion ointments use different drug formulas (such as yang-warming ointment, heat-clearing ointment, blood-activating ointment) according to the patient's constitution (e.g., yang deficiency, yin deficiency, phlegm-dampness) and syndrome types (cold syndrome, heat syndrome, deficiency syndrome, excess syndrome) to enhance local drug absorption. During operation, the moxibustion ointment is first applied to the selected acupoints, then the Thunder-Fire moxibustion stick is used for vertical suspended moxibustion or pressing through cloth. Each moxibustion session lasts 15-20 minutes, until the local skin of the acupoint is flushed and the patient feels warm and comfortable. The treatment is administered 2-3 times a week, with a course of 4-6 weeks. During treatment, the acupoint combination and moxibustion intensity are adjusted according to the patient's symptom improvement.

4. Conclusion

The therapy of Thunder-Fire moxibustion combined with Tianxing Twelve Acupoints integrates the warming effect of Thunder-Fire moxibustion and the precise regulation characteristics of Tianxing Twelve Acupoints, with three core advantages:

(1) Synergistic Enhancement: The combination of the thermal medicinal power of Thunder-Fire moxibustion and the specific functions of acupoints enhances the effects of dredging meridians and regulating qi and blood, especially suitable for deficiency-cold and stagnant diseases (such as chronic arthritis, deficiency-cold stomach pain).

(2) Simplicity and Safety: Compared with acupuncture, Thunder-Fire moxibustion is relatively simple to operate and highly acceptable to patients; combining with moxibustion ointment reduces the risk of skin burns, ensuring strong safety.

(3) Holistic Conditioning: Tianxing Twelve Acupoints cover multiple visceral meridians, capable of holistically regulating the balance of qi, blood, yin, and yang in the body, reflecting the TCM concept of "treating the root cause", and suitable for the treatment and rehabilitation of diseases in internal, surgical, gynecological, pediatric, and other departments.

For future research on this therapy:

(1) Carry out large-sample, multi-center randomized controlled trials through clinical evidence to verify the efficacy of Thunder-Fire moxibustion combined with Tianxing Twelve Acupoints in specific diseases (such as chronic pain, functional gastrointestinal disorders), and establish standardized treatment protocols.

(2) Combine modern medical technologies (such as infrared thermography, metabolomics) to further explore the regulatory mechanism of Thunder-Fire moxibustion thermal conduction and acupoint stimulation on the neuro-endocrine-immune network.

(3) Develop intelligent moxibustion tools by optimizing the drug ratio of Thunder-Fire moxibustion sticks and moxibustion equipment, and expand the application scenarios of this therapy by integrating modern rehabilitation technologies (such as exercise therapy, physical therapy).

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