

Migraine and Acupuncture

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In Chinese medicine, the tools of diagnosis include a detailed case history of the patient's health, well being and lifestyle, diet, life events, work and recreation. This helps present a good profile that hopefully will identify the person's primary migraine causes and triggers.

Checking the pulse and looking at the tongue also gives us internal information helping to make a diagnosis. This is slightly different way of looking at the body than in the conventional Western model. The main patterns of imbalance for migraine sufferers according to traditional Chinese medicine would be translated as an excess of liver yang rising to the top of the head and pain going along the meridians and causing pain in the head. The meridians involved are the liver and gall bladder. An excess consumption of chocolate, cheese, alcohol and greasy foods can help to trigger this particular pattern. Emotional circumstances, life events and study can contribute to this as well. A build up of chi (energy) or tension is another trigger. It can also affect the stomach channel which can then cause the nausea and vomiting.

Another pattern translated from the Chinese model is blood deficiency which can occur from skipping meals, over working, excess menstrual bleeding in women and also lack of physical exercise. Also we get people who have migraine as a result of whiplash from an accident.

External trigger factors that can also cause a migraine are excess attacks of "wind heat" or "wind cold". That may be an unusual way of describing things but it is another trigger from the oriental point of view.

Having determined the cause or made a particular diagnosis and after checking the tender points across the body, the acupuncturist will then choose acupuncture points specifically for that person. There may be local points that are used and also distant points that are used on the opposite end of the body.

Regular meals, moderate exercise, reduced stress levels and less alcohol will help for some people with migraine and do remember that it is an individual condition.