

## ACUPUNCTURE TREATMENT IN PATIENTS WITH EPILEPSY

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**ABSTRACT**

Epilepsy is a transient disorder of the brain function. The epileptic seizures, which occur in a form of convulsion, are the result of excessive irritation of the nerve structures. Acupuncture as part of Traditional Chinese Medicine treatment mainly focuses on resolving the blood stagnation in the cerebrovascular system. According to the TCM theory there are 4 patterns that may represent as an underlying contributing factors for developing epilepsy: Kidney Qi deficiency, Liver Wind, Liver Yang rising and Liver and Gallbladder Damp Heat. In the research are included 38 patients, 24 male and 14 female, on age from 9 months to 71. All patients were treated with acupuncture for epilepsy. The patients were also taking prescribed medications from doctors. Striking fact is that most of the patients were children, starting from 9 month old baby. Most of the patients – 9, were on age from 10 to 20. Most of the patients have done between 10 and 20 treatments. The number of treatments indicates how many treatments were needed to completely eliminate epileptic seizures. The patients continue with acupuncture treatments in combination with medicament therapy. The acupuncture treatment for epilepsy is a long-term treatment and requires lot of patience and effort to reach the positive results. The treatment helps to reduce the frequency of epileptic seizures, improves the patient's overall physical and mental health, raises the Qi energy, regulates and restores the proper flow of the energy and blood, restores the normal balance of the organism and helps as an adjunct to the medication therapy.

**KEYWORDS:** epilepsy, acupuncture, traditional Chinese medicine, neurology.**INTRODUCTION**

Epilepsy is a transient disorder of the brain function. The epileptic seizures, which occur in a form of convulsion, are the result of excessive irritation of the nerve structures. The causes of epilepsy are numerous. It can be caused by various congenital anomalies and malformations of the brain, head trauma, degenerative diseases, tumors, infections, vascular diseases and more. Generalized tonic-clonic seizures are manifested by abrupt loss of consciousness and tonic spasms, followed by clonic convulsions and vegetative manifestations. Attacks always start abruptly, with an initial scream where the patient loses consciousness.<sup>[1]</sup> In general, two or more seizures are an indicator for epilepsy.<sup>[2]</sup>

The Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) methods are being used for many years in the treatment of epilepsy. Mainly used are acupuncture, herbal medicine, cupping and tai qi exercises. The treatment mainly focuses on resolving the blood stagnation in the cerebrovascular system. Blood stagnation happens to be a very common and important underlying pathology in many illnesses.<sup>[3]</sup>

According to the TCM theory there are 4 patterns that may represent as an underlying contributing factors for developing epilepsy. Every pattern is presented with different symptoms, different tongue appearance and different pulse pattern. These findings are shown on table 1.<sup>[2]</sup>

**Patterns**

1. Kidney Qi deficiency
2. Liver Wind
3. Liver Yang rising
4. Liver and Gallbladder Damp Heat.

**Table 1: Four epilepsy patterns and their presentations.<sup>[2]</sup>**

<i>Pattern</i>	<i>Basics</i>	<i>Tongue</i>	<i>Pulse</i>
Kidney Qi deficiency	Shortness of breath, asthma, cold limbs. Incontinence, epilepsy, headache	Pale	Deep, weak possibly tight
Liver Wind	Convulsions, muscle spasms, epilepsy, coma, headache	Red, stiff with thick yellow coat	Wiry, rapid, full
Liver Yang rising	Stroke, dizziness, twitching, epilepsy, convulsions, schizophrenia	Red, peeled possibly deviated	Floating, empty or wiry, fine, rapid
Liver and Gallbladder Damp Heat	Fever, nausea, vomiting, coma, epilepsy, tremor, trigeminal neuralgia	Red with yellow sticky coat	Slippery, wiry, rapid.

Greater understanding of the inflammatory dysfunction and imbalance is leading to a more holistic approach in regulating the inflammatory processes and restoring the immune homeostasis.<sup>[4]</sup>

### MATERIAL AND METHODS

In the research are included 38 patients, all treated with acupuncture for epilepsy. The patients were also taking prescribed medications from doctors.

Medications that were taken are: Depakine chrono, Tegretol, Rivotril, Lamal and other similar antiepileptic drugs.

In the treatment were included children, older patients than 60, patients who have finished the treatments, patients who were taking medications, patients who were diagnosed with epilepsy and patients with mental disabilities.

In the treatment are not included patients who withdraw from the treatment, pregnant women and breastfeeding women.

The patients were treated in a clinic for TCM and acupuncture in Skopje, Macedonia by a doctor specialist in acupuncture. Treatments were made once weekly, indoor, on a room temperature, with duration of 30-45 minutes. Acupuncture treatments were performed using 0.25 x 25 mm sterile acupuncture needles manufactured by Wuijuiang City Medical & Health Material Co., LTD. Acupuncture points used in the treatment are: ShenShu (BL23), DaChangShu (BL25), TaiYang (EX-HN5), BaiHui (DU20), SiShenCong (3 cm from BaiHui), RenZhong (DU26), TianTu (RN22), HuaGai (RN20), ZhongWan (RN12), TanZhong (RN17), NeiGuan (PC5), QiHai (RN6), SanYinJiao (SP6), TaiChong (LR2), TianShu (ST25), XueHai (SP10), YinLingQuan (SP9), ZuSanLi (ST36), YangLingQuan (GB34), YongChong (K1), FengChi (GB20), FengFu (DU16) and DaZhui (DU14).

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the research are included 38 patients, 24 male and 14 female, on age from 9 months to 71.

Treated patients were divided into seven age groups. Striking fact is that most of the patients were children, starting from 9 month old baby. Most of the patients – 9, were on age from 10 to 20. The results are shown on table 2.

**Table 2: Age groups.**

<b>Age groups</b>	<b>Number of patients</b>
<10	6
10-20	9
20-30	5
30-40	7
40-50	4
50-60	4
>60	3

According to the number of treatments, most of the patients have done between 10 and 20 treatments. The number of treatments indicates how many treatments were needed to completely eliminate epileptic seizures. The patients continue with acupuncture treatments in combination with medicament therapy. The results are shown on table 3.

**Table 3: Number of treatments done and number of patients in each group.**

<b>Number of treatments</b>	<b>Number of patients</b>
<5	5
5-10	11
10-20	12
>20	10

Symptoms present in the patients were: cramps, body shaking, body and head twisting, mouth twitching, eye twitching, tongue biting, mouth color bleeding, mouth foaming, falling to the ground, loss of consciousness, abdominal pain, cold hands and feet, unconscious self-talk and other typical symptoms of epilepsy.

After the seizures the patients were feeling headache, drowsiness, fatigue and nausea.

Seizures occurred most often in the early morning or during sleep, or were triggered by stress, anxiety or fatigue.

The duration from one seizure to another and the duration of the seizures was different in all patients. Some have reported having short seizures for 5-10 seconds to longer from 2-5 minutes. The seizures in some patients appeared once or twice a day and in some patients more than ten times. The seizures in children were more common during the day.

According to the duration of the disease, in most patients epilepsy was present for more than 10 years, in most of them since birth. The results are shown on table 4.

**Table 4: Duration of the disease and number of patients in each group.**

Duration (years)	Number of patients
Less than 1 year	3
1-5 years	8
5-10 years	7
More than 10 years	20

Epileptic seizures in women are most common and strongest before, during and after menstruation period. One female patient reported that the epileptic seizures began after childbirth.

Each patient's condition was monitored individually. Each patient is treated individually and each case should be considered individually. However, the success of the treatment is evident in all patients. Improvement of the condition was observed in all patients.

All patients faced daily epileptic seizures despite the tablet therapy prescribed by their doctors. In combination with acupuncture treatment, the frequency of seizures was gradually reduced in all patients. In all 38 patients was achieved success by completely eliminating the seizures. The patients continue with acupuncture treatments in combination with medicament therapy.

In people without epilepsy the energy flow is balanced. In epileptic patients, the flow of the Qi energy is impaired and the goal of the treatment is to restore the smooth flow of energy through the body. To regain the energy, small sterile acupuncture needles are pierced in the body at the points of the meridians through which the energy flows. For epileptic patients, these are points that affect the brain energy and increase the blood flow to the brain.<sup>[1]</sup>

Acupuncture treatment may reduce the side effects of the medications, help in the control of the intensity and rate of the seizures, help repair the neurons and brain glial cells, decrease the perpetuating cycle of inflammatory dysfunction and support a better immunological and neuro-hormonal homeostasis.<sup>[4]</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The acupuncture treatment for epilepsy is a long-term treatment and requires lot of patience and effort to reach the positive results. The treatment helps to reduce the

frequency of epileptic seizures, improves the patient's overall physical and mental health, raises the Qi energy, regulates and restores the proper flow of the energy and blood, restores the normal balance of the organism and helps as an adjunct to the medication therapy.

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