

## **SHIATSU AND DIGESTIVE PROBLEMS**

### **RESEARCH:**

*Research Project on the Perceived Effectiveness of Shiatsu Treatment. Clifford Andrews BSc, MRSS.*

The first 9 conditions which include: General Health/wellbeing, ankle problems, headaches, joint problems, sciatica, back problems, emotional problems, shoulder problems, stress. Over 50% of the clients perceived the treatment as being +2 or Very Effective. In the second observable category which includes: Digestive problems, neck problems, menstrual problems, the perceived effectiveness was divided equally between the +1 (Effective) and +2 (Very Effective) scores but in each case over 80% of the sample found some benefit (+1 and +2 scores combined). A third group which includes depression, bowel problems/IBS, low energy, knee problems, showed a greater variety in the distribution of the scores. In depression slightly more +1 scores than +2 were recorded, although all of the sample indicated some benefit (+1 and +2 scores combined). Bowel problems and IBS proved difficult to treat giving the widest spread of scores amongst all the categories. Of the sample 40% indicated 0 or no change and 30% giving +1 and 30% giving +2. Low energy also proved to be a difficult category to completely resolve with 24% scoring +2 but a larger 55% feeling some benefit and scoring +1. Knee problems also appeared difficult to completely resolve, despite all of the sample reporting some benefit, only 17% scored +2 with 83% scoring +1.

Conclusions: A large majority of clients that responded to the Questionnaire perceived Shiatsu as being very effective. Two patterns emerged from the analysis of the responses; The most common conditions treated by Shiatsu in the sample shown, and also the relative perceived effectiveness of treatment of different conditions described. These show very promising results with some conditions which western medicine sometimes has difficulties in treating.

Shiatsu is perceived by the majority of clients in the sample as a complimentary approach to health management which is very effective for a wide range of common health problems.

### **CASE STUDY 1**

#### **Personal History**

A is 53. He works as a local government officer with responsibility for co-ordinating international projects, involving chairing large meetings, leading and receiving delegations and much computer work. He lives with his wife and 21 year old daughter.

He describes himself as an 'old hippy' and likes to stay up late and sleep in. He prefers to socialize with family and appears confident and easygoing, while professing to be shy. He has says he, had to develop skills to deal with socializing, speaking and chairing large and sometimes disparate groups.

He doesn't readily express his feelings and admits to some rigidity. He is hungry for information and finds it hard to 'switch off' naturally, preferring to 'engage and think'. He has a passion for playing and designing computer games, which perhaps provides an escape from relating to people which is a large part of his work, but few other outside interests.

He initially came for treatments to ease the presenting symptoms (see below) and for ongoing maintenance of his health.

### Medical History

A had acute appendicitis when he was 11, which he remembers as a traumatic experience. He had a vasectomy 10 years ago and about 6 years ago a helicobacter pylori infection was cure with antibiotics.

He used to be a keen runner and stills cycles and walks a lot and has suffered various ankle and leg injuries, especially on the right. His knee tendons used to be very tight. This was alleviated by acupuncture some years ago, although some stiffness remains. He developed a frozen right shoulder about 2 years ago, for which he initially saw an osteopath but now has weekly Feldenkrais sessions.

He gave up smoking 5 years ago with an attendant weight gain, which is not apparent as he was previously underweight. He has a 30 year old dope habit and drinks about 14 units of alcohol a week. There is a family history of quite serious heart problems.

### Presenting symptoms

A presented with ongoing tension in his neck shoulders and upper back, extending into his right forearm with excess typing, and stiffness and tenderness in his knees, ankles and Achilles tendons.

He is prone to acid indigestion and generally feels hot and sweats easily and copiously, especially in stressful situations. He most dislikes a humid hot climate. Although his diet is healthy, large business lunches are the norm with no breakfast and little in the evening. He has a chocolate habit and a preference for sour flavours. He urinates frequently, particularly if cold or tense and at night.

Any emotional problems were expressed soley as difficulties at work – long, confrontational meetings, overload, over thinking – which affected his sleep and exacerbated his physical tension. He rarely mentioned his family or personal relationships.

### Presenting signs

A appears 'full' in the head, diaphragm and belly and 'deficient' in the limbs – he has particularly long arms – and chest. His neck and mid to upper back tends to jitsu, while his lower burner and the sides of his torso tend to kyo. His shoulders hips and knees are fairly tight and there is a right-left imbalance – his right hip is looser and in prone he prefers to have his right arm down and his left arm up.

His complexion appears doughy with a greeny-yellow hue, especially around the mouth. He is often dark under the eyes, with a pronounced frown. He likes to wear green clothes.

### Aims of Treatment

To tonify the most kyo and sedate the most jitsu meridians and areas diagnosed from the hara, touch and appearance and use Five Elements and TCM theory to supplement diagnosis and treatment.

In Five Elements theory, Wood appeared to be in excess from the joint and tendon problems, green facial hue, frown, preference for green and sour things and staying up late (2am), physical rigidity, left-right imbalance, liking for organizational and computer work and addictive tendencies. In TCM, lack of suppleness and emotional repression is associated with liver imbalance and Tony's job and hobby are

demanding on gall bladder energy. The consistently jitsu hara diagnosis supported this.

Consequently, Wood is draining its mother, Water, which was consistently deficient from the hara diagnosis. This is supported by the darkness under the eyes, lower backache, inability to relax and frequent urination, which is a sign of K deficiency in TCM, as is a lack of tongue coating.

Wood is also invading Earth which is showing signs of imbalance in his chocolate habit, analytical mind and slowness in getting up. In TCM also, constrained LV energy upsets digestion, which can be a problem for Tony and his dislike of humidity and scalloped tongue indicate a damp condition.

Additionally, in TCM terms there are signs of Interior Heat – dislike of heat, long red tongue, copious sweating and feelings of anxiety, lack of emotional expression, exacerbated by dope and alcohol. The family history of heart problems would also support this.

In addition to treatment based on the Zen shiatsu diagnosis, Metal, as the controller of Wood in the Ko cycle, was tonified through treatment of the LU and L1 meridian or appropriate points on either. Additionally, points for Heat, were included (L14, L111, GV14, HP6) as well as points for musculoskeletal problems (GB34, LV3) to address the excess Wood energy.

### Treatments

The pattern of hara diagnosis was:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Kyo</b>	<b>Jitsu</b>
08.7.04	K/BL	GB
22.7.04	K/BL	GB
30.7.04	TH	GB
06.8.04	Unsure LU/TH/BL/	Generally
13.8.04	TH	GB
20.8.04	BL	GB
25.9.04	BL	GB
2.10.04	BL	GB
23.10.04	K	GB

It was suggested that decreasing the consumption of dope and alcohol and meat might ease symptoms of Heat and trying to find ways to get good quality rest and relaxation and creative expression apart from the computer games would increase energy and decrease anxiety and stiffness.

### Results and conclusion

The treatments complimented A's ongoing Feldenkrais sessions and awareness of postural and physical problems. He regarded them as part of the same process of re-educating his body to achieve better mental and physical health, but did not seem interested in any other aspect. He did not attempt any behavioural changes or take any steps to take more responsibility for his own health and decrease his reliance on practitioners. He embraced the Feldenkrais philosophy without showing any intention to end the sessions or do any regular exercise to address his particular problems or explore his mental or emotional patterns.

He felt that shiatsu made him generally more relaxed, with slightly improved digestion. He seemed to enjoy the treatments although gave little feedback during or after.

His energetic pattern remained unchanged, perhaps reflecting the chronic Wood and Water imbalance – rigidity in his psycho-emotional make-up and fear of upsetting the status quo.

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