

# SHIATSU & DIABETES



## WHAT IS DIABETES?

Diabetes is a condition where the amount of glucose in the blood is too high because the body cannot use it properly. This is because the pancreas does not produce any insulin, or not enough insulin, to help glucose enter the body's cells – or the insulin that is produced does not work properly (known as insulin resistance).

- Insulin is the hormone produced by the pancreas that allows glucose to enter the body's cells, where it is used as fuel for energy so we can work, play and generally live our lives. It is vital for life.
- Glucose comes from digesting carbohydrate and is also produced by the liver.
- If you have diabetes, your body cannot make proper use of this glucose so it builds up in the blood and can't be used as fuel.
- There are two main types of diabetes: Type 1 diabetes and Type 2 diabetes.

Diabetes develops when glucose cannot enter the body's cells to be used as fuel. This happens when either:

- There is no insulin to unlock the cells (Type 1).
- There is not enough insulin or the insulin is there but not working properly (Type 2).

Source: *Diabetes UK, Sept 2013* <http://www.diabetes.org.uk>

## CASE STUDIES

### **Anthony McRitchie**

#### Profile

SN is a 58-year-old male. He has led a very active life both physically, heavily training in Karate and mentally as an advocate. Emotionally, he has got a mentally retarded daughter who he looks after. He split up with his wife, which was very traumatic. At 17 his mother died and his father suffered a breakdown, which left him to sort out everything. This took its toll and he was prescribed 40mg Diazepam a day, which he has been on for nearly 40 years in which he has developed a dependency. He is now being weaned off this in conjunction with counselling and Shiatsu treatment.

He is suffering from late onset Diabetes and has lost feeling in the lower legs and feet. He suffers with bad rashes and flaky skin in this area and attends a chiropodist on a monthly basis. Due to these problems he ceased all exercise activities and is now experiencing breathlessness on exertion. Just recently he has developed wrist problems sounding like the onset of carpal tunnel syndrome. He is under the GP for all these conditions apart from the wrist.

#### Observations / Diagnosis

Posture – very strong and stocky in upper body, large stomach. Thighs are also very muscular and heavy. There is an overall curvature to his right when lying down. Both hips and shoulders are difficult to rotate, muscles very strong and holding.

Diagnostically the energy needs to be cleared in middle burner and brought down to feet. Also needs nourishing and calming.

Emotionally very needy and worried. Devotes all his time and energy to others, neglecting himself.

Energy appears to be held in middle burner especially at back where there is a pronounced kyphosis which is from diagnosis area and to clients left. Lower legs and feet are completely empty. Feet are very cold and stiff. Qi is not flowing, also GP has said the nerve endings are dead in this area.

### Zen

The most consistent channels that come up from Hara were Lung kyo and St jitsu. The skin and breathing problems indicate Lung there are minor digestive problems (heartburn & indigestion) relating to stomach.

Lung kyo – intake of new qi is neglected – depressed. Stomach jitsu – stomach trying to compensate for the lack of intake of Qi by lungs.

### TCM

Face is consistently red but to varying degrees from just red to very to almost mauve. It usually covers cheeks, nose, chin and forehead. He has little energy, therefore deficient.

I feel the most likely cause of symptoms is the effect of the drugs, causing heat, which in conjunction with diabetes has had its toll on the liver. It is most likely Liver Yang Rising. Specific points to subdue Liver yang Liv3, GB20 & TH5 and to tonify yin Liv8, SP6 and Kid3.

Diabetes can be linked with earth i.e. Four limbs. Also the gathering of energy in the middle burner, earth and therefore spleen. Sp had also shown up in tongue. The numbness and swelling in the lower legs can be linked to dampness. Damp tends to affect lower part of body causing Qi not to flow i.e. legs and feet. Damp can be caused by deficiency of spleen. Failing to transform and transport fluids adequately causing them to collect as internal dampness.

A Sp Qi deficiency can also be related to emotional neediness. Overall it is a mixture of Liver yang rising and Spleen Qi deficiency.

### Action Aims / Treatments

Energy appeared to be stuck in middle burner so wanted to bring the energy down and help the neediness and lack of ability to relax and is suffering coming off the drug. Worked according to what was found in the hara. Also used Liver points on lower legs for Qi movement with 3 & 5 always empty but responding.

### Treatment No 2 23/03/03

Previous – stiff neck has resolved, legs felt freer and his breathing felt a little easier. Present – problems will always be the diabetes and the problems with the lack of feeling in the lower legs. He is worrying for no reason and feeling stressed. Hara Lu kyo, St jitsu.

Worked B1 to help relax. Did Lu classical only wasn't very kyo. St felt very kyo in lower legs but jitsu in thighs, quads very tight. Finished on neck, occiput B1 10 & GB20.

### Treatment No 3 6/04/04

Previous – breathing easier. After a couple of days slight tightness in shoulders and groin.

Present – lack of feeling in feet and in need of relaxing

Hara Lu kyo, St jitsu. Lu was only moderately kyo, St particularly tight in thighs needing extra work, lower leg seemed kyo. When working on thighs, especially left client got tingling around St 42.

### Treatment No 5 20/04/04

Previous – respiratory problems greatly improved and overall calmer. Feet feeling warmer.

Present – usual physical problems. Emotionally taking on less work to reduce stress levels.

Hara St kyo, Si jitsu. St slight blockages in thighs, cleared ok, tingling on St42 while being worked. In side position did extra work to relax shoulders with stretches and holding. Si classical only.

#### Treatment No 6 27/04/04

Previous – more relaxed and more flexible in hands.

Present – usual but with cold weather extremities particularly affected. Feeling very calm.

Hara Si kyo, Li jitsu. Sitting Li seemed Kyo, classical only. Used Li 4 good response. Supine classical Hp jitsu although Hp3 kyo. Extra feet work.

#### Treatment No 7 04/05/04

Previous – definite respiratory improvement, doing things and not getting so breathless.

Present – feeling good, had tough week physically & emotionally and was able to cope well. Calmer and got a bit of confidence back.

Hara Lu kyo, Hp jitsu.

Lu upper arms kyo, lower jitsu. Lu 5 empty, responded well. Hp not particularly jitsu. Extra feet work.

#### Treatment No 9 18/05/04

Previous – feels good and lighter on leaving treatment, lasts few days.

Present – got groin twinge/strain when turning quickly. Ankles swollen and tight on outer aspect. Emotionally improving and getting stronger.

Hara, Liv kyo, Hp jitsu.

Back worked around middle burner, palming and forearms. B1 13 14, 15 also GB21.

Side Liv in leg. Hp in arm Hp6 & 8 responded especially Hp 8.

St lower legs GB40 St36, lower sea points, tingling down channel when worked.

#### Conclusions

The diabetes is being controlled extremely well, with insulin and good dietary care and not causing undue problems.

Results – improved respiratory function and circulation with feeling for the first time in soles of feet and tingling down channel when worked. Carpal tunnel syndrome completely gone after a couple of sessions. Found great benefit with lower leg and feet work.

Changing attitude to learning to look after no 1 and coping better with stress by taking on less work and to look after body with gentle exercising.

Taking an interest in alternative therapies and what Shiatsu is doing for him and likes looking into and getting an understanding of treatment.

He feels Shiatsu coupled with counselling has turned his life around.

#### Personal Reflections

The pronounced curvature of body to the right when lying down and its dramatic improvement after a few sessions indicating wood. Not sure how it's affecting fire, as still getting heat symptoms i.e. red complexion. So I have not really cleared heat.

Since the above, I have continued to see improvement in client.

## **Further Reading**

Diabetes UK [www.diabetes.org.uk](http://www.diabetes.org.uk)