

SHULAN CLINIC – ACUPUNCTURE • CHINESE HERBAL MEDICINE

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Smoking & Acupuncture – by Prof. Shulan Tang

Smoking not only costs money, it is anti-social and affects your health seriously. A smoker is more prone to sore throats, skin rashes, chest infections, asthma, stress, migraine and many more illnesses.

When you are pregnant and you risk smoking it can easily harm your baby and there is a higher risk that your baby will be born premature or underweight. Every day 300 people die as a direct result of smoking-the equivalent of a jumbo jet crashing every twenty-four hours. As an average smoker your habit may cost you over 800 pounds a year, but nowadays more and more of Britain's fourteen million smokers want to give up the habit. Yet giving up is not going to be easy.

Even if you are really determined to stop you may have found that willpower alone is not enough. All over the world people have tried different methods to stop smoking. Nicotine patches, hypnosis. Sometimes they work, very often they don't.

Acupuncture is a tried and tested, proven way of providing help to stop smoking. Acupuncture is a system of medicine which restores and maintains health by the insertion of fine needles into specific points on the surface of the body to re-balance and strengthen self-healing power. It can treat many conditions especially addictions, such as tobacco, alcohol, drugs, etc.

Over the last fifteen years I have treated in the UK over 2000 patients with tobacco addiction whose smoking histories vary from 2 years to 40 years. Among these patients about 70% of them stop smoking completely after one session, about 25% of them reduce the amount of cigarettes greatly after the first session and stop smoking completely after two or three sessions. The rest of them needed a few more sessions or regular treatment such as once every 3 months to help control the craving for Nicotine which depends on their lifestyle and how stressed they are.

Usually if other family members are still smoking it may affect the desire to stop smoking. It is far better if a friend or colleague is trying to stop: the reason being that you can have treatment together and encourage one another day by day. Sometimes one may find it difficult to make a decision to seek for help/guidance. Quite often a husband will make an appointment for his wife to have acupuncture treatment to stop smoking as a birthday present, or a couple may come to stop smoking for Christmas. Life is interesting, isn't it?

Acupuncture treatment, besides stopping smoking, helps the patient feel calmer, relaxed and happier, even releasing symptoms of sinus, asthma, migraine, stress and insomnia, etc. This is because acupuncture re-balances the vital energy of the body, or Qi (pronounced >Chee' in Chinese) which flows continuously around the meridian system. This system is an energetic network of channels that not only connects the acupuncture points to each other but also directly influences the functioning of the internal organs and other controlling systems of the body.

There are 14 channels and 361 points in the body, with each point having different functions to treat different problems. In the treatment of stopping smoking we usually choose 6-7 points which connect to the lungs to re-balance its functions to stop the craving for nicotine. The common points used are Quchi (LI11), Hegu (LI4), Liequ (LU7), and Yingxiang (LI20). Add points Neiguan (PC6) and Shenmen (HT7) for stress, anxiety or insomnia. Add points Taixi (KI3) and Sanuijiao (SP6) for general fatigue, tiredness. Add points Baihui (DU20) and Zusanli (ST36) for Qi deficiency. Add the point Taichong (LV3) for depression of liver energy.

Liequ (LU7) is the 7th point of the Hand Tai Yin Lung Channel. It is known as a >Lu' (collaterals) point. >Lu' points connect internal to external, allowing the free flow of the energy.

Hegu (LI4) is the 4th point of the Hand Yang Ming Large Intestine Channel. It is a >Yuan' (root) point. The body's energy gathers at >Yuan' points. Disease in the internal organs is usually shown at >Yuan' points. By stimulating a >Yuan' point, the normal function of internal organs can be recovered. Hegu (LI4) should be avoided in pregnant woman, however, as its use can cause miscarriage.

Quchi (LI11) is the 11th point of the Large Intestine Channel. It is a >He' (meeting) point.

Both Hegu (LI4) and Quchi (LI11) are points of the Large Intestine Channel. In terms of TCM theory, the lung and the large intestine work in co-ordination together with the body's internal and external functions. This is why these points are chosen for lung related imbalance.

Some people imagine that acupuncture uses very long needles, sometimes even with a machine involved. It sounds painful and therefore very frightening. This is maybe why many people will not go to see an acupuncturist. Actually, those who have been treated by acupuncture don't feel this way.

They find it a very relaxed way to help them stop smoking, it works fast and there is no pain or side effects. However, before you go to see an acupuncturist, you should make sure that the person is fully qualified and affiliated to one of the professional bodies, such as the British Acupuncture Council, etc, and that they have relevant experience. Also make sure that the needles used are pre-sterile disposable ones.

As I have said, sometimes willpower alone isn't enough. Why don't you seek help and guidance? Make a decision now and try to stick with it. Just take one day at a time and think of all the money you could save. It may lead to a new life.