



**CASE REPORT: FIRE-NEEDLE ACUPUNCTURE TREATMENT IN PATIENT  
PRESENTED WITH GASTRIC PAIN**

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**ABSTRACT**

According to the Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) philosophy, the abdominal area is the body's vitality centre and therefore the proper function of the digestive organs is of a great importance. Losing weight without trying, without changing the eating or exercise habits, thus causing gastric pain, should be a cause for concern. Despite the primarily manifestation of corona virus as lung infection presenting with respiratory symptoms and fever, it has manifested significant other complications affecting most organs, including the gastrointestinal tract with gastrointestinal symptoms in 1/3 of the patients. The treated patient is a 39 year old woman, presented with pain and cramps in the stomach and esophagus after sudden weight loss (16 kg in 1 month) after coronavirus infection. The patient had an echo of the abdomen. Liver, bile, spleen, pancreas are without pathological changes. Both the kidney and the bladder are neat without pathological findings. The patient has been receiving medication therapy for 10 days Reglan 10 mg, but without any effect and changes. After receiving only one fire-needle acupuncture treatment, the pain was gone and didn't come back. The treated points are located on the spine on the vertebrae Th5 and Th6. Acupuncture as part of the Traditional Chinese Medicine, is an effective treatment and gives very fast and satisfying results in conditions presented with abdominal pain and discomfort in the stomach and esophagus.

**KEYWORDS:** Stomach, esophagus, pain, acupuncture, traditional Chinese medicine.

**INTRODUCTION**

Stomach pain may occur due to number of reasons. According to the Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) philosophy, the abdominal area is the body's vitality centre and therefore the proper function of the digestive organs is of a great importance. The probable causes of pain, due to the TCM include weakness and cold of the stomach or may be caused by improper eating habits and chronic stress. It must be clarified how strong the pain is and the type of the pain - crampy, sharp, stabbing, burning, dull, sudden and other.<sup>[1,2]</sup>

From a TCM perspective, the pain in the abdominal region comes from disharmony of the stomach and spleen, which lead to disharmony of the blood and Qi. The blockages in the blood/Qi in the meridians are causing the actual pain. Therefore the TCM way of treatment includes harmonization of the imbalances between the blood and Qi and strengthening the stomach and the spleen meridians.<sup>[1]</sup>

Every individual's weight fluctuates a bit on a daily basis, but losing weight without trying or as called

unintentional weight loss, without changing the eating or exercise habits, thus causing gastric pain, should be a cause for concern. There are many known health conditions that cause unintentional weight loss like cirrhosis, celiac disease, stress, depression, diabetes, pancreatitis, peptic ulcer, cancer, leukemia, colitis and other.<sup>[2]</sup>

Since the start of the corona virus pandemic, despite the primarily manifestation as lung infection presenting with respiratory symptoms and fever, it has manifested significant other complications affecting most organs, including the gastrointestinal tract with gastrointestinal symptoms in 1/3 of the patients. 74 to 86% of the critically ill patients with corona virus manifest gastrointestinal complications. The most common present symptoms due to some research in China are anorexia, abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea. There are some evidences pointing that corona virus is present in the gastrointestinal tract and the angiotensin-converting enzyme 2 (ACE2) receptor is highly expressed throughout it. As such, the virus may enter the

gastrointestinal cells through these receptors and cause direct damage to the gastrointestinal organs.<sup>[3,4,5]</sup>

### CASE REPORT

The treated patient is a 39 year old woman, presented with pain and cramps in the stomach and esophagus after sudden weight loss (16 kg in 1 month) after coronavirus infection. The patient had an echo of the abdomen. Liver, bile, spleen, pancreas are without pathological changes. Both the kidney and the bladder are neat without pathological findings. The patient has been receiving medicament therapy for 10 days Reglan 10 mg, but without any effect and changes.

The patient was treated with fire-needle acupuncture treatment. The treatments were done indoor with duration of 5-10 minutes. The treatments were made in clinic for Traditional Chinese Medicine and Acupuncture in Skopje, Macedonia by a MD, PhD, TCM specialist.

After receiving only one fire-needle acupuncture treatment, the pain was gone and didn't come back. The treated points are located on the spine on the vertebrae Th5 and Th6.

The thoracic nerves are innervating different parts of the body. The nerves on Th1 through Th5 are affecting the muscles, mid-back, upper chest and abdominal muscles. These muscles and nerves help in the control of the lungs, rib cage, diaphragm and the muscles corresponding with breathing.

The nerves on Th6 through Th12 are affecting the abdominal and back muscles. These muscles and nerves are important for the body posture and balance and help to cough or expel foreign matter from the airway.<sup>[6]</sup>

Th6 vertebra protects the nerve root that allows the brain to communicate with the stomach. Most common issues associated with Th6 nerve include nervous stomach, dyspepsia and heartburn.<sup>[7]</sup>

Corona virus has a negative impacts on the body weight and nutritional status. In a study done upon this issue, of all the examined patients, nearly 30% lost more than 5% of their baseline body weight and more than half patients have been at risk of malnutrition.<sup>[8]</sup>

Gastric pain may be caused by number of different reasons. The pain can be caused by exposure to cold temperatures or damp conditions, thus causing blockages in the Qi circulation of the stomach and intestines. Diet can be a big reason too Irregular eating habits or eating while stressed or emotionally upset or eating too much cold food or too little or too much food, hot-spicy food, or too much sugar and sweets, fried or dairy foods can damage the function of the stomach. Emotional upset such as stress, frustration, anger, worry and resentment may also lead to stomach problems.<sup>[9]</sup>

Acupuncture as part of the TCM is used to re-establish the balance in the body, help the body feel better and decrease symptoms, including digestive by activating the body's own innate healing response. Acupuncture helps in stimulation of the parasympathetic nervous system (PNS) in the body or the "rest and digest" response. In a relaxed state, the blood flow increases to the digestive tract and the salivary glands are stimulated which in turn produce digestive enzymes in the body, the intestinal activity is increased and the sphincters in the digestive tract are relaxed.<sup>[10]</sup>

The acupuncture treatment is possible to help in the stress management, decrease inflammation and pain, improve the overall digestive functioning, strengthen a weak digestive system, prevent future stomach disorders from occurring and relieve the variety of symptoms of gastritis including pain, nausea and vomiting.<sup>[9,10]</sup>

### CONCLUSION

Acupuncture as part of the Traditional Chinese Medicine, is an effective treatment and gives very fast and satisfying results in conditions presented with abdominal pain and discomfort in the stomach and esophagus.

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### Conflict of interest

The author have declared that no competing interests exist.

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### Statement of Informed Consent

Written informed consent was obtained from the patient for their anonymized information to be published in this article

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