

Opinion

Treating Grief with Saam Acupuncture / Meditation

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Abstract

This is an introduction for the treatment of grief using a traditional Korean Acupuncture protocol. Saam Acupuncture / Meditation is use of meditation upon the acupuncture point prescription of Saam's Lung channel to engage and direct the patient's mind in channeling grief. The author has found this to be highly effective for remedying pathological grief as it gives control to the patient to meditate upon the acupuncture points both in and out of clinic when grief overwhelms.

Introduction

In Acupuncture Medicine Theory grief and sadness are emotions attributed to the Lungs. In theory the Lungs house the mortal corporal soul which is born at one's first breathe and dies at the last breath (as opposed to the immortal ethereal soul housed in the Liver). This sense of mortality and loss is the reason grief and sadness are attributed emotional factors of the Lungs.

Saam Acupuncture / Meditation is a Korean traditional technique dating back to its namesake founder 'Monk Saam' of Chosun Dynasty 16th century Korean. According to legend Saam meditated in a cave for 13 years and discovered the mystery of acupuncture. Thus Saam meaning 'cave dweller' is the moniker for this otherwise little known high priest and physician. Saam's Acupuncture / Meditation technique nearly lost to history was revived in 1980's Korea, becoming a popularly used technique worldwide today.

It is the author's opinion that Saam meditated upon the energetics of Qi (a central major theory of Acupuncture Medicine) at the acupuncture points of the entire body. This would include acupuncture points from the elbows and knees to the fingers and toes, hands and feet. It is the acupuncture points in these areas of the body that comprise modern Saam Acupuncture which is also known as the Korean Four Needle Technique.

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Citation: Mahoney E (2021) Treating Grief with Saam Acupuncture / Meditation. J Altern Complement Integr Med 7: 216.

Received: December 22, 2021; **Accepted:** December 28, 2021; **Published:** December 31, 2021

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Modern Saam Acupuncture Theory includes the Three Levels of Human Needs in which each of the three levels of human needs are associated with specific organs and channels. The first level of human needs is the need for material possessions and establishment of one's homeland. This first level human need is attributed to the Lungs. One's homeland includes the tools and possessions needed to maintain that homeland as well as family and members of community who make up that homeland. The inevitable, eventual loss of every component of one's homeland through death is the driving force of grief affecting and attributed to the Lungs.

A Pathology of Grief

Pathological grief is a problem that can diminish Lung function and threaten the health and well being of the individual sufferer. Pathological grief includes the imagined death of beloved friends and family before their passing, and prolonged rumination afterwards.

One aspect of how grief can potentially harm the Lungs is through the effects of sobbing and prolonged crying. Generally, sobbing occurs with visible phlegm such as tears and runny nose. Phlegm obstructing the nasal passages renders breathing through the nose difficult or impossible. Harmful environmental particles are more effectively filtered out through the nasal passages than through the mouth. Thus the grief stricken individual who engages in prolonged mouth breathing may be exposing the Lungs to harmful particles.

In Acupuncture Theory the Lungs are a Qi generating organ. They generate Qi (the body's energetic component) through respiration of Oxygen and Carbon Dioxide. For immune function and health the Lung's circulate Qi at the skin level which is known as Defensive Qi. When Defensive Qi is strong, exterior pathogens can be expelled at the 'skin level' (most superficial, exterior part of body) which prohibits the pathogen from entering deeper into the body. An example of invasion by a cold pathogen first affecting the body is the occurrence of chills. The skin may get 'goose bumps' and the body may momentarily shudder. If Lung Defensive Qi is strong this cold pathogen is expelled at the skin level and goes no further. If Lung Defensive Qi is weak a sore or scratchy throat with sneezing may develop within 24 hours (these are attributes of Lung). Next accumulation of clear moist phlegm present (attributes of cold pathogen) and the common cold with cough ensues. If immunity is weak the cold pathogen may go deeper into the body affecting in particular the Stomach with Flu.

Thus is one danger of prolonged grief affecting health, Lung Qi diminishes and immune vulnerability to pathogen increases.

Channeling Grief with Saam Acupuncture Meditation

It is the author's assumption that grief and sobbing expend great amounts of Qi energy, which if not channeled or replenished presents danger. It is helpful in therapy to imagine sobbing, as coming in waves of Qi. The Saam acupuncturist in therapy should always try to incorporate the patient's mind with the treatment. This is done by educating patient of the above mentioned principles and encouraging them to use meditation with and after therapy (Figure 1).

Saam Acupuncture Meditation

Grief

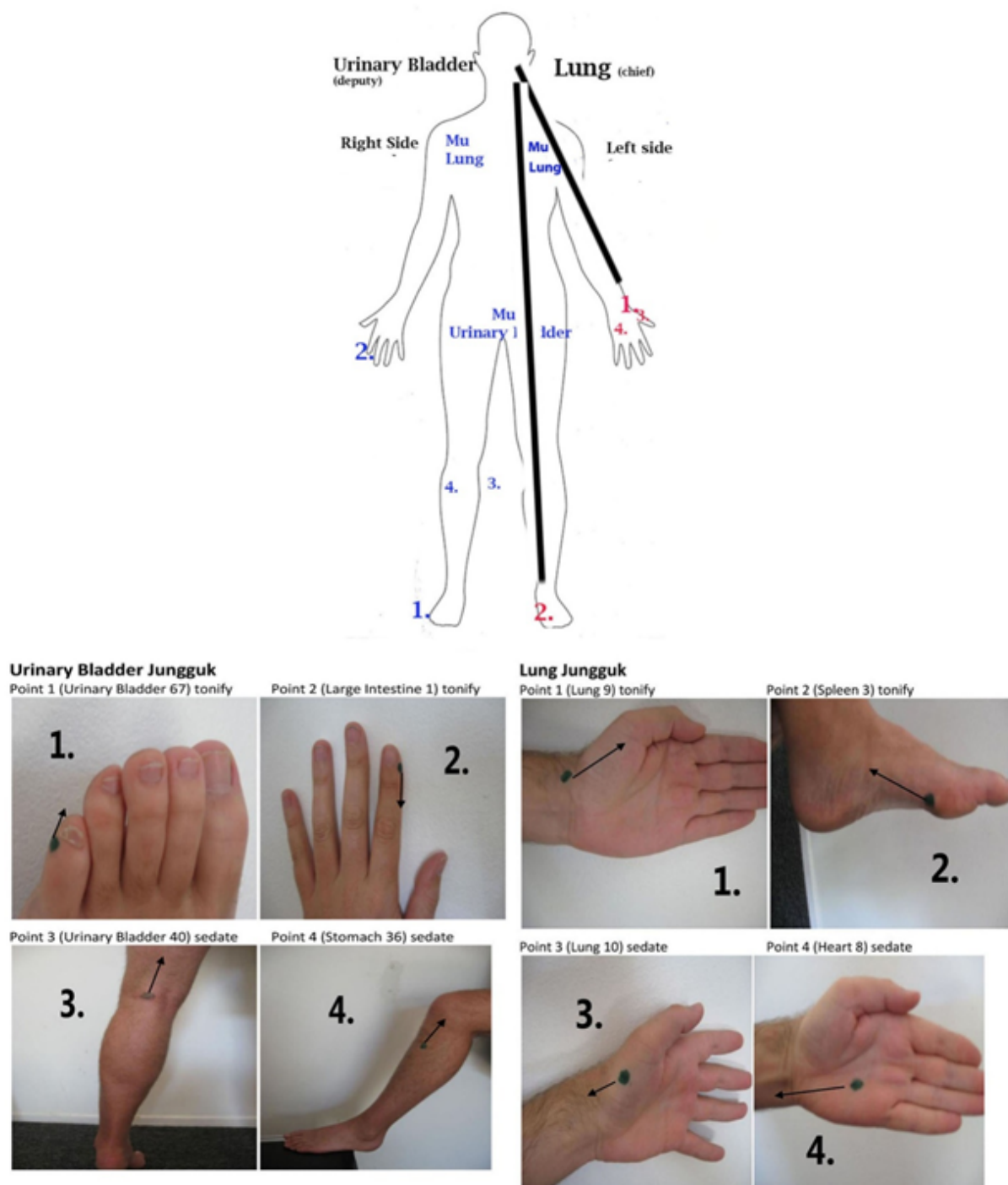


Figure 1: Meditation specifically upon the Saam Acupuncture point prescriptions of the Lung channel.

This graph indicates the Saam Acupuncture point prescriptions using what the author calls a Harmonized Combination. On the patients left side is the Saam Acupuncture; Four Needle Point prescription of the Lung tonification technique, supported by the Urinary Bladder technique on the right. Also used is the front influential points of these two channels.

The Lung channel on the left side is the primary channel used, supported by the Urinary Bladder right side. On the Lung channel, points #1 and #2 (being the tonifying points) of the four needle technique are the Chief points. The greatest emphasis is placed on these points with needle stimulation by the practitioner and meditation and focus of the patient. Points #3 and #4 are the sedating points and have secondary emphasis.

In preparation for the treatment the patient is coached to bring their attention and meditational focus to points #1 and #2. They are asked to recall their grief and channel the energy (Qi) of that grief to

these points. This is signified by the line drawn in the graph from the head to these points. The author uses a three breath technique with needle stimulation to bring the patient's attention and focus to these points (elaborated in the book "Saam Medical Meditation").

After the treatment the patient is asked to remember these meditational points of focus, so that when grief comes they can channel its energy to these points. In a sense the patient is asked to channel the energy (Qi) of grief so that it is not expended, but rather preserved.

This technique with Saam Acupuncture Meditation is one of the instances in acupuncture where a standardized point prescription works regardless of patient idiosyncrasies. Other instances of a standardized treatment with Saam Acupuncture Meditation are equivalent emotional psychological issues such as PTSD or Dr. John Sarno's 'unconscious rage'. When Grief is the chief complaint of the patient this is the point prescription that can be used without much variance.



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