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Acupuncture and Chinese Herbs Support Women's Health

Fang Mu, L.Ac., OMD

There is a connection between blood flow, hormones, acupuncture, and a woman's overall health that many women do not understand. This article presents some examples of how acupuncture and Chinese herbs can balance both the vital and the female organs.

First off, stress plays one role in blocking energy from the main organs, particularly the liver, and the female organs. When hormones are unbalanced and the menstrual cycle displays the negative effects, emotional instabilities and heart problems can ensue. There is a block in the flow of chi and a woman's menstrual period can become painful in the back and ovaries while also producing more blood clots.

One of my clients had problems with stress, creating infertility: she could not get pregnant despite the fact that all clinical tests showed that she had nothing wrong with her physically. She tried for four years to get pregnant; as a last resort, she tried acupuncture. When she came to me I learned that she tired easily and had poor digestion. Also, she had a number of food allergies and often experienced soreness in her back. I also discovered that her pulse was very weak. Over the course of several months, I treated her in order to strengthen the kidney chi and to help the energy flow through her liver, assisting the liver to better cleanse the blood. Within three months, she had more energy, her lower back pain was gone, she had fewer and fewer bouts with depression and, to her great delight, she became pregnant. She gave birth to a healthy son nine months later.

Another patient, the mother of two children, suffered several miscarriages as she tried to get pregnant again. She too had very low energy, constant lower back pain, and many clots during her menstrual period. Acupuncture helped relieve her back pain, strengthened her kidney, and she soon became pregnant and gave birth to a healthy baby girl!

A different set of symptoms was present in a 42-year-old woman who was diagnosed with breast cancer two months after the death of her mother. She had undergone surgery in order to remove the cancer but did not want to endure the following radiation treatments. When she came to me, she was very gloomy and had pain in her upper chest area, from below the under arm up through the upper chest area. Her menstrual period had lots of very dark clots. Her pulse was out of balance, like a tightly pulled string on a musical instrument. With all the stress and the symptoms she experienced, I believed her liver energy was blocked and began treating her once a week for the first six months, then once a month. Now, it has been four and a half years and she has had no recurrence of the cancer and even has enough energy to hold a full-time job and to ride a horse!

A woman's body belongs to yin: by the time of menopause, the yin becomes weak and builds up to a "false heat." This occurs as the hormones become unbalanced and a certain heat is produced from the inside; explaining why women feel emotionally off-balance, cannot sleep, have hot flashes and other bothersome symptoms during menopause. If a woman experiences extreme difficulty during menopause, it stems from low kidney energy and particularly unbalanced hormones. Sometimes during menopause, a woman gains too much weight and becomes obese from overeating, has back pain, and experiences extreme exhaustion. These are all symptoms that acupuncture can help relieve. Certain problems

occur from weak liver energy; other problems arise from high liver energy.

Another one of my clients experienced problems with hot flashes. The treatment for this can take a long time because hot flashes actually signal deeper imbalances. An excess of toxins in the body can trigger hot flashes, and diet plays a very important role in remedying the problem. Acupuncture can help bring the body back into balance but real change can only come about when diet also improves. Caffeine and alcohol add to the toxins in the blood, with the liver already working overtime due to the menopause process and need to cleanse the blood of hormones that are being cast off.

One 56-year-old woman came to me with hot flashes, sleeplessness, and constant fatigue. With weekly acupuncture treatments, I helped her strengthen her energy and assist the flow of the liver within a month. Another patient came to me with similar problems but was not willing to reduce her alcohol intake. Her improvement was hindered and much slower due to the fact she did not make dietary changes that would maintain her health.

"Restless leg syndrome" is another common problem associated with hormone imbalance. When a woman came to me with this problem, her legs would twitch and jerk and she had difficulty resting all day, and especially during the night. This woman did not have any stomach symptoms, but her tongue was coated with a very thick white layer, showing me that she possessed poor digestion. I asked about her diet and gave her a list of foods to eat or avoid, and she agreed to improve her diet. Using acupuncture, herbs, and her recommended diet, I helped improve the energy in her stomach. Within three months of regular treatment, her jumpy leg syndrome had completely stopped and she was both resting and sleeping better.

As shown by all these cases, acupuncture can play an important role in helping women regain their balance and maintain a healthy life. Not only during disease, but also in the simple process of aging, acupuncture can help women retain their wellbeing.

Fang Mu, LAc, OMD, received her medical degree for Acupuncture and Traditional Chinese Medicine in 1986 from Jiangxi University of Traditional Chinese Medicine in China. She is licensed acupuncturist in NC, and Dipl Acup and Chinese Herb in NCCAOM. Please call her to discuss any symptoms you may have and how acupuncture may be of help at Mu Chinese Acupuncture & Herbs in High Point, 336. 885.8898, www.muacupuncture.com.

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