

[IMAGE]

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The Treatment of AIDS with Traditional Chinese Medicine

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AIDS (acquired immunodeficiency syndrome) is a serious sexually transmitted disease caused by HIV (human immunodeficiency virus). HIV can present with multiple defects and abnormalities in the human immune system.

At present, there is no reliable way to control the virus.

AIDS has a long latent period, which provides an opportunity for traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) to treat it. This fact has allowed for studies indicating that TCM does have certain effects on these aspects, including: improvement of AIDS patients' immune and survival quality; relief of clinical symptoms; and extension of survival time.

The clinical manifestation is very complicated and includes mainly fever; night sweats; weight loss; appetite reduction; skin rash; asthenia; extensive lymphangoncus; and difficulty in breathing. As AIDS is classified into many types, the TCM treatment has not formed into a unified rule. The main observations following TCM teachings are:

- Weak vital *qi*;
- viral invasion;
- impacted viscera;
- intestinal and stomach disorders;
- *qi* energy and blood shortages;
- unbalanced yin and yang.

The symptoms on which these diagnoses (based on TCM teachings) are made include:

- weak lungs (yang);
- spleen and stomach disorders;

- deficiency of both spleen and kidney;
- internal presence of pathogen and toxins.

Treatment should be administered mainly by regulating the viscera; nourishing the yin and strengthening the yang; invigorating *qi* and blood; and strengthening resistance to enhance the immune system. AIDS presents as an abnormality and unbalanced immune system. Therefore, the principle of treatment is to adjust the immune system's balance in multiple ways. Current opinion suggests the treatment of weak patients mainly by strengthening resistance, and the treatment of strong patients mainly by eliminating pathogens. From my experience, the method that should mainly be used is one that will strengthen resistance to consolidate the constitution. When resistance is strengthened, pathogens will surely be eliminated.

I would like to introduce several ways of improving immune system by invigorating *qi* and blood, nourishing yin and yang and regulating viscera, with a desire to be of great help to others.

1. Needling the Two Channels (*Ren* and *Du*)

Yin and yang disorder is the early manifestation. By the principles of Chinese medicine, the *ren* channel is connected with all yin channels; therefore it is known as the sea of yin channels. Hand and foot six yang channels cross at *du* 14, so it is known as the sea of yang channels. When *ren* and *du* are not blocked, all the channels are clear; circulation is not blocked, *qi* and blood are flowing freely, and yin and yang are nourished. Needling the *ren* and *du* channels is the main way to adjust yin and yang. Main points on the *ren* channel are *ren* 23, 22, 20, 17, 12, 6 and 4. Main points on the *du* channel are *du* 14, 12, 9, 7, 6, 4 and 3.

When inserting acupuncture needles to *ren* 22, the practitioner must take special care to not impact the trachea. Apply acupuncture needles to *ren* 20, 17 and point toward the lower abdomen, and needle *ren* 12, 6 and 4 toward *ren* 8 with needle stimulation, but not too deep to prevent contact with internal organs. Needle *ren* and *du* channels in turn, three times a week, keeping the needles in place for 20 minutes. At the same time, cupping and moxibustion can be used on *ren* 17, 12, 8 and 4 and *du* 14, 12, 6, 4 and 3 for 10 minutes in cases in which there is discomfort or complaints of skin pain. This treatment method can nourish yin and yang; regulate viscera; dredge *tri-jiao*; and improve appetite. If symptoms present that include diarrhea, needle the four points around the belly button, one inch away. Remove needles when the patient has detected the needle sensation. Other points, such as the back/*shu* points with the front/*mu* points, and points on limbs, can also be needled at the same time, more or less according to the illness condition.

2. Treatment by Chinese Herbs

Chinese herbs can effectively contribute to nourishing *qi* and blood; regulating viscera; strengthening resistance; and eliminating pathogens. Dozens of Chinese herbs have been proved to have functionality that improves the immune system. Moreover, the herbs for preventing and treating AIDS are available in more than 30 different prescriptions, such as *ginseng tang*, *xiao chaihu tang*, *buzhong yiqi tang*, *danggui buxue tang*, *guipi tang*, *sanjia yangyin tang*, *yu pingfeng san* and *si junzi tang*. Chinese herbs should be used in quantity, and their strength determined by the clinical symptoms. Some herbs like astragalus root; bighead atractylodes rhizome; ledebouriella root; Chinese cassia tree bark; and licorice can be ground into fine powder and put on the bellybutton to improve immune function.

3. Abdomen Massage

"The abdomen is the original place where all diseases come from, where the bellybutton is connected with five viscera; it is the gate of vitality *qi*." (Li Zheng, *Advanced Massage Techniques*). Abdomen massage can make the *qi* of middle *jiao* flow smoothly, sending up the lucid and sending down the turbid, promoting flow of *tri-jiao*, regulating the middle *jiao* and restoring *qi*, relieving the depressed liver and invigorating the spleen. Therefore, it is very important in the full management of the conditions associated with AIDS.

The areas for massage are: *lan men* (1.5 inches above the bellybutton); lymphatic points (0.5 inches left and below the bellybutton); *ren* 11 and 6; GB26; LR13; ST21 and 25; and *ren* 25, grabbing and lifting the *du* channel to the extent of invoking a needle sensation felt by the fingers. The methods are: reduction or purgation for excess syndrome; reinforcement for deficiency syndrome; or uniform reinforcing-reducing method, using each point for two minutes. Grab and lift the *du* channel with the left thumb, forefinger, middle and ring fingers to grab the area of *ren* 11, while with the right thumb, forefinger, middle and ring fingers, grab the area of *ren* 6 and lift up three times, then gently loose down. When applying this acupressure once a day, the therapist must be gentle -- appropriately heavy, but not rough -- based on the patient's weight and body type.

4. Applying Acupressure to the Superficial Lymphatic Area

Lymphatic tissue is concentrated in the sides of the neck, armpit and groin. These three areas have several common characteristics by distribution: the temperature is a little higher; there is more possibility of rubbing against another body surface; the areas joining the head, neck, limbs and viscera are very important passages

for *qi* and blood; and they are easily found and touched by the subject. Rub the superficial lymphatic area by hand LU10 or the side of the hand. Do not press the lymph nodes directly, but rub this area to make it warm with the skin getting red, elevating the temperature slightly. Do not graze or chafe the skin. This should be done once or twice a day. This method can strengthen the activation of immune cells and adjust immune function, preventing influenza infection.

Chinese medicine has many methods in improving immunity, invigorating *qi* and blood, strengthening constitution and preventing diseases, such as: using elongated needles; plum-flower needles; ear needling; lifting and pinching therapy; finger-press therapy; massaging the spine and/or feet; moxibustion; cupping with jars; *qi gong*; *guasha*; and *taiji*.

Summary

1. When treating AIDS patients, it is absolutely essential to use sterile needles, and take care for disposal regulations.
2. Treat AIDS as early as possible. The latent period of AIDS is the best opportunity for treatment, after the HIV virus has been detected but before a full-blown AIDS situation. If treated continuously, the effectiveness is certain. Patients can perform abdomen massage themselves and rub the superficial lymphatic area under the instruction of doctors. Additional care should be taken with pregnant women.
3. The treatment of AIDS should be the combination of many treatments, as outlined above. Chinese medicine and herbs are only two of the treatment methods. They cannot supplant the scientific Western treatment, but they can be used as complimentary adjuncts.
4. Any disease can affect the immune system, changing the way it functions. Repair and strengthening of the immune system does prevent some disease, but overall, the immune system is being weakened. Therefore, preventing diseases is very important.



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