

SHIATSU & STRESS & ANXIETY



WHAT IS STRESS & ANXIETY?

Stress is a person's response to a stressor such as an environmental condition or a stimulus. Stress is a body's way to react to a challenge. According to the stressful event, the body's way to respond to stress is by sympathetic nervous system activation which results in the fight-or-flight response. Stress typically describes a negative condition or a positive condition that can have an impact on a person's mental and physical well-being.

Anxiety is an unpleasant state of inner turmoil, often accompanied by nervous behavior, such as pacing back and forth, somatic complaints and rumination. It is the subjectively unpleasant feelings of dread over something unlikely to happen, such as the feeling of imminent death. Anxiety is not the same as fear, which is felt about something realistically intimidating or dangerous and is an appropriate response to a perceived threat; anxiety is a feeling of fear, worry, and uneasiness, usually generalized and unfocused as an overreaction to a situation that is only subjectively seen as menacing. It is often accompanied by restlessness, fatigue, problems in concentration, and muscular tension. Anxiety is not considered to be a normal reaction to a perceived stressor although many feel it occasionally. When anxiety becomes overwhelming and distressing to the sufferer, it may fall under the psychiatric diagnosis of anxiety disorder.

Source: Wikipedia, August 2013

RESEARCH

The Use of Shiatsu in a Patient with Depression and Anxiety By Jill Bailey, MRSS

Published in the Shiatsu Society News 85 Spring 2003

This single case research was conducted as part of the research module for a Masters degree in physiotherapy, writes Jill Bailey MRSS. In my role as a physiotherapist and complementary therapist, I had been using Shiatsu with people with mental health problems for approximately three years and I welcomed the opportunity to look at this as part of a research project. The case research had to be done and presented in the format that follows to fulfil the guidelines for the module. The results clearly demonstrate the difficulties in using quantitative research methods and posed more questions than answers. Single case research does allow the individual to be researched and not lost in the results of a group study.

The aim of the study was to evaluate the use of Shiatsu in clinical practice.

Design:

A single case ABA study design was chosen.

Subject

The subject was a 53 year-old female with depression and anxiety referred to a mental health day centre's physiotherapy service. The subject lived alone following her husband's recent death and

did not work. She presented with mid thoracic pain and general body pain and muscle tension. A course of Shiatsu aided relaxation and symptom relief when the subject presented with similar symptoms three years ago.

A physiotherapy assessment was made to exclude acute back or neck problems and therefore the need for musculoskeletal physiotherapy techniques. An assessment of the need for relaxation and generalised muscle tension indicated the use of Shiatsu.

Inclusion criteria

- Diagnosis of depression and anxiety for 3 years or more
- Age 18-65, male or female
- Patient is experiencing muscles tension in the neck, shoulders or back and is unable to relax
- Medication is stabilized and not likely to change during the study
- Undertaking psychological interventions but not receiving any other physical therapies

Exclusion criteria

- Unable to comply or give consent to the study
- Mental health status is unstable and high risk factors present
- Uncertain diagnosis
- Abuse of illicit substances
- Concurrent systemic disease

Outcome measures

After consideration of patient compliance, relevance to the intervention and clinical experience three outcome measures were used. A functional activity rating scale, (the subject indicated cleaning the flat) and two 100mm visual analogue scales to measure muscle tension and relaxation.

Intervention

The intervention consisted of twice weekly Shiatsu from the same physiotherapist in the same room. It consisted of a whole body treatment but concentrated on the areas of muscle tension. The actual techniques varied according to subject assessment.

Procedure

To avoid researcher bias, the measures were taken at home by the subject following training:

Phase A Baseline – The subject took measures once a week for 4 weeks.

Phase B Intervention – The subject took measures twice a week for 6 weeks.

Phase A Recovery – The subject took measures once a week for 6 weeks.

All measures were taken on the same day and at the same time. One measure was taken at 34 weeks to monitor long-term effects.

Results

Visual analysis showed no improvement in relaxation or muscle tension. The SD method confirmed there was no statistical significance for muscle tension, however there was a statistically significant change in the intervention and recovery phases for relaxation. The subject reported that she had felt benefit from the intervention but the measures did not reflect this.

The functional measure showed an improvement at week 5 which remained the same throughout the study.

Discussion and conclusion

There was no improvement during and after the intervention as indicated by the muscle tension outcome measure. The relaxation outcome measure and the functional activity rating scale indicated some change however the measures were not sensitive to the changes the subject reported.

After phase B there was a change in diagnosis and new medication was prescribed. The subject stated that she was not compliant with this medication change. The change in medication contravened the inclusion criteria. The subject also reported at the end but not during the study that she was unsure and worried about documenting the measures. This may have therefore influenced the results. The cyclical variation of the subject's depression during the study may also have influenced the results.

If the study were repeated using quantitative research new outcome measures would be required. However, a qualitative study design is recommended (Cheesman et al 2001). The study highlights the difficulties of working with this patient group.

What do Shiatsu Practitioners Treat?

Nicola Pooley and Philip Harris.

Conclusion: It is clearly evident from both the pilot study (published at the first stage) and the main survey that musculoskeletal and psychological problems were the most common conditions presenting for Shiatsu treatment. The most frequent musculoskeletal problems were neck/shoulder problems and arthritis. Depression was the main psychological problem followed by stress and anxiety. Other conditions commonly reported in the main survey included Myalgic encephalomyelitis, irritable bowel syndrome, hypertension and asthma.

Physiological adjustments to stress measures following massage therapy: a review of the literature

This study has met our selection criteria but has not been fully appraised by the CAM specialist collection. Where there is an appraisal available we have linked to it.

Citation:

Moraska A, Pollini RA, Boulanger K, Brooks MZ, Teitlebaum L. Physiological Adjustments to Stress Measures Following Massage Therapy: A Review of the Literature. Evidence-based Complementary and Alternative Medicine. 2008 May 7.

Authors' objectives:

To summarize the effectiveness of massage therapy on stress-reactive physiological measures.

Authors' conclusions:

To date, the research data is insufficient to make definitive statements regarding the multiple treatment effect of massage therapy on urinary cortisol or catecholamines, but some evidence for a positive effect on a diastolic blood pressure has been documented. While significant improvement has been demonstrated following massage therapy, the general research body on this topic lacks the necessary scientific rigor to provide a definitive understanding of the effect massage therapy has on many physiological variables associated with stress.

Publication Date: 07 May 2008

Publication Type: Systematic Review

Publisher: Oxford University Press

Creator: Moraska A, Pollini RA, Boulanger K, Brooks MZ, Teitlebaum L

ARTICLES

SHIATSU IN STRESS RELATED CONDITIONS

By Michael Webster, Shiatsu Society Marketing Director, 2003

Stress related conditions are increasingly common in modern society. Stress in the workplace during 2003 accounted for more days off than the common cold, a total of 176 million days costing the country £13 Billion. The BBC Healthwatch programme stated that 80% of all visits to GP's are stress related.

Stress occurs when the perceived pressure on an individual exceeds their perceived ability to cope and they feel out of control. Too much of the wrong type of pressure for a particular individual may lead to breaking point, inability to cope and feelings of not being in control.

What is stressful for one person at a particular time may not be stressful for another person, equally, at a different time it may not be stressful to the first person. It is the way a situation is viewed that causes the stress rather than the situation itself. If dealt with at the acute stage stress is much easier to resolve than if left until chronic.

All the stresses of modern life which trigger fear and the 'fight or flight' response are not released by physical means as they should be, instead there is a tendency to build up tension in the body and mind. Many people no longer have strong family support systems as in the past so have no one to talk to and may feel very isolated.

The stress and tension within accumulates until 'overload' is reached at which point the stress begins to take a toll on health. The chemical and hormonal changes which affect every organ when the body and mind are stressed have not evolved with modern civilisation and the very biological system designed to protect us from external threat is now a contributory factor in cancer, heart disease, mental illness and many degenerative and disabling diseases

The pressure and stress may be external – from the environmental factors, coping with constant rapid change, information overload or work and family pressures from others which are accepted. Alternatively the stress may be internally generated through not releasing emotions appropriately, sedentary lifestyle, self-inflicted pressures or any mental, physical, emotional, or spiritual strain.

Stress can impact on heart rate, memory, breathing, muscle function, hormonal balance, the immune system, acid production in the stomach and many other physiological functions. Equally it can lead to anxiety and depression or panic attacks.

Whatever the cause of the stress overload the individual who needs support is invariably 'stuck' and unable to move forward without some form of support and intervention. Relaxation and time out is needed.

Shiatsu offers supportive, attentive touch, essential for healthy human development and especially helpful in stress related conditions.

Shiatsu provides a clear process for working with and managing change. It looks at the person as a whole and their interaction with the environment, taking into account both internal and external influences.

Shiatsu sessions can move people from a stuck position. Breathing exercises help in letting go of physical and emotional stresses and tension, gentle holding and stretching techniques help muscles relax, heart beat to slow down, anxiety reduce and the mood lift.

Shiatsu Often the stressors are not going to go away so help is provided in looking at situations differently and guiding the person towards attitudinal or lifestyle changes, focusing on what can realistically be changed.

Shiatsu is particularly helpful where there is a deep emotional reason for the stress as the relevant meridians can be worked on.

Shiatsu can be very supportive in anxiety, depression and other mental health problems. It provides a safe space to be listened to deeply, a sense of connectedness and the opportunity for peacefulness and quiet. Shiatsu offers physical touch without invasion building a trusting relationship and acceptance of where the client is at that moment. Shiatsu can offer a different perspective on illness which the client can make sense of and supports physical calming and relaxation of the nervous system without any side effects.

Shiatsu treatments promote clarity of thought and creativity helping in decision making, especially important in times of stress or transition.

Energy Depletion

We are born with a certain store of energy which is called our ancestral or source chi, sometimes referred to as our essence. It is stored in our lower abdomen and we gradually deplete this in our lifetime. Source chi is like rocket fuel – a little goes a long way. It acts as a catalyst for all bodily processes, is related to kidney energy and powers the yang energy of the whole body. The store is replenished by chi formed from breathing and digestion.

If we assume we start with 100% of energy in our store most people run at 50% of their potential energy. In modern society sedentary lifestyles and lack of exercise, poor dietary habits, overwork, stress, emotional distress, shock, environmental factors, processed foods, additives and so on, all deplete our energy levels.

At 50% level we become susceptible to colds, flu etc. At this stage we need to take steps to 'recharge our batteries'. If we carry on depleting our energy levels through more stress, lack of rest and overwork, or they get depleted through bereavement or other factors they may drop to around 30% at which point our innate vulnerability will manifest. More serious degenerative diseases such as cancer, to which we are genetically or inherently susceptible, will be allowed the freedom to develop unchecked by a compromised immune system.

When chi or energy drops below the critical level our state of mind also changes and we become depressed, detached, cannot sleep, our fear levels rise and we may indulge in compulsive or addictive behaviour. This is an attempt to boost the energy but it just makes the body more toxic and lowers energy further.

The next step is we become totally de-motivated and may even lose the will to live. Self-help at this stage is impossible as we can become defeated and self-critical. If energy is depleted we first of all need support to give us a 'jump start'.

When you know you would feel better for exercising, changing your diet or attitude, or making other lifestyle changes, but do not have the motivation or energy to get started it is time to ask for support, let go and receive. This is especially difficult for British people who are trained to give and be stoic! We do not find it easy to admit to feeling tired or sick and almost need permission to be ill.

Shiatsu and acupuncture are very effective therapies at this stage. Once energy levels rise above the 30% mark then practices such as Tai Chi, Chi Gung, Meditation, Relaxation, Visualisation and other forms of complementary therapy will continue to build the energy. At 50% energy levels we can start to help ourselves more but need to refrain from the tendency to return to old patterns and lifestyles. Shiatsu can help us to understand what causes our stress and energy depletion and teach us how to replenish our energy stores and regain vitality.

CASE STUDIES

CASE STUDY 1

Heidi Armstrong, MRSS(T)

B is 47, she has three children, twins aged 13 and a 7 year old. Her husband works away a lot. She is thin, with a muscular build and has a contained quality. She finds it hard to cry, but has a weepy quality to her voice.

She has come for Shiatsu to relieve stress and pain around her back and shoulders, she is finding it hard to relax and switch off, and acknowledges she finds it hard to slow down, feels a lack of physical and emotional support.

They moved to England from Switzerland 5 years ago and a year ago bought a house. At around the same time her mother died. Her father is suffering from Alzheimers, he lives quite close by so she looks after him. His behaviour can be difficult, angry and hostile.

She has a good diet but has found herself drinking a lot of coffee and more alcohol in the past year. B has been feeling anti-social and cutting herself off from friends and neighbours. She is a movement work teacher but has found it impossible to focus on setting up classes and is having a break and not doing much physical activity.

MEDICAL HISTORY

B had a caesarean with her twins 13 years ago and has suffered on and off with lower back problems. She has been to an osteopath with no lasting affects. She recently discovered that her uterus is retrograde. Her upper back and shoulders have been painful for 18 months.

She has suffered from digestive problems over the last couple of years, and has a history of PMS starting about 5 days before her period, feeling irritable and impatient. Her periods are getting close together.

PRESENTING SYMPTOMS

She has been uncomfortable with tightness and pain around her neck and shoulders, upper and middle back with limited movement toward the left. She has been feeling very stressed and finding it hard to relax.

Her sleep has been unsettled, waking several times a night worrying and mentally over active.

Emotionally she has been feeling up and down suffering from irritation, tiredness and depression sometimes feeling that she cannot cope.

Her digestion has been unsettled, suffering from bouts of nausea, abdominal pain, bloating and constipation, which goes in a cycle of 4 to 6 weeks, lasting for several days. She has blocked sinuses and her breathing is quite shallow.

ZEN DIAGNOSIS

B'S Kyo lung meridian was associated with difficulties communicating and expressing her grief. Her shallow held breath, sinus problems, and isolating herself from friends and neighbours, limiting her exchanges between herself and the outside world, led to feelings of depression and a lack of vitality.

Symptoms of her Kyo spleen meridian relates to feelings of not being supported, excessive nurture of others at the expense of herself, disturbed sleep, PMS, digestive problems and a lack of exercise.

Small intestine kyo relating to shock after her mothers' death, and difficulty in assimilating events have left her lacking the ability to acknowledge these difficult emotions. Lack of patience and nervousness can be linked in Zen Shiatsu to the S1 providing a source of Ki in the Hara through nutrients thus bringing the presence of the heart down to the Hara. Because of its link with the ovaries and menstrual disorders it is often diagnosed after a difficult birth, it could relate to shock and uterus problems after her caesarean, and links with lower back problems held since then.

Bladder jitso came up in the first three treatments, relating to tension pain along the meridian pathway, nervous tension, lack of impetus with her work, but overloading herself with family issues, bladder can also relate to the uterus in Zen and an inability to relax.

Liver and GB came up in back visual diagnosis, held around the side of the body, this relates to uneven flow of Ki, inconsistent emotions, irritability, anger and to a physical lack of flow resulting in stiff painful shoulders, neck and back. This stagnation of energies causing the abdominal distension pain, nausea and constipation. This also reflects with livers poor distribution causing problems with her menstrual cycle, frustration and feelings of being at wits end and difficulty expressing creativity in her work.

FIVE ELEMENTS DIAGNOSIS

B's water element if full but not flowing resulting in an inability to relax, tension in her back some insomnia and a lack of motivation. Water not feeding well into wood which is unrooted and stagnant, its rising energy getting stuck and causing areas of pain and stiffness in the neck, shoulders and joints. Headaches, digestive problems, nausea, swollen painful abdomen, constipation and PMS are also linking to blocked wood energy. Not aided by daily consumption of coffee and alcohol.. A lack of emotional harmony, feelings of irritability and impatience causing problems in areas of creative expression and organisation. Her lean muscular frame has a wood presence. Stuck wood energy not fuelling fire which is being put out by water causing a lack of joy and emotional expression.

Low fire energy giving a lack of substance for earth which is also being invaded by wood is symptomatic of her care and nurture of her family to the deprivation of herself and feeling unsupported by her partner. Retreating into her head and over worrying, her digestive and PMS problems, the death of her mother, moving country and house all ungrounding the earth energy which is not controlling and channelling her water energy and lacks the nourishing composites for feeding her metal element.

Her weepy choked voice relates to metal imbalance. Overwhelmed with grief, difficulties with crying and expressing emotions and letting go (constipation) lowering her vitality and causing her to withdraw into herself. Problems with her father relating to her metal element, lack of exercise compounding depletion and its inability to control and cut wood.

TREATMENTS

1 & 2. 20/04/04, 04,05/04

Front and lower legs Kyo, back Jitso

1st treatment: Hara Diagnosis S1 kyo BL Jitso started with sopia stretches to release neck. Dispersed BL in sitting and prone using stretches, rocking. Worked BL28 to effect Uterus, BL27 for small intestine and tonified meridian. S1 3, S1 11 for back shoulders tension. S1 felt Kyo used compassionate touch.

Worked hara. heart Uterus which felt disconnected lower hara. Tonified spleen using a supportive touch and spleen 6 to benefit uterus calm mind, relieve frustration.

Recommended holding S1 3, breathing into lower hara.

Next two treatments: 18/05/04, 08/06/04.

Liver GB Jits, spleen Kyo. Back diagnosis, visually energy held in sides, shoulders. My emphasis in treatment was in releasing stagnation, working in side to open liver GB.

The meridians felt Jitso responded to movement and points used.

GB 34 descends rebellious Ki, relaxes tendons, muscles.

GB 21 Move Ki down, ease neck shoulders, Tension. Liver 13 Harmonise Liver and spleen.

Liver 3 smooth flow of Ki, release anger, PMT.

Hara work releases tension ST25, tonified spleen which felt Kyo using SP 6/3.

Recommended hara massage ST 25 for bloating and constipation. Talked about finding more time for herself exercise to shift stuck wood energy.

Last 3 treatments: 22/06/04, 13/07/04, 05/08/04.

Back diagnosis. Liver GB Jitsu. Lung spleen Kyo.

Energy less contracted more continuity. Still working with stretches to release wood energy also focusing on nurturing earth energy, tonifying lung using deep present connection and breath to connect with feeling of grief.

Using lung 9 tonify lung Ki deepen breath. Lung 7 sinuses. Lung 1 help descending Lung Ki release stuck emotions.

TREATMENT RESULTS

During treatments B had the following results and improvements. Her neck mobility improved. By treatment 3 her lower back pain was nearly gone and she was finding it easier to relax.

As her liver, GB Qi released so did her shoulder and upper back pain. With an improvement In PMS, abdominal bloating and nausea. By treatment 5 she was doing more exercise had taken up riding and teaching again, and she was feeling less irritable and able to cope.

As B's metal energy strengthened she was able to express herself better to her husband and felt less inclined to isolate herself. With firmer boundaries found that she was able to deal with her father's emotions better and with more clarity. She looked more relaxed, her voice was clearer and her breath deepened.

CONCLUSIONS

B, has been able to get in touch and express her grief more. Through meeting some of her own needs exercising her friends horse, giving her a sense of freedom and joy in life again. Using her strength to bond and communicate with her father, who she has moved into a home, where he is happier. Through releasing tension is able to be more relaxed and comfortable. Seeing more of her friends/neighbours, has some support outside of the family.

CASE STUDY 2

By Anthony McRitchie

Profile

CB is a 33-year-old male. He works as a furniture maker, although physical doesn't involve much exercise. He feels too tired at home to do any exercise. He is under a lot of stress having to work to deadlines. Emotionally he is experiencing problems from his recent ex-wife who appears to be chasing and hounding him. This is also causing a great deal of stress.

He is quiet and fairly easy going but can flare up when really pushed. When he was around 8 years old he suffered from a protracted kidney infection. He traumatically lost a close friend at 17 to cancer.

Although he has a good appetite, he suffers indigestion problems at night. His main complaint is that the stress is causing really tight neck and shoulders. Also pain in his right buttock, thigh and foot.

Observations / Diagnosis

Posture – very slight build thin but with broad shoulders and thin legs. On rotations is very flexible almost over flexible. Joints are sinewy and seem loose and weak, ankles, shoulders and hips.

Emotionally tends to bottle things up but will eventually flare up if pushed to extreme. Has frustrations and resentment from being hassled by his ex-wife.

Zen

The most consistent channels that came up were Gallbladder and Heart protector from both Hara and Back diagnosis.

Diagnostically the energy appears to be stagnant and collecting in the lower body. It manifested at the same GB points each treatment, although the upper body does not seem particularly kyo.

The tension in the shoulders also indicates GB as the channel runs through this area also the client found chickenwing stretches very beneficial as they went through the zen extension.

The digestive problems can also be related to gallbladder. In zen the GB helps regulate the digestive secretions as well as bile this would seem to be impaired further collaborated by manifesting at night around 11-1 o'clock.

5 Element

He is feeling pressurised and overwhelmed from all sides i.e. work and wife and is losing clarity on how to handle it, increasing the stress on himself.

The Hp is being affected emotionally with his relationship problems, which can produce heat and reflect in the GB.

Stress is really taking a toll on him, along with the anger, frustration and bottled up resentment stagnation of wood energy.

Therefore wood and fire are involved in the creation cycle as mother and child.

The emotions he is experiencing is stagnating his wood energy and therefore allowing heat to show in fire (child).

Action Aims / Treatments

To help relax and relieve tension in neck and shoulders and circulate energy. I want to get the energy flowing and help relax and calm him. Apart from the GB points I used Ht3, Hp3 & 8 to clear heat and calm shen. Also Liv 3 & 5 Qi flow.

Treatment No 117/03/04

Present – very tight neck and shoulders. Deep buttock pain and tight thigh and calf on R. He is extremely stressed.

Hara GB kyo, St jitsu.

Worked B1 to help relax. Tender B1 24 and down. St was not very Jitsu.

GB 30 could feel energy bubbling, very tender also GB 34 & GB 40, energy started to move vigorously.

Treatment No 224/03/04

Previous – buttock pain much improved. Neck and shoulders eased away but returned.

Present – neck and shoulders stiff. R thigh and calf feel knotty. R knee feels unsupported. Still stressed from work.

Hara GB kyo, Hp jitsu.

GB upper body was kyo/empty lower jitsu. GB30 and GB34 tender GB40 extremely tender. Most points around ankle tender.

Hp arms and torso not very jitsu.

Extra work on R. Knee and around neck.

Treatment No 301/04/04

Previous – felt really good for a few days and less stressed. Knee feels more supported. Deep buttock pain gone.

Present – neck and shoulders still tension from stress.

Hara Hp kyo, GB jitsu.

Hp not very kyo in legs. Arms and torso empty except HP3 & 7.

GB upper body not jitsu, lower body very. GB30, 34, 40v tender felt energy start to move. Li15, 16, B110, GB20 for neck and shoulders. Liv 3, 4, 5 for moving Qi.

Treatment No 408/04/04

Previous – neck and shoulders not so tight. Thigh and calf released.

Present – sleeping well. Coping better with stress. R knee no improvement.

Hara Hp Kyo, GB jitsu.

Hp 6, 7, 8 v kyo. TH4 (sinews), TH5 (stagnant ki)

GB30 on L v tender, R GB34 and both GB40 felt energy move.

Extra knee work St35, Bl40.

Treatment No 515/04/04

Previous – shoulders felt sore that night then felt improved. Thighs and calf better. Knee feels much improved but not right.

Present – shoulder tension both sides. R buttock pain again. Coping better with stress.

Hara St kyo, Liv jitsu.

St slightly jitsu in thighs, St36 reacted, St44 tender. Arms v kyo.

Liv not jitsu in arms or torso. Liv 4, 5, 6 tender. Liv 5 feel energy move.

Worked GB round shoulders for tension. GB21 tender rest fairly kyo.

Treatment No 628/04/04

Previous – shoulders, neck, thigh and calf all feel relaxed.

Present – deep buttock pain gone but starting to come back. Pulled chest muscles on left (Ht extension) when coughing. Knee still niggly.

Stress as build up to wedding.

Hara Ht kyo, GB jitsu.

Ht arms v kyo. Worked Ht1 & Ht8 reaction, Ht9 strong reaction/throbbing. Torso felt needy.

GB upper body felt ok, lower jitsu. GB30, 34, 39, 40 strong reaction.

Legs seemed to clear easily.

Conclusions

Results – There was immediate improvement with the muscle pain in buttock area with it gone after two treatments although it re-occurred later. The other tensions reduced greatly, almost gone by sixth treatment.

Feelings and emotions are causing stagnation in GB being able to relax has allowed him to cope with the stress.

Client started to learn to look after himself. Recommended taking up exercise to help maintain circulation, now using exercise bike daily. As a further recommendation I have asked to consider his working practises, as it may well be a physical reaction that is causing the muscle problems. Just to consider and think about what he is doing during the day.

Appreciating what Shiatsu has done for him and is recommending it to all his work colleagues.

Personal Reflections

I wasn't able to conclude any definite TCM patterns but the treatments seemed to have been effective working on Zen.

The first treatment was the most dramatic reaction I have experienced. Working down GB when I reached GB30 the energy was so violent it felt like a volcano ready to explode but it eventually dispersed.

CASE STUDY 3

By Francesca Pirrone, MRSS

Introduction

This case study shows the story of one of my most creative and inspiring clients. For privacy reasons, I call him here Palisander. This made up name takes inspiration from one of our Shiatsu sessions, where he said he was feeling like wood. What kind of wood, I asked him. Palisander, he replied promptly. Coincidentally, his real name rhymes with the Italian word for Palisander.

Personal history

Palisander is a 40-year old man who lives in the province of Como, Italy. He lives with his girlfriend and a dog in a big house in the grove. His psychotherapist (Jung's approach) sent him to me asking me to help him with his stress, hypochondria and insecurity. He works as a Commercial Director for a busy furniture company and finds it stressful and not inspiring enough. He's outgoing, sociable, clever, sensitive, creative, and has many friends. He plays golf regularly. He drinks and smokes. Mentally, doesn't feel in the right place. Manifests irritation, anger, worry and signs of hypochondria.

Medical history

He injures his spine at the age of 15, probably level with BL20. Has a cyst in the coccyx removed in 2000. He used to suffer from kidney stones, which he expelled naturally in 2009. Although his past injuries, his overall health is strong, his body resilient. Has family history of frequent headaches, cervical pains, panic attacks (mother side) and peri-arthritis in left shoulder and hip (father side). He started taking antidepressants in 2010 to calm his anxiety down and for the same reason, he went to see a psychotherapist. He started Shiatsu after 6 months of weekly psychotherapy. He hasn't had any surgery and accidents in the 6 months prior to Shiatsu therapy.

Presenting Symptoms

1. Vertigo, worsen in working environment. He worries about his health during and after vertigo, he defines himself as 'hypochondriac'.
2. Tense posterior legs. All day long, especially night.
3. Irregular sleeping patterns: 5hrs sleep, waking, drinking water and urge to urinate.
4. Shivers in the morning, chills-like but he's not actually cold. Worsens when stressed.
5. Sense of smell is weak due to daily smoking. Compression and blockage of chest. Breathlessness, shallow breathing, palpitations.
6. Pain in left hip, nail-like. Origin of pain is lower back, quadratus lumborum, radiates to sacrum, piriformis, PSOAS and sartorius muscles.
7. Left shoulder, reduced mobility. Pain in shoulder joint, can't sleep on it. Pain awakens him.
8. Irregular eating patterns. Overeating at times, overweight. Cooks and grows his own vegetables. Often experiences nausea.

Observations

Light brown hair, red complexion, slightly high blood pressure. Overweight, curvy distended abdomen and chubby face. 1.75 m tall, slim limbs, weak ankles and wrists. Energy is stuck in chest, shoulders, neck and head. Hard and tense lower back. Energy distribution is inward. Heart/Liver type. Arrives 5 minutes early at sessions, expects me to let him in earlier and tries to leave later. We start every session on time. Always smiles and often crosses his arms whilst smiling. He tidily folds the end border of his trousers before every session.

Five Elements Diagnosis

Wood stagnation over-acting on metal and obstructing the descending of Lung-Qi. Excess Wood making too much demand on its Mother Element. Water deficiency affecting Lungs. Water over-acting on Fire transmitting heat to it. Wood invading Earth.

Water element is drained (weak and contracted lower back), waking, night thirst and need to urinate, weak soles of feet, kidney stones, lesion of spine level with BL20. Always active,

sleeps 5hrs at night, no rest.

Metal element is weak. Qi not held by the kidneys, obstructs the lungs causing shallow breathing, palpitations, clinging.

Earth element not supported and not supporting Metal: arches of feet collapsed, tiredness after eating, nausea, wet tongue, flaccid stomach, worry/repetitive thought patterns, hypochondria, weight gain and loss.

Wood over-acting: bloating, distended stomach, wind, feeling stuck, difficulty to make decisions, control freak. Liver area on back is hard as well as St25-28 and GB/LV on hara. High achiever, jumps onto new targets with no rest in between.

Fire is not supported by its Mother, Shen is agitated: waking, red tip of tongue, red complexion, collapsed heart on hara, laughing sound, sensitive soul, anxious and insecure.

Integrated Diagnosis: TCM and Developmental Movement

Kidneys fail to receive Qi and to give the body direction and alignment through the Bladder and Small Intestine, Lungs fail to send Qi down and receive the upward support from Spleen and the ground. Large Intestine and Stomach overact to compensate, they try to replace Spleen support by taking in as much energy as possible from outside world (overeating/over social) and delivering unclear boundaries (weak ability to say no/need). Liver stagnation creates excess heat in the Heart and damp-heat in the Spleen (worried/sticky). Heart not anchored by drained Kidneys. Overacting Liver drains kidneys and blurs the centre from which Gall Bladder integrates all actions. Gall Bladder hyper tonifies sides of the body to integrate unclear centre and find direction among several options.

Resolving Combined Patterns

- Support kidneys to anchor heart and find centre. Slow, deep, work on lower back and meridian (Kd1,3,5,6,10 Bl23,52,du4,du2) + Heart (ren17, Hp6, He7, He3, St36, St40, Kd27).
- Tonify spleen and rebalance stomach/large intestine intake. SP3, SP6 to tonify, SP9 to expels dampness, very gentle ampuku, SP20, LU1, LU2, Kd27, chest work. Developmental movement to experience connection between first, second toes and chest. Singer's position.
- Break through Liver Qi stagnation and develop authentic action. Move and stretch Liver channel, 6 combined channels and developmental movement (i.e. rolling exercise). Points moving Liver Qi: GB34/Liv3/Liv13/Liv14/TH6/P6. Tonify Spleen and Stomach with Bl20 / Bl21 Ren12/ St36 /Sp3 /Sp6.

Needs support on water and earth (60%) – Shao Yin, Tai Yin. Needs spontaneous movement and solid pressure to break through Qi stagnation (40%) – Jue Yin, Tai Yang.

Shiatsu Sessions

From a series of 6 sessions between 13th May 2010 and 3rd August 2011

1. Liver Qi stagnation (Shao Yang) (08th December 2010)

Hip work, side – rolling exercise, movement blocked. Worked on blockages: right sartorius, S2, S3; left lumbar back, ASIS, BL23. Shoulders and neck. Neck resisting. Stopped. Immediate – liberated. Later – liberated for 2 days, then stress.

2. Kidney Yin Xu / Liver Yang Rising (Shao Yin) (19th January 2011)

Water in child's pose – Yu points along Bladder channel BL23 / DU4. Closing and opening to develop authentic movement, finished with hugging himself to find core. Water in prone – Bladder on legs, sacrum rubs. Fell asleep here.

Immediate – vertigo went. Later – vertigo decreased by 40%.

3. Liver Qi Stagnation / Liver Yang Rising (Jue Yin) (2d February 2011)

Anger due to family issues, located in fists, chest, legs. Liver in prone, diagnostic area on back. Arms in sitting: LI 11,4 + TH.

Immediate – satisfied. Later – irritable.

4. Stomach Fire / Spleen Qi Xu (Yang Ming) (27th April 2011)

Disappointment on Hara heart diagnostic area. Lung connection and HE3, HE7. Worked Stomach in supine – ST 34/36/43/44. Ampuku, LI4. Connection middle and upper burners.

Immediate – balanced. Later – right arm less painful.

5. Kidney Qi Xu / Lu Qi Xu (Tai Yin) (16th May 2011)

Presenting signs: sadness, tiredness, complaining.

Worked on emotional aspect of body, caring and gentle touch. Supine – Lungs. Prone – Lower back work, finished with solid pressure on KD1.

Immediate: really sad and stopped complaining. Later: sadness went.

6. Kid Yin Xu/Lv Qi stagnation (Tai Yang) (29th June 2011)

Back in prone, Yu points and SI. Calves Bladder + Masunaga's Large intestine, 4th, 5th toes in charge of exertion. Supine: occiput – BL10/2, GB20/12, temples, palms on eyes.

Immediate – 'thank you'. Later – lighter.

Sessions Outcome

- He stops taking antidepressants after 5 months of Shiatsu therapy.
- He engages more and expresses his needs clearly.
- Less clinging, complaining, worrying (reduced by 30%) and no longer hypochondria.
- Vertigo attacks decreases in frequency (from every day to once a month).
- Tension in the back of legs during sleep plus jaw locked decreases by 40%.
- Left shoulder pain reduced by 50%, completely gone for a period of 3 months.
- Hip pain goes after every session and returns after playing golf and at work.
- He stops mentioning night awakening.
- Weight loss - 10k since commencement of therapy with the aid of a professional nutritionist.

Clinical conclusions

Movement of Liver Qi stagnation and chronic pattern is shifting.

Mentally is more present and self-aware.

Allows him-self to feel satisfied for his achievements and rest.

Relationship with his family has changed: they're present, more respectful and less invading.

He expressed clear intention to leave his job and his girlfriend when I last saw him.

He has not come back for Shiatsu since.

CLIENT TESTIMONIALS

Denise Quinn, Customer Relations Manager, EDF Energy

I've just returned from a session, so.. feel very relaxed, to the point of drifting off to sleep, but in another way, feel completely chilled out, as if nothing is a problem on my return to work. I do tend to choose my tasks carefully when I return, in order to keep the chilled out feeling as long as possible. It's similar to feeling a bit high when you've drunk that first glass of wine! If I ever feel particularly stressed either mentally or physically, I find the massage helps to push my shoulders back down to where they're supposed to be! I particularly like the way each massage has a bit of variety each time, and think you must focus on specific areas if required. I always recommend the massages to my colleagues and try to encourage them to come along and feel the benefit for themselves!

Simon Warrilow, EDF Energy

I can definitely advise of the benefits of the massage (Shiatsu). The relaxation you get as a result of the massage is great, and it makes such a contrast to the hustle and bustle on the floor! Although feeling lethargic during and immediately after the massage, this quickly transcends to a feeling of relaxation and calmness. I can't recommend this massage enough!