

Review Article

Saam Acupuncture and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder: Fear is a Physical Disease and it resides in the Kidneys

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Abstract

PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) is a well-known and commonly experienced phenomena affecting nearly all people at some time in either small or great measure. Understanding PTSD as a Kidney Pathology is part of the four branches of Saam Acupuncture's 'Organ Centered Consciousness' Model. Fear, derived from a traumatic event is the basis for understanding and diagnosing PTSD according to Acupuncture Medicine Theory. Understanding PTSD along the lines of Acupuncture Theory and Saam's 'Organ Centered Consciousness' Model may be an effective and comforting way to treat, manage, or self-relate to the disorder'.

Keywords: Acupuncture; Kidneys; Organ Centered Consciousness; PTSD; Post Traumatic Stress Disorder; Saam Acupuncture; Saam Medical Meditation

The United States Military has been a forefront leader of Medical and Health Care research and study for the condition of PTSD. Combat exposure is a leading cause of PTSD among military soldiers. Other causes of PTSD are serious accident, Terrorist attack, Natural Disaster, Sexual/ Physical assault, and child abuse [1].

There are four symptoms for the diagnosis of PTSD

- Reliving the event (also called Re-experiencing)
- Avoiding situations that remind you of the event
- Feeling numb
- Feeling keyed up (also called hyper arousal) [2]

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Two current treatments for PTSD administered by the Veterans Affairs are

Prolonged Exposure Therapy: People with PTSD often try to avoid things that remind them of the trauma. This can help you feel better in the moment, but in the long term it can keep you from recovering from PTSD. In Prolonged Exposure, you expose yourself to the thoughts, feelings, and situations that you've been avoiding. It sounds scary, but facing things you're afraid of in a safe way can help you learn that you don't need to avoid reminders of the trauma. What happens during PE? Your therapist will ask you to talk about your trauma over and over. This will help you get more control of your thoughts and feelings about the trauma so you don't need to be afraid of your memories.

Mind Fit Meditation: From "Mindfulness-based Mind Fitness Training: A Case Study of a High-Stress Predeployment Military Cohort" by Dr. Elizabeth Stanley.

"Introduction and Order of Techniques At first, exercises emphasized building concentration by focusing on one object of attention. This single focus of attention was to be maintained throughout the practice session; when attention wandered, it was to be returned back to the object of attention. The first exercise introduced included short periods of paying attention to the contact between the feet and the floor while standing, and between the body and the chair and floor while seated. These contact point exercises lasted between 5 and 10 minutes. The next exercises required attending to body sensations during a modified, seated body scan and to body sensations during standing movement. Exercises introduced in the middle of the course included awareness of breathing and awareness of body sensations during seated movement [3].

Saam Acupuncture (Korean Four Needle Technique): Derived from 17th century Korea. Named after the high monk and physician who was given the moniker "Saam" (Sa-ahm) which means "cave dweller". It was the custom of all high monks at the time to give up the use of their birth name.

The legend of "Saam" is that during his retreat to live in a cave, through meditation he discovered the core mystery of acupuncture. There are only few surviving documents of his technique from that time. In the 1980's Korea, his technique was revived, with elaborations and additions made. In its current form Saam Acupuncture is a complete acupuncture system, applicable for most diseases and disturbances of the spirit (mental conditions). This is a Korean acupuncture technique and is a branch from the foundation of acupuncture which is Chinese.

Saam Acupuncture is also known as "the Korean Four Needle Technique" because of its application of just four needles. Four needles are placed on the patient's arms and legs. For males the needles are placed on the left side, females the needles are placed on the right side.

Two of the needles are tonifying or strengthening points. Two of the needles are sedating or reducing points. This system of needling is derived from the Five Element Theory of Acupuncture Medicine.

From the basis of the four needle technique, the author has since expanded and modified the application to include harmonized combined yin / yang channels on both the right and left sides.

Saam Medical Meditation is the application of Saam Acupuncture with meditation. This treatment recruits the patient's mind by meditation, to be aware of the two tonifying acupuncture points (the Chief points) of the Saam acupuncture techniques.

The Theoretical Significance Of Saam Acupuncture / Meditation To The Condition Of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

Fear and Kidneys

In acupuncture theory fear is the emotion attributed to the Kidneys. The Kidneys are energetically, deeply located in the body. They pertain to the element of water per their five element designation. To the ancient Chinese, water signified danger. Water is the element of the Kidney, and fear is its emotion. A Western Medical correspondence of fear being associated with the Kidneys is through the release of Adrenalin from the Adrenal Glands during a 'fight or flight' moment. The Adrenal Glands anatomically sit atop the Kidneys. Adrenal Fatigue may develop from untreated, prolonged cases of PTSD.

The root of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder arises from a fearful event witnessed or experienced by the sufferer. PTSD can also be attributed from bad health issues and experiences. Fearful fixations may be relived and reimagined, such as when driving through the place of a previous car accident and imagining another accident about to occur. Or unable to be comforted after a surgery such as hysterectomy. In Saam Medical Meditations' 'Organ Centered Consciousness' Model these re-lived, reimagined fixations are ascribed as pathology of the Consciousness.

Simply Forgetting and the San Jiao Technique

San Jiao (aka Triple Heater) is the 12th organ of Acupuncture Medicine. The relevant attribute of the San Jiao according to Saam Acupuncture Theory and PTSD is its ability to help simply forget the traumatic event. It has an energetic characteristic of Wind of an outward moving nature. This outward movement of Wind simply helps to expel the traumatic event from the conscious, where the symptom of reliving or re-experiencing occurs.

Of additional relevance is the relationship of the San Jiao together with the Kidneys. Saam Medical Meditation uses both techniques at the same time. They have a Yin/Yang harmonizing and strengthening effect upon one another. This is derived from the I Ching hexagram Bagua pairing of the Shaoyang/ Shaoyin channels.

Initiation of the treatment begins with a three breath sequence for each channel whereby the tonification chief acupuncture points are stimulated in concordance with breath (Figure 1).

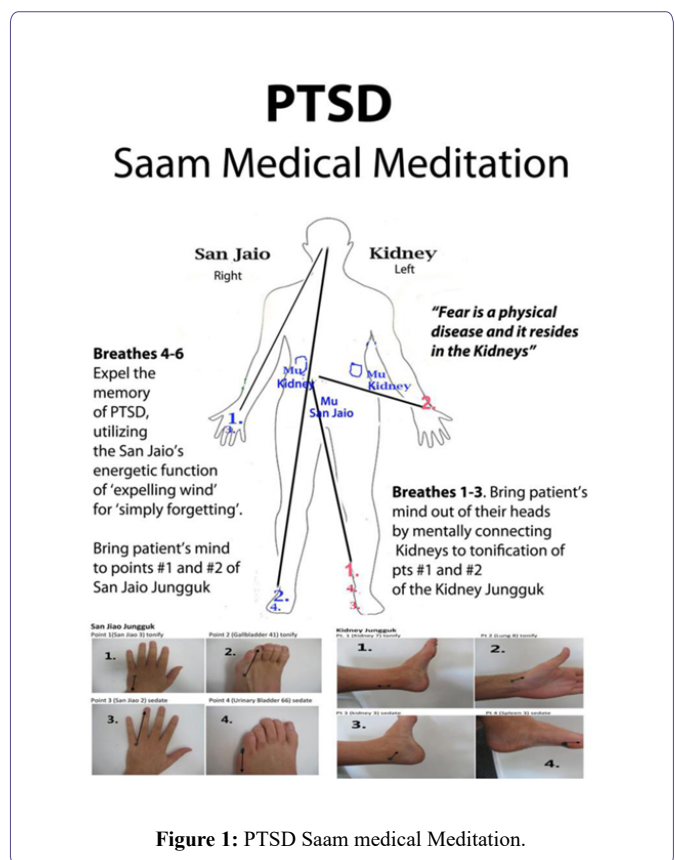


Figure 1: PTSD Saam medical Meditation.

Saam Medical Meditation coaches the patient and meditator to learn that "Fear is a physical disease and it resides in the Kidneys". Doing so brings the patient 'out of their head, while still being in the body'. During a treatment the patient is also coached to momentarily recall the fearful event (a Prolonged Exposure technique) and feel for any Qi energy of Adrenalin generated in the Kidneys. The patient is then coached to mentally send this energy to the tonification points of the Kidney/ San Jiao Harmonized Combination thereby making a mental connection with the Kidneys (where fear resides) to the chief tonification acupuncture points. This is similar to Mindfit Meditation because the acupuncture points are located at faraway places of the hands and feet. This is also a technique based upon a saying from traditional meditational arts such as Taichi and Acupuncture, "Where the Mind goes, so goes Qi." We use the mind to direct the movement of Qi.

After the treatment the patient is coached to remember the acupuncture points and meditate on them, especially after frightful episodes or reimagined moments [4].

Conclusion

'Fear is a physical disease and it resides in the Kidneys' is a cornerstone branch of Saam Acupuncture's 'Organ Centered Consciousness' Model. The treatment or meditation upon the Kidney/ San Jiao Harmonized Combination is mechanism for channeling the Qi energetics of PTSD in a manner that offsets the reimagining, reliving of a frightful experience or health episode which can lead to adrenal fatigue and unrelieved stress. This is an example of 'Organ Centered Consciousness' which expands the understanding of consciousness beyond just a 'brain only phenomena'.

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