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Heart Shock Treatment Strategies

In the first article of this two-part series, I introduced a more nuanced understanding of the heart, revisioning how it works, developing the deeper awareness of its relationship to the blood, as seen through the Eastern medical lens. I identified the kinds of shocks that are brought to bear, and how the shape of those familial, cultural, gendered and national experiences is writ upon the personal.

As we remember, Trauma or Heart Shock (as the Eastern medics call it), affects both the heart as the residence of the Shen and the kidneys as the treasure trove of the Jing, in both an organ and meridian sense, separately and together. With complementarities one does not exist without the other, but for the purposes of differentiation, we can say that without Jing there is no body, and without Shen there is no animation.

This relationship between the Kidney and the Heart is the expression in and of the physical body; the earthly vessel of manifestation (Jing) and the sacred, divine, pure spark of heaven (Shen). Through the developing relationship between these states of being: the Shaoyin; articulated through the meridians and time; as development from embryo to elder, is the sovereign human being.

It should be noted here, that as practitioners, in order to listen with open hearted connection, our own Shaoyin needs to be functioning well. The correspondences tell us that the kidneys open to

the ears, the heart to the tongue. Deep and active listening finds the ears open and the tongue held.

When we hear the narratives that patients bring us and do not underestimate the relief, release and healing that active and conscious listening can provide, we deepen the Shaoyin reserves of both ourselves and those we treat. The combination of the wisdom and the spirit, that is the healthy Shaoyin connection, provides recognition with acceptance of what is being, or has been, suffered.

The Taiyang meridians, the yang aspect of the Shaoyin (if you like), represented by the Bladder and the Small Intestine, are the meridians symbolic of dynamic movement and invigoration (yang water; the churn of surf) and integration (yang fire; the burning away of the impurities). They move at the surface of wei qi level, as the instinctual and reactive aspect of the energy body. It is an energy or dynamic that is a step beyond or before our conscious mind and body - lightning fast, sensitive and reactive to life's flux. It might be considered in translation (from East to West) as the nervous system.

It is here in the Taiyang that our bodily responses to the external world are most obvious. Physical cold will make us shiver, emotional coldness might make the hairs on the back of the neck arise which really is a different kind of shiver. Both are instinctive responses in that zone of the senses. Heightened awareness within the Taiyang might be observed

through a strong or keen sense of smell, sensitivity to loud noises, responsiveness to the lightest touch. It is here we might find a patient or oneself 'highly sensitive', and where we might encounter those that find the skin-penetrating 'pins' of the acupuncturist's trade 'uncomfortable' or even 'scary'.

It is an interesting point of reflection to consider our own response to 'sensitivity'. How much do we accept another's sensitive nature as gift or curse, not only for them but for us. What does it demand of us in our approach to them? Does it require us to slow down and have more patience? Does it require that we become more sensitive, and when we do does pain arise in ourselves?

One of the reasons why I love the Meridian Therapy strategies so much is simply because philosophically there is a validating awareness of what it means to be a sensitive person. Too often being sensitive is considered troublesome, or the person derided as hyperbolic or immature. When we recognise and accept as practitioners the tenderness and strain of the human body and heart in pain, we are able to deepen our skills and soften our approach. It becomes less about treatment as a technical application (and us as having the answer) and more about how the technique begins to inform us and the patient of their inherent sensitivities.

The Gentle Embrace of Meridian Therapy Acupuncture Strategies

One of the most beautiful, elegant and powerful treatment strategies I have learned in my years of graduate skills training is the Dr Manaka Cord Treatment for Whiplash. I have found it a remarkable treatment for post trauma states, whether it be actual or emotional whiplash. And I thank Sensei Paul Movsessian, a master practitioner of Meridian Therapy and Toyohari, who has transmitted to me with generosity, much of the healing arts of Dr Manaka and Meridian Therapy more generally.

I use it often as a first treatment to gauge a person's receptiveness. I use it when there has been any kind of fall or accident. I use it when a person feels they are disconnected or haven't ended up where they wanted to go in life. I use it when there has been expressed trauma of any kind, especially anything that has threatened, or seems, to have 'derailed' the person. And these days after 10 years of regularly applying this treatment in clinic I am no longer surprised how many people "don't feel anything during the treatment" and then get up off the table and get a bit wobbly, as if their legs - the structural supports of their spine - have been recalibrated

without them knowing. This notion of "not feeling anything" in itself is fascinating, as though if we don't feel it, then it's not quite real. It certainly opens up the mind to the idea that there are levels of stimulation that the body doesn't feel through the nervous system, but which might be having an impact anyway.

Ion Pumping Cords and the X-Signal System

A cord treatment refers to a treatment using ion pumping cords (IPC). "An IPC is essentially a copper wire or silver chain with a germanium or silicone diode in it. This allows a unidirectional flow of bioelectrical current through the wire, creating part of a circuit. Theoretically attaching the positive and negative clips of an ion cord to two needles inserted shallowly will create a polarity between the two needles and bioelectrical and ionic currents will begin to flow inside the body"¹.

The currents are minute, too small to stimulate the nervous system so the favoured explanation of the mechanism is "... a flow through the wire of a negative charge from the red to black clip and positive charge from the black to red clip. There is also some evidence to suggest that 'part of the mechanism of the IPC involves the production of minute electrical currents in the wire from the transduction of external fields'¹. More on this when we come to the clinical guidelines for the use of polarity devices.

Underpinning the use of the IPC is "the theory of the X-signal system as *the* biological system that lies at the heart of acupuncture and moxibustion theory and practice can be stated as follows:

There is a primitive signal (information) system in the body that has embryological roots, but is masked by the more advanced and complex control (regulation) systems. Thus, the original signal system is hard to find or see. This primitive system is able to detect and discriminate internal and external changes and plays a role in regulating the body by transmitting this information. This system serves as the modus operandi of acupuncture... we cannot explain it with neurophysiology because it manifests and is manipulated clinically with minute stimuli or influences that cannot be clearly said to affect the nervous system... It appears to operate at a more primitive and deeper level than many of the flows of biological information - neural, hormonal, biochemical..."¹.

The IPC treatments as generally used within Dr Manaka's protocols and are applied to the eight

extraordinary meridians, although they can also be used symptomatically with main meridian point combinations. According to the modern Classical acupuncture scholar and clinician Ann Cecil-Sterman, when the IPC are applied to the eight extraordinary vessel channels (which are usually reserved to treat at the yuan qi level) they will treat at the level of the wei qi².

This means that we can treat using the eight extraordinary vessels, access their structural and symbolic relevance in ways that don't disturb what the Classists rightly consider the deeper yuan levels of the body. We may still affect the yuan qi, but through the wei qi. We can speak to the Shaoyin through the Taiyang. The conversation we are engaging in with the body is less threatening because it is less direct.

Polarity Devices

IPC are a polarity device that come in a pair of cords. Other devices that can be used interchangeably for testing and treatment include zinc and copper plates, North and South faced magnets, and electrostatic adsorbers. (All of these tools can be found in Australia through the various industry suppliers, although Helio Supply has a consistent and extensive range of meridian therapy tools). The many polarity devices have their own particular uses and can be used interchangeably, however for the Whiplash Treatment mentioned below, there is no substitute.

The Rationale for Polarity and Treatment Considerations Using the Ion Pumping Cords

As acupuncturists we hardly need any rationale for how polarity might assist us in treatment. It is at the heart of our philosophical approach (yin/yang) to life, and the body in situ. We use polarity when we define and delineate the body into the yin and yang of upper and lower, left and right, back and front. Dr Richard Tan's masterful approach developed into the Si Yuan Balance Method, with its efficient and elegant truss structures, incorporates these relational polarities, together with the system polarities expressed in the Chinese clock, and other yin/yang systems. Dr Manaka's approach is the octahedral model, isophasality and topology.

Even if we don't label it polarity medicine, the diagnostic framework of acupuncture medicine is always giving us this tension and balance within treatments. The clinical advantage to having a more nuanced and granular way of working with yin yang, in particular with polarity devices such as the IPC, the plates or the adsorbers, "is the greater control gained over the therapeutic effects"¹.

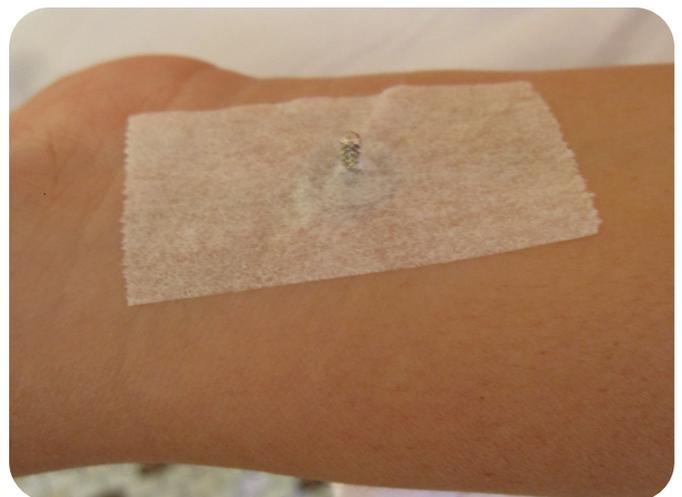
Bilateral Approach - The Rationale

There is often no rationale for doing treatments bilaterally as many in the Si Yuan or Tung Method traditions will attest. The Meridian Therapy traditions tend not to treat bilaterally as a matter of course and there are only a few treatments even within the Dr Manaka Protocols that require bilateral application. It should be stated again here that the IPC treatments are quite different to the standard acupuncture treatments applied within different diagnostic systems.

The bilateral nature of this treatment is important. If we remember that the stimuli directed at the body with this kind of treatment is very small and the idea with the treatment is not to overly engage the nervous system, then the bilateral nature of this treatment strategy is to ensure that the 'information' is equal on both sides. The nature of the stimuli at work in these kinds of treatments is theorised to be related to how the embryo maintains structural symmetry in utero.

Dr Manaka's Whiplash Treatment

Dr Manaka's Whiplash Treatment can be applied using acupuncture needles or silver spike points (SSP). The SSP are taped onto the body and rest upon the skin. The acupuncture needles are inserted obliquely and once inserted are then taped in place to secure them. I find the SSP, which are non-insertive, quicker and easier in clinic and just as effective.



What you will need:

- 2 x IPC sets (4 cords)
- 8 SSP + white tape 1"
- OR 0.18 x 40mm needles Acuglide Pro (Japanese handled needle) + White tape 1/2"

If you are going to use acupuncture needles you must do the following:

- Use Japanese metal handle needles. The handles are solid metal and this allows application to be done properly. The Chinese and Korean style needles are not appropriate and are generally not of a high enough quality of stainless steel.
- The needle must be inserted at an oblique angle at the points and only inserted about 2-3mm into the skin. Due to the gauge of the needles used, insertion must be done with a guide tube.
- Once inserted, the needles must then be taped using the ½” white tape.
- The tape must be cut and not torn into acceptable lengths.
- The needle shaft should be taped first along the length of the needle, to about ⅔ of the way along the shaft, then a piece of tape placed at the top of the needle across the handle. See photo.



Silver Spike Points

If you are using the SSP which in many ways are easier to apply, use the 1” tape, push the stem of the spike through the tape and tape the spike to the body, ensuring that the point of the spike is resting on the acupuncture point.

Application

- Apply the SSP or the taped acupuncture needles



to SI3 and BL62 bilaterally, then SJ5 and GB41 bilaterally.

- Attach the red clip of one IP cord to SI3 and the black clip to BL62 on the right-hand side.
- Repeat on the left-hand side.
- Then attach the black clip to SJ5 on the right-hand side and the red clip on the GB41.
- Repeat on the left-hand side.
- All four IPC should be attached to the clips or needles.
- No cords should be crossing the body.
- The cords should be running along the sides of the body.
- The right hand is attached to the right foot at two places. The left hand is attached to the left foot at two places.

Allow the person to rest comfortably for about 20 minutes.

Do not needle any other point, apply moxa or essential oils while this cord treatment (Whiplash Treatment) is ‘ongoing’

In particular, you must never needle above the Dai Mai (umbilicus) when cords are attached. It tends to make the person feel nauseated.

After 20 minutes, remove the IPC as well as all the needles or the SSP. The needles will require putting in the sharps container, the SSP can be put in a small bowl of alcohol or rubbed down with alcohol swabs to clean for reuse.

Turn the patient over to lie on their front (if this is possible). Now you are going to apply one round of needle head moxa to BL19, BL22, BL27, BL28 which are the back shu points of the GB, SJ, SI, BL respectively.

If you haven’t been trained to do needle head moxa properly, you will need to modify the treatment a little by using a heat lamp over the needled points instead and allow the patient to rest for about 15-20

minutes. Please check the lamp does not get too hot.

If you have been trained in how to apply needle head moxa properly, you will be using metal Japanese handled needles of 0.22 x 40mm or 0.22 x 50mm at BL19, BL22, BL27 and BL28 bilaterally.

If you are able to use the smoky wakakusa (sweet grass) moxa punk then you can do all the points together, because while this will be warm it will not be too hot or last very long.

If you are only able to use the Ondan smokeless moxa caps, or baskets depending on your preference, then you will need to apply the moxa in stages. This is because the smokeless moxa is much warmer and goes for longer.

Do the Back Shu of the GB and SJ points first, then do the SI and BL points.

Once the moxa has finished, remove the moxa ash and the needles from the back shu points and allow the patient to carefully and slowly turn over to their back and rest for a moment before getting them to their feet. Ensure the patient gets up carefully and advise them to take it very easy for the next day or two. They need to feel their feet on the ground before they stand up from this treatment, so please ensure you have a little time to allow your patient to “get grounded”.

Considerations

SI3 and BL62 are the Master and Couple points of the Du mai and Yang Qiao mai when used in combination they activate these two extraordinary vessels. However, they are also Small intestine and Bladder channel points and will to a degree engage the Taiyang system. These channels structurally affect the back.

SJ5 and GB14 are the Master and Couple points of the Dai mai and the Yang Qiao mai when used in combination they access these two extraordinary vessels. As we know the Qiao mai channels emerge from and engage with the Du mai, so have an effect on the spine. The Dai mai or belt channel runs the width of the body and is said to pull all the channels together. It has an effect on the pelvic basin and the area around the umbilicus. It has a way of binding the vertical structures together.

The points to access the eight extraordinary channels though are also engaging the Shaoyang system. The Shaoyang relationship is important for the structural aspects of the side body, by its

relationships to the fascial planes and the health of the interstitial aspect of the soft tissue.

Modifications to Aspects of Treatment

If your patient is too sensitive then do one needle and moxa on alternating sides of the body (either left or right BL19, then the opposite side BL22, then opposite BL27 and opposite BL28). Or you just do the needle head moxa on the SI and BL back shu points.

If you are needling only and using a heat lamp instead of moxa, you can use 0.16 x 30mm or 0.16 x 40mm on the points. Body acupuncture is better done with finer needles after cord treatments.

If your patient can not lie on their front, then lie them on the side and apply needles without the moxa. Apply a heat lamp if you have it.

If you haven't been trained to apply head moxa do not wing it. There are other just as beneficial ways to complete the treatment. Moxa is a specialty technique and requires care in application and removal. If you would like to be trained in how to apply needle head and chinetsukyu moxa techniques, then Paul Movsessian has online modules that you can do through China Books.

It should be stated in case of any confusion, this is not an electro-machine protocol. The charge we are working with is from the body's own field and much smaller than the currents introduced to the body with electro. You can not use this treatment with electro-machine currents.

Summary

In being able to apply a very gentle and respectful treatment to the Heart in shock, we are able to begin a better conversation with the body. It sets up and develops a level of trust in the therapeutic alliance that is both somatic and philosophical.

In being sensitive to treatment we recalibrate our own skin and find how our own perceptions are either developing or perhaps no longer serving us. When we listen with the inherited and gained wisdom of our own Shaoyin this is then engaged in the hands and we deepen our skills within the practice of the medicine.

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