

Ear Acupuncture Prescriptions and Techniques, Part Two: Point Energetics

By Skya Abbate, DOM

In the first part of this article, which appeared in the September 2004 issue, I provided the reader with a list of clinically effective formulas for the treatment of 26 common diseases.

In part two, I will summarize the salient energetics of core acupuncture points so that readers can appreciate their role in auricular prescriptions.

Shenmen. *Shenmen* is the foremost point in the treatment of virtually every disease. Analogous to body *shenmen* (Heart 7), ear *shenmen*'s functions largely pertain to the heart. Like body *shenmen*, the earth point and thus the sedation point of the Heart meridian, ear *shenmen* adds "dampness" to the body. By virtue of this physiological function, it grounds the patient and calms the spirit, thus putting the patient into a state of receptivity for treatment. It should be the first point treated in any ear acupuncture prescription because of these energetics. The only contraindications for *shenmen* are when there is already excess phlegm or dampness that would compromise the heart and lungs, as in the case of COPD (coronary obstructive pulmonary disease), or asthma or bronchitis characterized by excess phlegm. (It is not contraindicated in other damp disorders such as leukorrhea, eczema or obesity.)

The heart is the supreme commander and governs the blood. Thus, all blood disorders of deficiency, stagnation, extravasation or rebelliousness can be treated with *shenmen*.

The *Nei Jing* reminds us, "When the Heart is serene, all pain is negligible." This function is largely related to the heart's role in blood regulation as well as the strong relationship of the heart to the mind and the spirit. Indeed, *shenmen* proves to be a primary point in the treatment of pain.

Because of its internal pathway of "the eye system," the heart also has a strong connection to the eye and can benefit many ophthalmological disorders.

Brain. In my opinion, Brain is the second most important auricular point, and should be used in almost every ear prescription. The brain controls everything - all bodily systems and parts - and thus it controls pain perception, movement, and the proper functioning of all organs.

Sympathetic. Sympathetic is another major auricular point instrumental in balancing the sympathetic and parasympathetic branches of the autonomic nervous system. It relieves pain and promotes dilation of blood vessels, which aids in pain relief.

Adrenal. The Adrenal point strengthens the function of the Kidney point, particularly by controlling adrenal hormones involved in stress reactions. It reduces pain and quells anti-inflammatory responses.

Endocrine. Sometimes referred to as the internal secretion point, the Endocrine point regulates all of the endocrine glands needed for homeostasis of the internal bodily environment. It is useful in all endocrine, i.e. hormonal, disorders.

Kidney. The kidney is the organ that encapsulates the person's genetic inheritance (constitution) as well as the state of one's current health. It is useful in all chronic problems.

The kidney is the root of the *qi*. It anchors and secures it, thus keeping the person healthy and balanced physically and psychologically. The kidney governs all of the developmental life phases, from conception through puberty and adulthood to menopause and aging.

The kidney governs the anatomical and physiological domains of the back, knees, the lower *jiao*, blood, hearing, and the head hair.

Liver. The liver is the organ responsible for the free flow of *qi* in the body, thus it can move for stagnation anywhere in the body.

The liver, like the heart and kidney, has a close relationship to the blood. While the heart dominates the blood and the kidney aids in its production, the liver stores the blood, releasing it in the daytime and during menstruation.

The liver dominates the tendons and the muscles. The Chinese character for "tendon" includes the nerves, tendons and ligaments. Hence, any disorder of these structures is controlled by the liver.

The eyes are the external manifestation of the liver, so the Liver point is indicated in treatment of eye disorders.

Heart. Many of the functions detailed under *shenmen* are also applicable for the heart, but the Heart point directly relates to the Heart organ/meridian complex in Chinese medicine along with all of its voluminous Western connotations.

The Heart point is synergistically reinforced when used with *shenmen* but targets the treatment as related to the heart itself.

Spleen. Like all the organ points, Spleen has numerous physiological functions. It dominates the muscles, making it involved in all muscular movement and health. When the spleen is not functioning properly, it is involved in the production of damp. The spleen is responsible for a healthy mind and a balanced spirit. As part of the Oriental digestive system, it is the primary organ involved in digestion and assimilation of nutrients.

Other Points - Specified

- **Diaphragm** is an extremely powerful point. It assists in respiration and in moving the *qi* of the liver. The diaphragm, through its connection with the liver, moves the blood when stagnant. It also can make an inactive auricle reactive, thus it is a good point to use for this reason as well.
- **Fingers** are an area for all finger disorders.
- **Wrist** is a local point for all wrist disorders.
- **Gall Bladder** pertains to the gall bladder, which regulates the release of bile to the small intestine for digestive purposes. It treats all gall bladder disorders.
- **Stomach** pertains to the Stomach organ/meridian complex. It is vital to the initial breakdown of food.
- **Lung** points also have a *zang-fu* connection. They are used for all respiratory problems. The Lung points contribute to one's energy level, as the lungs are the master of the *qi*. They are also very applicable in skin problems and the healing of mucous membranes, because the lung dominates the skin and the mucous membranes.
- **Large Intestine** is a local point for all large intestine problems.

- **Sanjiao** regulates the three *jiaos*.
- **Cheek** is a local point for cheek disorders.
- **Jaw** is a local point for jaw disorders.
- **Brainstem** is a local point for all functions of the brainstem. Brainstem treats shock and neuro-vegetative disorders.
- **Relax Muscle** is a specialized point within the liver area. It is a powerful point in pain relief because of this function.
- **Ovary** is a local point for problems of the ovaries such as menopause, infertility, ovulatory problems and more.
- **Ear Apex** treats liver yang rising symptoms such as hypertension and conjunctivitis.
- **Eye** is a main local point for all eye disorders.
- **Eye1** and **Eye 2** are clinically effective points for eye problems.
- **Inner Ear** is a local point for inner ear disorders.
- **Mouth** can be used as a local point for mouth diseases including stuttering, aphasia, dysphasia, oral ulcerations, etc. The Mouth point is also called the anti-fatigue point. One reason is that it is located close to the external auditory meatus, which is a very tender and delicate area, and elicits a strong stimulus upon treatment. Second, the Mouth point, when stimulated in a tonifying manner, promotes eating, which gives one the energy derived from food. Hence, it combats fatigue.
- **Sciatic** can be used for treatment of the sciatic nerve.
- **Cervical Vertebrae** are local points for disorders of the cervical vertebrae.
- **Neck** is a local point for neck disorders.

In the third and final part of this article, we will explore treatment modality options.

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