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# Case Report: Acupuncture Treatment for Cervical Spondylosis

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**Abstract:** *The neck pain is a problem that appears usually over the age of forty, because it is caused by degeneration of the cervical discs and cervical vertebra, also including all the changes that occur in the cervical spine. The treated patient is a 47 year old man diagnosed with cervical spondylosis. According TCM the pain can be caused by stagnation of Qi and blood in the body. This kind of stagnation appears due to trauma, an external invasion of wind, cold, dampness or heat, poor diet, insufficient rest coupled with too much activity or overwork (ie, busy live, excessive sex), overuse of drugs, chronic illness, heredity weakness, an excess of the emotions fear and anxiety, and general aging as our Qi is naturally declining. Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) suggests that cervical spondylosis can be treated with acupuncture, gua sha and cupping therapy.*

**Key words:** *acupuncture, treatment, traditional Chinese medicine, cervical spondylosis, pain*

## Introduction

The cervical spine is made up of: vertebrae, discs, spinal cord, nerve roots and ligaments. [1] Cervical spondylosis (CS) or neck arthritis is chronic cervical disc degeneration that affects the joints in the neck that gradually develops with age. The risk factors for cervical spondylosis are: age, neck injuries, repetitive stress, an uncomfortable position of the neck for prolonged periods of time and etc. [2][3]

Symptoms of spondylosis include pain in the neck (might increase when sneezing, coughing, tilting your neck backward), muscle weakness, headaches and etc. If the nerve roots become pinched, the patient might experience: pain radiating to the arms, pins and needles in the arms, loss of feeling in the hands, lack of coordination and etc. [1] [4] [5] [6]

Musculoskeletal pain, in this case to treat the pain in the neck, can be treated with acupuncture, cupping and gua sha (a therapeutic method for pain management using tools to scrape or rub the surface of the body to relieve blood stagnation. [7]

Another form of alternative medicine is the cupping therapy. The cupping therapy as a type of deep-tissue massage, is used to help with pain, inflammation, blood flow, relaxation and well-being. For the cupping therapy are used special cups that can be made of glass, bamboo, earthenware and silicone, which are put on the skin for a few minutes to create suction. [8]

## Aim

The aim of this work is to show how the treatment of acupuncture, cupping and gua sha works in a cases for cervical spondylosis and the positive results from it.

## Material and methods

The treated patient is a 47 year old male who has been diagnosed with cervical spondylosis with neck pain and radiating pain in the left arm. The patient could not finish his normal daily activities because of the pain and was taking tabletes like Doreta, Diklofenak, Vektor, Ibuprofen, Diazepam, Dexametason. There are no other complications like hypertension and diabetes. The first treatment was done on 12.08.2016 in the clinic for Traditional Chinese Medicine and Acupuncture, in Skopje, by a doctor specialist in acupuncture. The treatments were done every week until 09.09.2016. During the first three therapies he had a big reaction of pain, which is a normal occurrence during the therapies. After the 5th therapy the patient started to feel better. In the treatments were used normal sterile needles for single use, cupping therapy and twice was used gua sha treatment. The patient has made 8 therapies and after finishing, the pain was gone without any limited movements in the neck. Acupuncture was done in normal room temperature with duration of 30 minutes. Acupoints that were used in the treatments are:

## Discussion

Cervical spondylosis in TCM is called "stiffness of nape" or "rheumatism involving the bone". [8] According TCM the pain can be caused by

stagnation of Qi and blood in the body. This kind of stagnation appears due to trauma, an external invasion of wind, cold, dampness or heat, poor diet, insufficient rest coupled with too much activity or overwork (ie, busy lives, excessive sex), chronic illness, overuse of drugs, heredity weakness, an excess of the emotions anxiety and fear and general aging as the qi is naturally declining. [9]

Acupuncture is popular treatment for treating cervical spondylosis. For most cases, nonsurgical treatments, like acupuncture, are preferred to surgical intervention. [10] The main symptom of CS is pain in the neck. TCM considered that the pain is caused by blockage in the meridians that traverse the neck and other affected areas. Acupuncture works by regulating the patient's qi, supplementing it if it's deficient, dispersing it if qi has become stagnant and prompting the body to produce chemicals that help to reduce pain by using sterile needles, about the size of a human hair into specific points on the body. Acupuncture points are connected via meridians also called energetic channels and when placed a needle in one point of the meridians it can also affect distant parts of the body along the same meridians. Acupuncture mobilizes the own reserves of the body and helps to stimulate the body's natural healing processes. [11] Also acupuncture can be combined with moxibustion to alleviate neck pain and restore muscle strength. [12]

## Conclusion

Acupuncture, as part of the TCM gives positive results in the treatment of cervical spondylosis. Sometimes a few acupuncture treatments are enough to reduce the pain and numbness of the shoulders and neck.

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