

Research Update – Acupuncture Related to the Lungs

A study published by the Natural Health Research Institute suggests acupuncture can improve the breathing ability of COPD patients. COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease) is a progressive disease that gradually decreases lung function. The patients in this study received daily acupuncture treatments for twelve weeks using the same points on each patient. Using the Borg scale to rate their ability to breathe, it was found that patients receiving the regular acupuncture treatments showed significantly better Borg scores. This study shows there are alternative options for COPD sufferers that can lead to an overall increased quality of life.

<http://www.naturalhealthresearch.org/acupuncture-may-benefit-lung-health/>

Traditional Chinese Medicine uses a holistic approach to the body. Everything exists within the circle of nature according to TCM theory. Balanced elements lead to a harmonious life and a balanced body, mind and soul. TCM also considers how the psyche affects the physical body, making emotional wellness just as important as physical health.

In TCM, every organ is associated with a series of properties. These associations provide clues that help the TCM practitioner locate the root of the physical problems, while guiding them through the treatments. The associations of the lungs include the emotion of grief/sadness, the season of fall, the color white and the pungent flavor. When the body is imbalanced, then disease or illness may take root. TCM views this as an imbalance in the Qi (pronounced “chee”) or vital energy. The Qi of the lungs is very important to all aspects of human life.

The lungs are known as the Prime Minister in TCM and in such, they control breath and energy, while assisting the heart with the circulation of blood throughout the body. Without Qi, the blood will not flow causing illnesses. The lungs also control the skin, which breathes through the opening and closing of the pores, which helps regulate body temperature. This is done through both perspiration and shivering.

Acupuncture is one of the modalities used by TCM practitioners to help balance the body and the energies flowing through it. The function of lung Qi is to descend and dispense downwards and to dissipate outwards. When these functions are compromised, they need to be balanced. This is achieved by restoring the downward and outward functions. Acupuncture points on the body, when stimulated, can greatly improve the flow of lung Qi, while opening up the airways and increasing the uptake of oxygen within the cells of the whole body. Acupuncture also helps relax the muscles associated with breathing, allowing lung Qi to flow properly.

Another aspect of TCM that can greatly improve and balance lung Qi is herbal formulas. Pungent flavors are known to help the lungs. Because pungent, spicy substances generally have a dispersing nature, they tend to be very effective in treating lung pathologies. Coupling Chinese herbs with pungent foods, can quickly regulate lung imbalances. Pungent foods that

help balance the lungs include garlic, ginger, onions and horseradish. But just as with any type of food or herb, they should be used appropriately. Excessive usage of these items can be harmful to the lung Qi.

To find out how TCM can help you with any form of lung imbalance, it is recommended to search your area and contact a licensed acupuncturist. There are many qualified acupuncturists across the country that know how to address various lung pathologies.