

On the Treatment of Insomnia with Fang's Scalp Acupuncture Based on the Therapy of "Regulating Mental Activities and Smoothing the Liver"

Yanyan Zhou¹, Yuanyuan Ren^{2*}, Kaiya Zhang¹

¹Shaanxi University of Traditional Chinese Medicine, Xianyang 712046, Shaanxi Province, China

²Xi'an Hospital of Traditional Chinese Medicine, Xi'an 710021, Shaanxi Province, China

Funding: Xi'an Fang's Scalp Acupuncture School Inheritance Studio Project {Shi Wei Ji Han [2018] No. 699}; Clinical study of the Treatment of motor aphasia after stroke with Fang's scalp acupuncture combined with resuscitating acupuncture therapy (Source of scientific research: Project of Shaanxi Provincial Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine; Project No.: 2019-ZZ-LC027).

Abstract: As a common clinical disease, insomnia was usually treated with anti-psychotic or sedative-hypnotic drugs in Western medicine, which showed a fast efficacy, as well as easy drug tolerance and side effects. In traditional Chinese medicine, the basic and key pathogenesis of insomnia are believed to be "the restlessness of the mind", as well as "the absence of the mind"; and the treatment mainly focus on "regulating mental activities and smoothing the liver". By combining the theoretical basis and characteristics of Fang's scalp acupuncture, this paper aims to explain the advantages of Fang's scalp acupuncture in the treatment of insomnia, and provide new ideas and methods for its clinical treatment.

Keywords: Regulating mental activities and smoothing the liver; Fang's scalp acupuncture; Insomnia; Acupuncture

Publication date: September, 2020

Publication online: 30 September, 2020

***Corresponding author:** Yuanyuan Ren, yuanyuan_ren@126.com

Insomnia, also known as "sleepless", is a common clinical disease, including difficulty in falling asleep, unable to sleep again after waking up, a broken sleep,

and staying awake all night^[1]. According to the survey, the probability of insomnia in Chinese adults can reach 38.2%, and an increasing trend year by year can be viewed^[2]. Severe insomnia can cause mental disorders such as anxiety and depression, and severely reduce the life quality of patients^[3-4]. In Western medicine, insomnia is usually treated with oral anti-psychotic or sedative hypnotic drugs, which has fast efficacy, but easy drug tolerance or side effects^[5]. Therefore, to improve the sleep quality of patients and alleviate the physical and mental pain of patients through finding a green, effective and manoeuvrable treatment is the focus and direction of current research.

As a set of therapies originally created by the famous old Chinese doctor Yunpeng Fang, Fang's scalp acupuncture has simple clinical operation and high safety^[6]. By combining the theoretical basis and characteristics of Fang's scalp acupuncture, this paper aims to explain the advantages of Fang's scalp acupuncture in the treatment of insomnia, and provide new ideas and methods for its clinical treatment.

1 "The restlessness of the mind" is the basic pathogenesis of insomnia

According to *Suwen (Plain Questions)*, "The mind is

restless, and the body cannot sleep”. Later generations of physicians have broadened their views on this basis and believed that, when the mind was restless, people would be in a awakening state and can conduct various physiological activities. This is Wu (waking up); When the mind returns to itself, people would feel tired and weak. This is Mei (Sleeping)^[7]. There are also discussions about the pathogenesis of insomnia in *the Complete Works of Jingyue*, that is, “不寐证虽病有不一……神其主也”, indicating that insomnia has different syndromes, but all of them are controlled by the mind. Therefore, “when the mind is peaceful, sleep will be easy; when the mind is restless, sleep will be difficult”. It can be seen that most important factor affecting sleep lies in the peace of the mind. “The restlessness of the mind” peaceful or not. “The loss of the mind” is the root cause of insomnia throughout the whole process, and is the basic pathogenesis of insomnia, so “regulating the mind and calming the mind” is the key to treatment^[8].

2 “The absence of the mind” is the key pathogenesis of insomnia

According to the records of *Lingshu (Miraculous Pivot)*, “肝藏血, 血舍魂”, indicating that the liver stores blood and the blood is the material basis for soul. Therefore, it can be said that the liver stores the soul. In *a Treatise on Blood Troubles*, the author also put forward that the soul of a person in the awake state was wandering in both eyes; and when the person is in the sleep state, the soul with blood as the carrier returns and hides in the liver. If the soul cannot hide in the liver and wander outside, then sleep will be difficult. Therefore, “the mind its state” serves as an important factor for a normal sleep while “the absence of the mind” is the most crucial pathogenesis of insomnia^[9]. Although there are five gods in each of the five internal organs, and any dysfunction of them can disturb the mind and cause insomnia, the anxiety caused by liver depression is most common^[10]. Therefore, in the process of treating insomnia, attention should also be paid to regulating and soothing the liver while adjusting the mind^[11].

3 “The brain is the house of the mind and the head is the, and the head is the gathering area of all the yangs” is the theoretical basis of Fang’s Scalp Acupuncture in the treatment of insomnia

Scalp acupuncture has been proposed as an indepen-

dent system for only a few decades, but the treatment of diseases through the head acupoints has a history of thousands of years^[12]. *Lingshu (Miraculous Pivot)* recorded that “Qi lies in the head, and can be taken from the acupoints of Tianzhu and Dazhu”, indicating that the ancients have recognized that acupuncture at scalp acupoints can treat systemic diseases. In traditional Chinese medicine, it is believed that “the brain is the house of the mind”. There are also discussions about the positions and functions of the head in the whole body in *Suwen (Plain Questions), theory on the Essence of Pulse*, like “头者, 精明之府……五脏六腑之精气皆上注于头”, emphasizing the head is the house of sagacity and the essence of the whole body would be injected to the head. According to the meridian and collateral theory, “The head is the gathering area of all the yangs”. Among the twelve meridians, those directly circulating in the head and face include the six yang meridians, and the liver channel of foot Jueyin and the heart channel of hand Shaoyin in the six yin meridians; while other yin meridians also reach the head and face after the convergence of yang meridians. This shows that the head and the viscera and organs of the whole body form a whole and dense network through the circulation of meridians. Therefore, stimulating scalp acupoints can adjust the “the mental activities” and the state of the whole body to treat diseases^[13-14]. Modern biological research has also verified that the nerve center function is located in the projection area of the scalp, which has proved that acupuncture at the acupoints of the scalp can treat diseases in the corresponding parts of the body with modern medical evidence^[15-16].

4 The acupoints’ selection basis of Fang’s Scalp Acupuncture

The scalp points of Fang’s Scalp Acupuncture are not only the points of reflecting the diseases, but those of curing the diseases. The arrangement and combination of the entire acupoint area is equivalent to a miniaturized human body. As an independent system, Fang’s Scalp Acupuncture divides the whole head into four parts, “Fu Zang, Fu Xiang, Dao Zang, Dao Xiang”, and 11 major centres. Acupuncture at the corresponding head acupoint area can regulate the related viscera^[17]. Its academic succession team summarized the best insomnia group acupoints in the process of treating insomnia, that is, Fu Xiang head, Fu Zang upper energizer, Dao Xiang upper part, Dao Zang upper energizer, thinking, memory, signal acupoints^[18]. The acupoints

selection is shown in Figure 1. responsible for controlling and regulating the movement of Qi and blood throughout the body, the Fu Xiang head is the governor of *yang* meridians and can make the mind dependent, and the acupuncture can regulate and calm it; The Fu Zang can be regarded as the general sensory centre, which can reflect the conditions of internal organs and adjust the human spirit and emotions to make people feel comfortable; The combination of the above two acupoints can relieve the nervous and anxious state of insomnia patients; Thinking belongs to the central scalp projection area, and the core part of concentrated thinking activities, which can calm the mind and improve sleep^[17]; The combination of memory and signal acupoints can adjust mental activities, adjust and ensure the balance of human functions^[16]; The comprehensive application of the above-mentioned scalp acupoints can play a role in regulating and tranquilizing the mind, improving the negative emotions such as tension and anxiety of patients, making the “soothing” function of the liver normal, implementing the treatment of “regulating the mind and soothing the liver”, and regulating the body state of insomnia patients as a whole^[19].

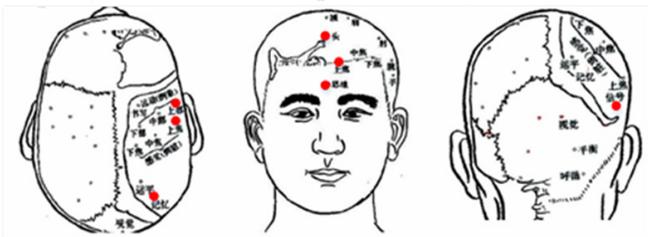


Figure 1. Acupoint selection figures of Fang's Scalp Acupuncture from the top, front, and back

5 Characteristics of Fang's Scalp Acupuncture

“Direct flying needle punching method” is the characteristic acupuncture of Fang's Scalp Acupuncture. The key of “flying” is to pay attention to the place where the force is generated. The shoulder joint is taken as the central axis, and the upper arm is used to drive the forearm, and then the wrist joint is driven to exert force through the forearm. The needle should be injected vertically and fast. After the needle tip penetrates the skin, it should be directly punctured to the periosteum and the sound of “Pa” can be heard. The operation method must be fast, accurate and vertical, which can not only alleviate the pain caused by the acupuncture, but ensure the curative effect and increase the intensity.

6 Discussion

With increasing pressure from all aspects of modern society, insomnia has become a common clinical disease. Insomnia was usually treated with anti-psychotic or sedative-hypnotic drugs in Western medicine, which showed a fast efficacy, as well as easy drug tolerance and side effects. In traditional Chinese medicine, the basic and key pathogenesis of insomnia are believed to be “the restlessness of the mind”, as well as “the absence of the mind”. Therefore, the treatment mainly focus on “regulating mental activities and soothing the liver” to achieve peaceful mind so that the soul has its reliance and to make regular sleep so that insomnia can be alleviated. Based on the theoretical foundation of “the brain is the house of the mind and the head is the house of sagacity”, Fang's Scalp Acupuncture has formed an unique theoretical system of “Theories, treatment, methods, acupuncture points” through combining the theory of functional localization on cerebral cortex as well as ECIWO biology in the modern medicine.

References

- [1] Wang MY. Effect of Ning Shenanmian Soup on sleep quality in patients with insomnia due to heart and Qi deficiency[J]. World Journal of Sleep & Sleep Medicine, 2015, 5(11): 1283-1286.
- [2] Lu XL, Mo XF. Experience and experience of treating insomnia based on syndrome differentiation of wind pool and forehead three needles[J]. Chinese acupuncture, 2016, 36(3): 259-260.
- [3] Li Y, Bai CJ, Chen LX. Correlation between coping style and anxiety and depression in patients with clinical insomnia[J]. Chinese clinical research, 2020, 33(1): 102-105.
- [4] Wang HY, Li SY, Zhang Y, *et al.* Systematic evaluation of integrated traditional Chinese and western medicine in the treatment of insomnia[J]. Shandong journal of traditional Chinese medicine, 2020, 39(2): 134-139.
- [5] Ran Q, Jiang XP. Clinical observation on the treatment of insomnia with fine fire needle[J]. Henan traditional Chinese medicine, 2017, 37(7): 1288-1289.
- [6] Li YJ. Clinical application and research development of Fang's head needle [C]. Chinese Society of Acupuncture and Moxibustion. New Era, New Thinking, New Leap and New Development -- 2019 Annual meeting of Chinese Society of Acupuncture and Moxibustion and review of the 40th anniversary.
- [7] Wang WS, Liu JH, Huang W, *et al.* Wang x w's experience in treating insomnia with lily anshen decoction[J]. Journal of traditional Chinese medicine, 2020, 61(4): 303-306.
- [8] Wang Z, Wang JQ. Differentiation and treatment of insomnia in the elderly[J]. Journal of traditional Chinese medicine, 2014, 55(19): 1697-1698+1707.
- [9] Ma BT, Chen LL, Jin LL. Discussion on the diagnosis and treatment of insomnia from the theory of huangdi neijing[J].

- Journal of traditional Chinese medicine, 2017, 32(7): 1209-1210+1214.
- [10] Ma XB, Xue YX. Experience in regulating insomnia[J]. Journal of traditional Chinese medicine, 2020, 61(2): 107-109. (in Chinese)
- [11] Hou Q, Tan ZH. Treatment of anxiety insomnia from the perspective of affective disorder [J]. Hunan journal of traditional Chinese medicine, 2014, 30(7): 143-144.
- [12] Wu JL, Yin HN, Wang DL, *et al.* Origin and development status of head acupuncture therapy [J]. Journal of Guangzhou University of Chinese Medicine, 2019, 36(11): 1783-1787.
- [13] Xu CH, Fan GQ, Zhao Y. Comparison and development of scalp needle schools[J]. Chinese acupuncture, 2016, 36(6): 663-667.
- [14] Zhang JR, Zhang DD, Ding N, *et al.* Clinical thinking of “The Head is the meeting of all Yang” [J]. *Liaoning Journal of Traditional Chinese Medicine*, 2008(3): 381.
- [15] Yu ZX. Matching study of The Localization of cerebral cortex and peripheral nerves with Sino-Japanese scalp needle theory[D]. Guangzhou University of Traditional Chinese Medicine, 2017.
- [16] Qiao XQ, An JM. An jun-ming’s experience in treating insomnia mainly from the perspective of “heart and liver” [J]. Henan traditional Chinese medicine, 2019, 39(1): 48-52.
- [17] Fang BZ. Innovation of Fang’s Acupuncture and Moxibustion -- Scalp needle [M]. Xi’an: Shaanxi Science and Technology Press.1994.
- [18] Ma AL, An JM, YangT, *et al.* Experience of chief physician Huang Linna in treating primary insomnia[J]. Journal of Shaanxi University of Traditional Chinese Medicine, 2019, 42(4): 18-20.
- [19] Huang LN, An JM, Dong HL, *et al.* Therapeutic effect of head acupuncture on primary insomnia [J]. Shanghai journal of acupuncture, 2011, 30(9): 596-597. (in Chinese with English abstract).