

Laser Acupuncture and Respiratory Disease

By David Rindge, DOM, LAc, RN

While we can get by without water for days and food for over a month, our needs for oxygen and to eliminate carbon dioxide are nearly immediate. If you have ever tried to hold your breath for an extended period or to breathe through a straw, you have an idea of what it feels like to be short of breath.

Many people with chronic asthma, bronchitis and emphysema live this way.

Standard medical practice focuses mostly on the "supply side." Oxygen is given when blood levels are low, and drugs are administered to relax muscles around constricted airways to reduce the work of breathing.

Yet, oxygen may be no more than palliative; drugs seldom cure, and may have side-effects. Even when these are helpful, they may only alleviate symptoms without addressing underlying causes. Many still live with chronic respiratory insufficiency. Over time, the price of excessive work of breathing for the individual is constitutional weakness, and the cost to society totals in the billions of dollars.

Laser therapy¹ has biostimulative and tissue regenerative properties as well as antimicrobial, anti-inflammatory and analgesic effects.² Studies on its effects in respiratory disease have shown improvement in both gas exchange and pulmonary function, as well as enhanced immunity and other health benefits.

Sinusitis and Laser Acupuncture

Sinusitis causes or contributes to many other respiratory conditions and, more often than not, accompanies them. Hacerova and Hubacek³ treated a group of 194 patients with acute sinusitis using laser therapy. A control group of 241 patients with the same condition received only drug therapy. The authors studied the effects of laser therapy by itself, as well as in combination with antihistamines or with both antihistamines and antibiotics.

A significant analgesic effect was noted, and the average duration of therapy was shorter for those who received laser treatment, varying between 6.3 to 10.5 days as compared with 11.1 to 18.8 days for the group treated with drugs only. Increased activity of phagocytes, stimulation of T- and B-lymphocytes, and higher levels of lysozyme in the saliva, were reported in those receiving laser therapy.

The authors wrote, "*Laser irradiation works through its analgesic, anti-inflammatory and biostimulative effects on ease of pain, or even on its elimination. It also causes a quicker withdrawal of inflammation and oedema of the mucosa and thus brings restoration of drainage of sinus as well as normalisation of mucociliar function.*" (emphasis added)

One can administer laser acupuncture in contact over LI 20, GB 14 and near UB 2 (points over the maxillary, frontal and ethmoidal sinuses). The maxillary sinuses may also be treated intraorally by directing the probe upward toward them in contact along both sides of the palatine ridge. This strategy may also be a great starting point for the treatment of other respiratory conditions. Always take measures to protect the eyes.

Case Study: Sinusitis, Earache

A 49-year-old female, whose primary complaint was an earache (which she associated with chronic, life-long sinusitis) was treated four times using laser and needle acupuncture. She was also instructed to follow the sinusitis protocol that follows this case study (adapted from a patient handout, which you are welcome to use). By the fourth session, she reported that her sinuses were clear and that her earache was gone.

Sinusitis Protocol

1. **Purchase and begin using a HEPA filter.** Keep it on 24 hours a day in your bedroom for at least the first week and during sleep thereafter. This will reduce exposure to airborne allergens.
2. **Eliminate dairy intake.**
3. **Purchase and begin using a neti pot twice daily.** Fill with spring water, adding a pinch of sea salt. Insert the tip into one nostril and tilt the head, allowing the water to flow by gravity and drain out the other nostril. Repeat on the other side.
4. **Decongest twice daily.** Steam with an essential oil such as eucalyptus, lavender, or rosemary.
5. **Goldenseal snuff.** Ouch! This is not for the faint-hearted! Snuff a tiny amount into each nostril **after**

using the neti pot and steam. It may burn for a bit. Goldenseal has strong bactericidal and virucidal properties and, when taken in this way, places a barrier between mucous membranes and microorganisms. Take a break after four days of consecutive use.

6. **Immune tincture** (two parts echinacea to one part each of Oregon grape root, olive leaf, red clover and astragalus extracted in 100 proof vodka for a minimum of eight weeks). Adult dosage: one teaspoon every two to three hours for three days, then one teaspoon four times daily for seven days.
7. **Vitamin C: to bowel tolerance.** In most cases, this will be around 3,000-4,000 mg of vitamin C, 3-4 times daily for adults.

Asthma and Laser Acupuncture

Asthma causes over 1.5 million emergency room visits, around 500,000 hospitalizations, and more than 5,000 deaths annually. Approximately 15 million people are affected in the U.S., and the cost of conventional treatment is in excess of six billion dollars annually.⁴

Milojevic and Kuruc⁵ treated 50 patients with bronchial asthma using laser acupuncture for 10 days, comparing changes with those of a control group of the same number of patients, differing only in that laser acupuncture was not given. A significant improvement of all estimated lung function parameters was observed 30 minutes after laser treatment. Improvements achieved on the third and the tenth day of treatment were significantly higher in the study group than with controls.

The authors wrote, "A ten-day course of low-power laser stimulation of acupuncture points in patients with bronchial asthma improves both the lung function and gas exchange parameters. *Positive effects of laser treatment in patients with bronchial asthma are achieved in a short time and they last long, for several weeks, even months. Successive laser stimulation in asthmatics prolongs periods of remission and decreases the severity of asthmatic attacks.*" (emphasis added)

Ailioaie and Ailioaie⁶ compared the effects of laser acupuncture and pharmaceutical drugs in asthma. They divided 98 patients with moderate or severe asthma into three groups. Thirty-five patients in group 1 were treated solely with laser acupuncture using extrameridian acupuncture points as well as laser scanning twice daily, 10 days per month, for three months. Thirty-three patients in group 2 inhaled Salmeterol xinofoate⁷ twice daily for three months. Thirty patients in group 3 were treated with Theophylline twice daily for three months. The authors reported, "*A noticeable improvement in the clinical, functional and immunological characteristics were observed in 83% of the patients in group 1, 70% in group 2 and 53% in group 3.*"

There were no side-effects in the laser group." (emphasis added)

Case Study: Asthma, Allergies

A 60-year-old male retired sheet metal worker with longstanding asthma and allergies already taking multiple respiratory medications (Proventil, Theodur, Serevent, Flovent, Naserell) came seeking ways to improve stamina and address shortness of breath. He was treated with laser and needle acupuncture. Breath sounds, which were moderately diminished bilaterally with occasional expiratory wheezing, improved following laser treatment. After a course of 12 treatments, he stated that he felt his breathing, endurance and overall health had improved significantly.

Pneumonia and Laser Therapy

Amirov⁸ divided 142 patients with pneumonia into two groups. The study group (96 patients) received laser therapy in combination with pharmaceuticals, while the control group (46 patients) was treated solely with drugs. A pronounced reduction in cell membrane permeability, a rise in concentrations of iron and chromium in the blood serum, and improvement of microcirculation were observed in those receiving laser treatment. Amirov wrote, "*These changes closely correlated with those in immunity, external respiration function. Conclusion: Laser therapy is an effective method of pneumonia treatment and can be included in relevant combined schemes.*" (emphasis added)

Lutai, Egorova and Shutemova⁹ compared two groups of patients with pneumonia. The study group received laser therapy and drugs while the control group received only drugs. There was an earlier regression of clinical symptoms and a more rapid recovery of lung function in the group treated with laser therapy. The authors wrote, "*The findings demonstrate that non-drug treatment had an undeniably positive impact. In the absence of side effects of this method, these data allow infrared laser therapy to be recommended for rehabilitation of elderly patients with pneumonia.*" (emphasis added)

Commentary

All studies cited in this article or their abstracts are available online through the Laser Research Library at www.healinglightseminars.com. The reader is encouraged to explore any areas of interest.

Laser therapy is already practiced widely throughout Europe and Asia, and it deserves to be fully explored in the United States. Our government presently subsidizes the development of pharmaceutical drugs, yet

drugs do not equal medicine.

At the time of this writing, Vioxx has recently been removed from the market because of an increased incidence of heart attack and stroke, and the safety of Celebrex, Bextra, Aleve and the entire class of NSAIDs is being questioned. In contrast, studies of laser therapy have shown few side-effects, and to my knowledge, an adverse reaction has never been reported. Perhaps it is time to reassess how money spent on medical research is allocated.

References

1. Laser therapy is the most common term for the therapeutic application of laser light at an output power of 500 milliwatts or less.
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 3. M. Hacarova, J. Hubacek, Low Level Laser Therapy of Sinusitis, Laser Partner, 28.3.2002.
 4. Statistics from Asthma in America: www.asthmainamerica.com/statistics.htm.
 5. Milojevic M, Kuruc V., Low power laser biostimulation in the treatment of bronchial asthma. *Med Pregl* Sep-Oct 2003;56(9-10):413-8.
 6. Ailioaie C, Ailioaie L. The treatment of bronchial asthma with LLLT in attack-free period in children. *Ter Arkh* 1997;69(12):49-50.
 7. Salmeterol xinofoate is the generic name for a bronchodilator marketed as Serevent. According to David Graham, a scientist who reviews medicines for the Food and Drug Administration, Serevent is one of at least five approved medications which he believes may present a serious health risk to patients (*Kaiser Daily Health Policy Report*, 11/19/04).
 8. Amirov NB. Parameters of membrane permeability, microcirculation, external respiration, and trace element levels in the drug-laser treatment of pneumonia. *Ter Arkh* 2002;74(3):40-3.
 9. Lutai AV, Egorova LA, Shutemova EA. Laser therapy of elderly patients with pneumonia. *Vopr Kurortol Fizioter Lech Fiz Kult* May-June 2001;(3):15-8.
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