Diabetic Neuropathy Treatment Using Microcurrent Electro-Acupuncture

By Darren Starwynn, OMD, LAc

Microcurrent therapies consist of very low-intensity electro-therapeutic currents delivered to the body for pain relief, assisted rehabilitation and electronic, non-needle acupuncture. Microlight therapy is the combination of microcurrent and color light therapy.

Both microcurrent and Microlight can be considered to be part of the growing field of Energy Medicine – the use of energy frequencies and wavelengths to promote accelerated healing and well-being.

There is now wide recognition of the value of microcurrent therapies for pain relief. What is less understood are its valuable applications for treatment of neuropathies, neuro-muscular degenerative diseases and internal medicine. Special treatment protocols are required to address these conditions. Knowledge of appropriate acupuncture points is required for good results.

The focus of this article is the uses of Microlight therapy for treatment of diabetics. While there is much anecdotal evidence for the effectiveness of this approach no formal studies have been published to date. I will explain two ways Microlight can be used to treat diabetics.

It is beyond the scope of this article to fully explain the use of acupuncture and adjunctive therapies for diabetes. Good acupuncture treatment for this condition requires differential diagnosis and choice of appropriate acu-points. Major TCM diagnostic categories for evaluating diabetes include Spleen qi deficiency with possible dampness or damp heat, Liver qi stagnation with possible Liver Fire, or wasting disease of one of the three regions of the Triple Warmer. Once good differential diagnosis and acupuncture treatment planning has been accomplished the addition of vibrational medical methods can significantly improve outcomes. Therefore the treatments described in this article should be used as a complement to a good acupuncture treatment.

**Microcurrent therapy - Copyright â Stock Photo / Register Mark** Microcurrent therapy has been shown to reduce or even fully eliminate the symptoms of peripheral neuropathy. No therapy for treatment of diabetes is likely to be effective without needed dietary and lifestyle changes being implemented. Such programs are
called Therapeutic Lifestyle Change (TLC). The NIH has mandated that physicians first put their patients on TLC programs before starting them on long-term regimes of medications. It is likely that acupuncture and energy medical therapies could reduce the amount or duration of medication needed. The therapies for treating diabetes can also be helpful for weight loss and management. The Ideal Weight Program™ developed by Debi Weiss, R.N., L.Ac. is highly effective for weight loss and "diabesity", a complex condition encompassing both diabetes and obesity.

While a patient is making necessary dietary changes Microlight therapy can be useful for treating diabetes in the following ways:

1. **Alleviation of peripheral neuropathy (PN)**

   Microcurrent therapy has been shown to reduce or even fully eliminate the symptoms of peripheral neuropathy. Positive results have been noted for treatment of neuropathy in diabetics and AIDS patients who were experiencing the side–effects of long-term medication regimes.

   Treatment techniques include:

   - Application of pad electrodes to the legs, with special frequencies and polarity patterns being utilized.
   - Treatment of acupuncture points on the legs and lower back with needle acupuncture and/or Microlight probe electrodes that strongly promote energy circulation and help "wake up" dysfunctional nerves.

Richard Niemtzow is a retired Colonel in the U.S. Air Force who has introduced many acupuncture treatments, as well as microcurrent therapy, into the military. Dr. Niemtzow developed a protocol for treatment of PN that showed positive results for many military personnel. It called for 20-minute microcurrent treatments every other day for 1 – 3 weeks. I have personally experienced very positive results with my patients using a version of this therapy. His suggested microcurrent frequencies were 0.6 and 1 Hz.

I have found that the most effective form of pad electrode treatment for PN uses a sequence of Russian stimulation followed by microcurrent. Russian current is a modality devised by Kots in the 1970s for the Russian Olympic team. It consists of a complex milliamperage pattern and is applied to the body for muscle strength building. I have discovered, quite serendipitously, that this form of current can also be very effective for treatment of post-stroke, peripheral neuropathy and other neuro-muscular degenerative conditions. Further, I have observed that best results are produced by applying 5 – 15 minutes of Russian stimulation followed by 10 – 20 minutes of microcurrent through the same pad electrodes. This form of
sequence therapy, plus Microlight probe stimulation, is available through the Acutron device.

The osteopath and naturopath H. Van Gelder discovered energy frequencies that can help heal a wide range of health disorders. Most of these frequencies can be applied through microcurrent stimulators to good effect. During the 10 – 20 minute period of microcurrent application through pad electrodes described above the following frequencies which could be supportive for treatment of diabetes could be applied:

- 35 Hz: Diabetes, also Liver
- 3 and 6 Hz: Endocrine system
- 9 Hz: Pancreas
- 91 Hz: Pancreatic islets of Langerhans
- 23 Hz: Kidney

In most neuropathy cases needle acupuncture can be used simultaneously with this pad electrode sequence. Useful needle points include the sacral Liao and Shang-Baxie points.

2. Organ / Autonomic Balancing Therapies

Organ functions are regulated by the autonomic nervous system through sympathetic and parasympathetic effectors. There are special acupuncture points on the front of the torso called Alarm or "Mu" points. These directly register the health of its associated organ, and can also be used therapeutically as acupuncture treatment sites. There are also acu-points that run along both sides of the spine on the back called Associated or "Shu" points. These are closely associated with nerve ganglia that connect with and regulate the organs. Mu-Shu technique is a simple method in which the front-Mu and back-Shu points are treated together with polarized microcurrent and appropriate colors of light.

There are Mu-Shu point combinations that help balance function of each of the major organs affected by diabetes. Organs should be selected that are found to be dysfunctional during differential diagnosis. It is best to just select two Organs for Mu-Shu treatment per treatment. Complete instructions for performing microcurrent and light Mu-Shu technique can be found in my article in Acupuncture Today February 2006, Vol 07, issue 2. (See my columnist link on acupuncturetoday.com.)

Color light selection is important for good results with Mu-Shu treatment of diabetes and other internal conditions. Dinshah, the great pioneer of color therapy in the USA taught that the colors of light particularly
beneficial for treating diabetes mellitus include lemon, yellow and magenta. I suggest using kinesiology to confirm correct choice of color for each organ.

There is almost no risk to using this method and much potential for significant benefits. The few contraindications for microcurrent treatment include patients with a heart pacemaker, active cancer processes or those who are pregnant.

It will be of great value to set up clinical trials to further document these valuable effects of Microlight therapies for treatment of diabetics. This would fulfill a part of the NIH’s mandate for Therapeutic Lifestyle Change programs that can treat more patients at lower cost, and with less need for long-term drug use.

I believe that Microlight therapy can be a particularly valuable treatment in settings where there are large numbers of diabetic patients and limited resources, as exists in many Native American reservation and inner city health centers.

Click here for more information about Darren Starwynn, OMD, LAc.

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