

Research Update – Acupuncture Related to the Large Intestine

A study published in the Annals of Internal Medicine, has determined acupuncture, and more specifically, electroacupuncture is a safe and effective treatment for chronic severe functional constipation. The study was conducted throughout 15 hospitals in China. The participants were patients with chronic severe functional constipation and no underlying pathological causes for the constipation. They each received 28 sessions of acupuncture with electrical stimulation. The study showed each participant increased the number of consistent bowel movements with the assistance of electroacupuncture treatments and without any adverse side effects.

<http://annals.org/aim/article/2552074/acupuncture-chronic-severe-functional-constipation-randomized-trial>

The large intestine is responsible for absorbing water from indigestible food and transporting the useless waste material out of the body. This is the second to the last part of the digestive tract in the human body. However, according to Traditional Chinese Medicine, the large intestine is considered to be a functionally defined entity, not an organ.

TCM looks at things a little differently than Western medicine. In TCM, the large intestine is an energy system. The large intestine is defined by the role it plays energetically in the body. But there are correlations between the large intestine energy system and the actual large intestine organ. In TCM, the large intestine system is in charge of the same functions as the large intestine organ (absorbing fluids, excreting waste, etc.).

The large intestine pathway is associated with the emotions of sadness, loss, grief, guilt and stagnation. These can lead to pathologies that make it difficult for one to go with the flow of everyday life. When these emotions become deeply ingrained, the body can manifest this as constipation, diarrhea or lower abdominal cramping. Energetic imbalances in the large intestine can lead to physical weakness, while provoking emotional introversion. This can lead to depression, irritability, apathy and discouragement. It can also stimulate panic responses that then produce spontaneous defecation due to the body's reflex reactions.

Imbalances affecting the large intestine are quite frequent in modern society due to excessive stress and constant worry. Chronic stress and worry actually stimulate the body's parasympathetic nervous system, which controls the heart rate, increases intestinal and gland activity and relaxes the sphincter muscles that control the gastrointestinal tract. When the parasympathetic nervous system is constantly be stimulated, the body is unable to rest and digest. This leads to some of the aforementioned symptoms, diseases and ailments that trouble the large intestine.

TCM can assist a person who is dealing with pathologies of the large intestine in a safe and natural way. TCM utilizes several modalities for treating ailments within the body. The most commonly known of these modalities is acupuncture. Acupuncture uses hair-thin, solid stainless

steel needles to stimulate the body's ability to heal itself. Acupuncture works by stimulating or sedating sensory neurons that communicate with the central nervous system. This allows for the body to use its own defenses to regain harmony and balance.

Suffering from gastrointestinal ailments does not have to be a way of life. Help may be closer than you think. Search your neighborhood for a fully trained and properly-licensed acupuncturist and find out what they can do for you today.