

SHULAN CLINIC – ACUPUNCTURE • CHINESE HERBAL MEDICINE

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Alcohol Addition & TCM

- by Prof. Shulan Tang

To “go for a drink” is one of the most popular social activities in the UK. Young people start to drink as soon as they reach the age of eighteen and a lot of people only see their friends regularly in the pub. A friend told me how he went to work abroad and that a year later, when he returned, he found his friends at the same time in the same pub.



(Chinese Herb – Jin Yin Hua Honeysuckle)

A reasonable amount of drink leads to a comfortable social life. This especially suits the British climate where a lot of the days are rainy and cloudy, and it is impossible to do outdoor activities all the time. A proper amount of drink is also beneficial for good health, for example, arthritis (due to the invasion of damp cold), heart problems or poor blood circulation are all eased with an appropriate amount of alcohol.

However, over drinking and addiction to alcohol not only costs a lot of money, but can also cause a lot of problems, both physically and mentally. For example it can cause stress, headaches and rashes. All of these problems can affect work and lifestyle and can even lead to the break-up of marriages. If someone is addicted to alcohol, they usually lose self-control and this can make their life a misery. If you are addicted to alcohol, it would be advisable to find a qualified Chinese Medicine practitioner. He/she will be able to help you get rid of the addiction and improve your general health and quality of life.

I have been practising in the UK for nearly ten years and have treated a lot of alcohol, drug and nicotine addiction with highly successful results. Here, I would like to describe a typical case history for you. A lady of 32 years of age was my friend's sister and worked in Greece as a nanny. Just before Christmas 1998 she had to come back to the UK to stay with my friend. She had been told that she did not have long to live due to heavy drinking which had caused liver failure. The first time she came to see me was on 4th February 1999. She had been drinking heavily for five years. She drank three bottles of spirits and smoked 40 cigarettes a day!! She had severe pain around her liver area and a cough, bringing up a lot of green phlegm. She also suffered from headaches, sinus problems, hot flushes and very dry itchy skin. She also perspired a lot and had severe palpitations. Her heart rate was 102 beats per minute and her blood pressure was 167/140mmHg.

Initially, I gave her acupuncture treatment to stop her drinking and smoking. After 30 minutes, the treatment had finished and I checked her blood pressure again. It was 151/121mmHg, and her heart rate was 81 beats per minute. I prescribed a special herbal tea for her to take for two weeks. She came two weeks later on the 18th February. This was the 11th day without any drink at all. She said her smoking had reduced to 20 cigarettes a day. She explained that after the acupuncture, she felt very relaxed and I gave her another acupuncture treatment and prescribed herbal pills for anxiety. Also, I gave her herbal tea to regulate her digestive system and to suppress her appetite. Two weeks later, on the 4th March, she continued to feel better and reported that the herbal pills were good for relaxation. After the acupuncture she felt more balanced again and her blood pressure was 100/60. In general, she felt a bit tired and said she felt she could do with more energy. Her smoking was down to fifteen cigarettes a day; her appetite had calmed down and she had lost some weight. I prescribed another acupuncture treatment and she continued to take the herbal pills for improving her energy.

Her last visit was on the 18th March 1999. She came to say she felt good and had not had a drink at all. She did not enjoy smoking and had only two cigarettes a day until then. I gave her another acupuncture treatment to consolidate the treatment and she had two weeks supply of herbal pills (for anxiety) to take back to Greece with her, when she started work. At Easter time, I met her sister and she told me how glad she was to see her sister back to being normal, healthy person again, and more balanced. There was no pain around the area of her liver and her headaches had gone. Also, the palpitations had lessened and she had little sweating. The condition of her skin was better and she did not feel hot and nervous anymore.

However, she still felt anxious and ate a lot more, which she did not like. Her blood pressure was 100/83mmHg and her heart rate was 60 beats per minute. I gave her another acupuncture treatment and prescribed herbal pills for anxiety. Also, I gave her herbal tea to regulate her digestive system and to suppress her appetite. Two weeks later, on the 4th March, she continued to feel better and reported that the herbal pills were good for relaxation. After the acupuncture she felt more balanced again and her blood pressure was 100/60. In general, she felt a bit tired and said she felt she could do with more energy.

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