

## Acupuncture & Angina

Acupuncture has been traditionally used to treat a wide variety of cardio-vascular diseases (1), and recent controlled studies have demonstrated that it is particularly beneficial for angina (pain in the chest caused by insufficient blood supply to heart due to arterial disease) offering a proven option to drug therapy.

In one study (2) at the Human College of Traditional Chinese Medicine, Chansha, forty patients with stable type of angina pectoris were assessed during and after acupuncture treatments and compared to a control group. After only one acupuncture treatment, 15 (37.5%) of the patients were already noticing a marked improvement in degree and area of pain, but after 7 treatments 25 (63%) of the patients recorded significant reductions both in extent and area of pain, and they also experienced a reduction in the number and the duration of attacks. Furthermore the patients in the acupuncture group who did get angina attacks recovered much faster than the patients in the control group.

Similar findings were reported in another study, this time in Sweden (3), where 21 patients with stable effort angina pectoris were treated with acupuncture. All of the patients had a history of at least five anginal attacks per week despite intensive conventional medical treatment. They were given three acupuncture treatments per week which led to a 40% reduction in the number of anginal attacks and the researchers also observed that the patients were able to exercise for longer before the onset of pain. All the patients completed a life quality questionnaire which confirmed that they all felt better as a result of the acupuncture treatment. The report concluded that acupuncture should be considered a beneficial treatment even for those patients with severe, intensively treated angina pectoris.

Other studies have come to the same conclusion(4)(5) in the treatment of angina. In one research project at the Nanjing Medical College involving 267 patients (all suffering from angina pectoris) acupuncture treatment was shown to have a 93.3% success rate with no harmful side effects (6).

Chinese herbal medicine has also been shown to be a valid alternative treatment for angina sufferers. In one very large study assessing over 400 angina patients, saponin of the herb *Tribulus Terrestris*, was found to have an extremely high success rate, alleviating the symptoms in over 80% of angina patients (7). And the Chinese herb, *Kuo Guan Qu Yu Ling*, has also been shown, after a 30 day trial to offer substantial relief to over 60% of angina patients(8).

There can therefore be little doubt that acupuncture, acupressure and Traditional Chinese herbal medicine should be seriously considered as alternatives and/or complements to other forms of treatment for angina sufferers.

### Footnotes

(1) Acupuncture for cardiovascular disorders. Smith FW Jr Cardiopet, Inc., Floral Park, New York.

(2) *Probl Vet Med* Mar 1992, 4 (1) p125-31

[Metrological analysis for efficacy of acupuncture on angina pectoris] Zhou XQ; Liu JX Human College of Traditional Chinese Medicine, Changsha. *Chung Kuo Chung Hsi I Chieh Ho Tsa Chih* (CHINA) Apr 1993, 13 (4) p212-4,196

(3) Effect of acupuncture in patients with angina pectoris. Richter A; Herlitz J; Hjalmarson A Wallenberg Laboratory for Cardiovascular Research, Sahlgren's Hospital, University of Gothenburg, Sweden. *Fur Heart J* Feb 1991, 12 (2) p175-8

(4) Acupuncture in severe, stable angina pectoris: a randomized trial. Ballegaard S; Jensen C; Pedersen F; Nissen VH *Acta Med Scand* 1986, 220 (4) p307-13 [Acupressure on the zhiyang point in patients with acute anginal attack] Wang WT; Wei WL; Liu DG *Chung Hsi I Chieh Ho Tsa Chih* Apr 1987, 7(4) p206-7, 195

(5) Acupuncture in severe, stable angina pectoris: a randomized trial. Ballegaard S; Jensen C; Pedersen F; Nissen VH *Acta Med Scand* 1986, 220 (4) p307-13 [Acupressure on the zhiyang point in patients with acute anginal attack] Wang WT; Wei WL; Liu DC *Chung Hsi I Chieh Ho Tsa Chih* Apr 1987, 7 (4) p206-7, 195

- (6) Acupuncture in angina pectoris: does acupuncture have a specific effect? Ballegaard S; Meyer CN; Trojaborg W Department of Internal Medicine P. Rigshospitalet, University Hospital of Copenhagen, Denmark I Intern Med Apr 1991, 229 (4) p357-62
- (7) 406 cases of angina pectoris in coronary heart disease treated with saponin of Tribulus terrestris] Wang B; Ma L; Liu T Research Unit of Cardiovascular Disease, Jilin Medical College. Chung Hsi I Chieh Ho Tsa Chih Feb 1990, 10 (2) p87-7, 68
- (8) Observations on the treatment of coronary heart disease by kuo guan qu yuling. Guan M; Ni J; Zhao C; Zhai Y; Fu C; Hong M; Wang B Department of Pathology, Shenyang Military Medical School. J Tradit Chitt Med Mar 1990, 10 (1) p49-53