

Paediatric Acupuncture Course Notes

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**Treating Babies and Children
with Acupuncture
and Dietary Advice**


An Apple a Day
Healthy Children, Naturally

TreatingChildren.com



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Overview

The following is a snippet of what you get when you enroll in our new course “Treating Babies and Children with Acupuncture and Dietary Advice”. We hope you learn a lot from it, and that it leads you to treating lots of children.

Why treat children?

When I was trained in acupuncture, I was instructed not to treat children under the age of seven years. It was considered all right to treat older children, but if I really had to treat younger children, I was to use massage only. Actually that was sound advice at the time, for the training I had was rudimentary, because not much information about acupuncture was available in the West at that time, and the training in the special aspects of babies and young children non-existent. However, I was soon thrust into a position where I had to treat a child - my own child. At the age of three years he developed measles, and had a very high fever. He was really quite ill, and, as a father, I was desperate. As the saying goes “*fools rush in where angels fear to tread*”, and so I gave him a treatment. The result was quite extraordinary (see below) - and so it was that I was launched into treating children.

Oliver Scott

Oliver's first treatment came when he was 3 years old. He had been healthy up to that age, then had measles quite severely. He had been off-colour for a few days before, and we thought it was his usual teething problems. Then one morning, when we went to his room, we found him very ill with a fever of 40.5°C / 105°F and the characteristic rash of measles covering his whole body. At this time I had not treated any children, but he was obviously suffering so much, with incoherent speech and complete prostration, (floppy, like a rag doll) that I felt I had to do something. After much deliberation, I needled Hegu and Chi ze



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(rather painfully). He howled from the pain and the general misery of being ill, and I wondered if I really had done the right thing.

I did not know what to expect, having had little experience with treating infectious diseases even with adults, so I was amazed at the results. Of course he cried when I treated him (it is very difficult treating your own child - and very difficult having your father stick needles in you!)¹

But five minutes later he fell into a deep sleep. The sleep was restless, and soon he was drenched in perspiration. We left him and carried on our work (somewhat half-heartedly) and were amazed when he came down stairs only two hours later. The fever had gone, his skin was dry, and the measles rash, which had been an angry red was now a dull purple!

It was this experience which set me on the path of treating children. Since then I have treated several cases of measles, often with the same rapid results.

Being the parent of a young child means that you meet lots of other parents, and get to know a lot of other young children. What I kept noticing was that most of the children in our circle were ill in one way or another - constant colds, temper tantrums, vomiting, bed wetting, a lot of sleepless nights. The friends asked my advice, and I very soon found that I could help their children. After successfully treating a few children, the word spread. One thing led to another, and in quite a short space of time I found myself treating lots of children. It happened more or less by accident!

Since starting to treat children, I have realised how many sick children there are. So much so, that it is hard to find a really healthy child. This is really a change from 30 or 40 years ago, when the majority of children were healthy. It is not hard to find some of the causes - pollution, adulteration of foods, stress and pace of town life, overstimulation through television, lack of spaces for children to play

¹ I have since learnt that there is a law dating from the 1870's or so which prohibits penetrating the skin of your own child. It is OK on other people's children, but not your own.



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safely outside - and so on. The changes in one generation are truly astounding.

It is against this background that we present our course. The children of today are born into a hostile world and need help. So many of them are weak, or carry significant imbalances around with them. Without treatment, this weakness or imbalance is likely to stay for the rest of the child's life. By treating them now, in their childhood, you can easily restore them to health and give them a much happier life in the years to come.

Why acupuncture? Does it work?

Acupuncture is wonderful for treating children. It is not the only therapy which is effective - there are of course many others: cranio-sacral osteopathy, homoeopathy, herbalism to name just a few. But acupuncture on its own is nevertheless extremely effective. In many situations (for example acute asthma attacks, febrile convulsions) acupuncture is really the treatment of choice, with much quicker and more reliable results than any other therapy. Also, if you are an acupuncturist, there are great advantages in extending your treatments to children - it is much easier than learning a whole new therapy!

In some circles acupuncture has the reputation of being slow to work. Nothing could be further from the truth. The speed with which children change after treatment is really amazing. As we have seen from the case history, the effects when treating fevers can be seen in the time that it would take to go down to a pharmacy. In chronic conditions, progress is slower, but again and again one finds improvements in diseases which would otherwise stay the same or even get worse. Diseases can be cured which would otherwise stay there for the rest of the child's life.



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Doesn't it hurt?

Well, yes. It does hurt a bit. But the amount it hurts depends a lot on your needle technique, and it is really worth spending a lot of time developing painless insertion, and good flow of Qi (see lesson 4). Some children really don't feel anything; some do feel quite a lot, and cry during the needling, but are soon consoled. One thing to remember is that a child's world is full of pain. For example, very young babies cannot really make a distinction between hunger and pain. Then as they get older, they are always falling and bruising themselves or causing pain one way or another. So pain is part of childhood. Of course no one would willingly inflict pain on a child if they could avoid it, but what we find in clinical practice is that the amount of suffering caused by acupuncture is tiny compared to the wonderful healing effects. For many children, the trauma of an acupuncture treatment is no worse than having their mouth wiped after a meal! In fact, there are few children whose cries are not quickly soothed by the offer of a handful of raisins, or some 'special' stickers. This pain is to be set against curing them of an illness which they might otherwise take through the whole of their life. Also, it is worth bearing in mind that many tests in orthodox medicine involve the insertion of really quite big needles, even before any treatment is given. One would have no hesitation in submitting a child to a necessary test!

When not to needle?

There are times when it is better not to needle. This is when you are treating a Kidney deficient child. These children are rightly terrified of needle, for the effect on them is much stronger than on other children. They are quite different from those who don't like treatment, and happen to have very loud voices! Kidney deficient children can however be treated with moxa. How to recognise them and how to handle them will be discussed later on in the course.



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The effects of acupuncture

One of the other wonderful effects of treatment that I have noticed is to re-unite mother and child. Whether the child is brought in with a severe disease such as asthma, or a mild one such as interrupted sleep, one theme that comes back again and again from the mothers is that before coming for treatment they felt they had lost their child. Now, after treatment, they feel they have made contact with their beloved child again.

Handling children

Treating children can be much more traumatic and upsetting than treating adults. You may even feel so discouraged after giving your first few treatments that you want to give up altogether, but please don't. Please persevere and don't get discouraged. Children are incredibly robust. It takes more than a few sharp pricks to upset them in a deep way. Don't get upset by the mothers who are easily manipulated by their children. Above all persevere. Practise needling on yourself, so you know exactly what you are doing to the children, and keep in mind the enormous benefits that they can receive from your treatments.

If you have children of your own, or if you have worked with them, you will know how they behave and how to handle them. You will know how to distinguish the noise they make when they are cross from the noise they make when they are really hurt. If you don't have this familiarity, you are starting at a bit of a disadvantage. The best thing we can suggest is try and get some experience with children. Spend some time in a kindergarten or playgroup, do some baby-sitting for your friends.

Tim, the son of a doctor was an acupuncturist with five years experience, and a growing practice. He decided to study the treatment of children when the opportunity arose. Having completed the formal part of the course, with a further 10 days observation in clinic, he felt well equipped to start practising on his own. Although he was unmarried, and had no children, he had spent some time around children, especially in the children's clinic, so he felt ready to start



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treating. On his first day on his own, he treated 5 children, ranging from one year old to three years old. Quite a number of them cried, both before and after the treatment. To his great surprise he was really upset by this, and when he went home that night, all he could think of was the noise of children crying. He also had nightmares about it. Next week, the children he had treated had all got a bit better, and instead of five children to treat, he had seven. However, once again, when he went home in the evening, all he could remember was the sound of children crying. The healing that had taken place went unnoticed. Over the next few days he had a severe crisis of confidence, and it was only by spending time pointing out to him the benefits of acupuncture, that he was persuaded to try another two weeks before abandoning. Fortunately he recovered his nerve in these two weeks, and went on to treat hundreds of children. He is now the head of a children's clinic.

At what age can I treat?

When you have done this course, you will know that you can treat really very young babies. I have treated several who were only a few days old. This is much younger than I really like treating. I prefer to leave a child for the first 3 or 4 months until they have got used to being in the world.

What we suggest when you are starting to treat children, is to treat children 3 years old and above. Then when you feel comfortable, gradually reduce the age you treat until you are confident treating any age group.



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Module 1

This module is the first of a five-part series that provides you with the essential tools to expand your acupuncture practice to include treating babies and children. The first lesson will cover the two basic types of child; Shi - exuberant children with plenty of energy and Xu - those who don't have quite enough. This provides the foundations for understanding what illnesses a child may be predisposed to. Secondly, because good digestion is essential for healthy development, "Accumulation Disorder" (congestion and overloading of the digestive system) will be addressed with reference to Spleen Qi deficiency.

Learning Objectives

- Have a greater understanding of how Shi and Xu constitutional types predispose a child to certain illnesses and conditions
- Understand the role of digestion in the healthy development of babies and children
- Learn how Accumulation Disorder develops, the common causes, signs and treatment
- Understand how to differentiate Spleen Qi Xu in children and the appropriate course of treatment

Lessons / Videos

01 Introduction

02 Types Part 1

03 Types Part 2

04 Accumulation Disorder Part 1

05 Accumulation Disorder Part 2

06 Accumulation Disorder Part 3

07 Spleen Qi Xu



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Module 2

Having focused on the Digestion and Spleen Qi in Module 1, this module covers three commonly seen patterns of Kidney weakness; Kidney Jing insufficient, Kidney organ weak and Kidney Qi Xu. Understanding how to treat the kidneys is essential when working with children. It is also imperative that you know how to adapt your needle technique because children are so sensitive to the effects of acupuncture. This module teaches you how to needle children safely and how to maximize your results. In addition, the "Mother and Child" relationship will be explained as working with children extends to influences beyond the control of your little patient.

Learning objectives

- Have a greater understanding of the role of the Kidneys in children's health
- Learn about the differences between Kidney weakness; Kidney Jing insufficient, Kidney organ weakness and Kidney Qi Xu
- Learn how needling children is different from needling adults
- Understand how the "Mother and Child" relationship will determine the effectiveness of treatment and prognosis of the illness

Lessons / Videos

08 Pictures 1

09 Three Types of Kidney Deficiency

10 Needle Technique Part 1

11 Needle Technique Part 2

12 Mother and Child Part 1

13 Mother and Child Part 2



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Overview

In Module 1, we emphasised the importance of the Spleen in a child's health and development. It is now time to turn to the role of the Kidneys.

According to first year TCM course, the Kidneys “rule growth and development”, so why is it that we come to this aspect second, rather than first?

The reason has partly to do with our attitude and love of food, and partly due to clinical practice. On the whole, most children's problems stem from the Spleen rather than the Kidney. It is normally sufficient to regulate the Spleen for the child to get well.

This is not to say that all of these children have got perfect Kidneys. Often this is not the case. Take for example the child who has had weak Spleen for some time, and has developed thin bones and muscles: the bones are thin because the Kidneys have been affected.

However, we do not call this *Spleen and Kidney deficiency* because you don't need to do anything for the Kidneys. You do not need to tonify the Kidneys for the child to get well. All that you need to do is to get the Spleen working. Once it is absorbing food, the bones will grow strong, and the Kidneys will become strong again.

However, there are times when the child is so weak, or the child's Kidney Qi or Kidney organ has become so weak, that both the Spleen and Kidney have to be tonified. The Spleen just does not have enough support from the Kidneys to function.

For the treatment to be successful, you have to tonify the Kidneys as well as the Spleen. We call this imbalance '*Spleen and Kidney deficiency*'.

There are other cases where the imbalance is even more extreme, where the Kidneys have to be tonified before anything can happen. This is the place you have to start. We would call this *Kidney deficiency*, or sometimes *Kidney and Spleen deficiency*.



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Three main patterns

In this lesson we cover three commonly seen patterns of Kidney weakness, which can approximately be described as

- Kidney Jing insufficient
- Kidney organ weak
- Kidney Qi Xu.

Each of these has some characteristic features, and each requires slightly different treatment and has a slightly different outcome. We describe these three first because they are the most common, and they appear at all ages, from infants to adult.

In addition we discuss the following questions:

- Nervous exhaustion
- Birth defects
- Kidney stagnation
- Weakness/deformity in legs and feet



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Module 3

Digestive health is the foundation of childhood development and constipation is common, either as a presenting complaint or as an additional symptom to another illness. Often just regulating the bowels can be enough to clear conditions such as abdominal pain, insomnia, eczema, asthma etc. This module also covers aspects of diet that are most relevant in the treatment of children, based on traditional Chinese principles. In addition, in this module we discuss chronic diarrhoea, the most common form in the clinic, and how to treat it with acupuncture and dietary advice.

Learning Objectives

- Understand how constipation in childhood can lead to a range of conditions such as abdominal pain, insomnia, eczema, asthma etc.
- Learn how to regulate the bowels
- Understanding the energetics of food and common foods in a Western child's diet that lead to health issues
- Understanding acute and chronic diarrhoea and how to treat it with acupuncture and with dietary advice.

Lessons / videos

14 Constipation

15 Pictures 2

16 Needling + Capillary

17 Using Lasers

18 Diet 1

19 Diet 2

20 Diarrhoea

Overview

In this module we are going to be looking at the syndromes for constipation.

Constipation is common, either as a presenting complaint or as an additional symptom to another illness.

Often just regulating the bowels can be enough to clear conditions such as abdominal pain, insomnia, eczema, asthma etc.

It is therefore an important symptom to recognize and to be able to treat which is actually quite easy if you have mastered the previous lessons because, as you will see, the syndromes are almost the same as the previous patterns of Accumulation disorder and Spleen Qi xu.

What is constipation?

There is not complete agreement among practitioners as to what is constipation. We consider that a child is constipated if it does not pass stools once a day. Babies should go twice or even three times a day. So if a child misses a day, this counts as constipation. If it misses a day just occasionally, as a symptom it may not be worth treating, but we would still classify the condition as constipation. This stands in contrast to the orthodox medical view that it is OK for babies to go for up to 5 days without passing stools.

There are two main Syndromes for constipation.

SHI



XU





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The first two syndromes are basically the same as Accumulation disorder and Spleen Qi Xu, as discussed in the previous lessons. This is because constipation is one of the manifestations of the Accumulation disorder or of Spleen Qi deficiency, depending on whether the child is Shi or Xu respectively. Therefore the signs and symptoms, aetiology, and pathology are exactly the same.

There is a third syndrome, which we have called intestines Xu - cold. It is a pattern that we have seen emerging, in countries where they eat and drink very cold temperature foods.

The children often look Shi in nature, in that they are quite strong and determined, but unlike the Shi pattern they usually have a pale face. Also when the stools come they can be hard and difficult to pass.

We are not entirely sure about the aetiology but one factor is drinking ice cold drinks and eating ice cold food straight from the refrigerator. This does not seem to injure the whole body, just the Stomach and the intestines, at least initially.

Another cause for this pattern is thinking too much. All the Qi leaves the Spleen and goes up into the brain.

The fourth pattern is Hyperactive Spleen Qi Xu. This is basically the same as the Spleen Qi Xu pattern, except for the splitting headache that the practitioner gets when treating it.



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Module 4

This module covers "Lingering Pathogenic Factors" – an event which includes 'infection' by a virus or bacterium, and also includes immunisation. An infection which might keep an adult in bed with a fever for a few days can cause lasting damage to a child. The three common patterns will be taught: Spleen Qi Xu, Retention of Phlegm, Retention of very thick phlegm. This module also includes chronic cough and asthma which are the most commonly seen complaints in a children's clinic. And although not as common, the effects of cranial compression will also be taught in this module.

Learning Objectives

- Understand what are "Lingering Pathogenic Factors" (LPF) and the longer term effects on a child's health and development
- Learn about the three common patterns of LPF
- Gain an insight into how to treat chronic cough and asthma
- Learn about the effects of cranial compression and when to refer

Lessons / Videos

- 21 Lingering Pathogenic Factors 1
- 22 Lingering Pathogenic Factors 2
- 23 Lingering Pathogenic Factors 3
- 24 Lingering Pathogenic Factors 4
- 25 Chronic cough
- 26 Chronic Cough Treatment
- 27 Cranial compression



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Overview

In this lesson we look at the after-effects of infectious diseases in children - or more properly, in terms of Chinese Medicine, when they are invaded by a pathogenic factor.

We will see that children are affected in much the same way as adults. However, children are often affected much more, and an infection which might keep an adult in bed with a fever for a few days can cause lasting damage to a child.

It often happens that children are permanently thrown out of balance. The way they are thrown out of balance, and what to do about it is the subject of this lesson.

We will study the normal process of invasion by a pathogenic factor, and then introduce the idea of a Lingering Pathogenic Factor (LPF), a pathogenic factor which has not quite been expelled. (It has some similarities to the Western medicine idea of "post-viral syndrome").

We will see that there are three patterns that are often seen after an invasion by a pathogenic factor:

- Spleen Qi Xu
- Retention of Phlegm
- Retention of very thick phlegm.



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Module 5

This module covers two important topics: insomnia and enuresis (bed wetting). Insomnia in babies and children is very common and Acupuncturists are frequently asked to help. Parents kept awake by their children are often desperate to try anything, as they themselves are exhausted. Nocturnal Enuresis is described as involuntary and repeated passage of urine during sleep. It is very common in young children. The age when it is considered to be a real problem depends on the child and the parents, usually when the child starts to spend time away from home staying with friends when it is then an embarrassment. With virtually no western medical cure, acupuncture is an effective solution. Something which makes this module very different from most other teaching is that it covers the prognosis - will the acupuncture work, and what are the favorable and unfavorable signs/situations.

Learning Objectives

- Understand the underlying causes of insomnia
- Learn how to effectively treat childhood insomnia while coaching parents with the best strategies
- Understand Nocturnal Enuresis from a TCM perspective and how best to manage it
- Learn how important the family dynamic and home environment is and the impact on a family with a child who suffers from bed wetting and insomnia

Lessons / Videos

- 28 Insomnia 1
- 29 Insomnia 2
- 30 Insomnia 3
- 31 Insomnia 4
- 32 - 35 Enuresis 1- 4
- 36 Summary



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The Cares of Kingship

How many thousand of my poorest subjects
Are at this hour asleep! O sleep, O gentle sleep,
Nature's soft nurse, how have I frighted thee,
That thou no more wilt weigh my eyelids down
And steep my senses in forgetfulness?

.....
Canst thou, O partial sleep, give thy repose
To the wet sea boy in an hour so rude,
And in the calmest and the stillest night,
With all appliances and means to boot,
Deny it to a king? Then happy low, lie down!
Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown.

Henry IV (Part Two)
William Shakespeare

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The Habitat of the British Tiger (*Felis Tigris Britannicus*). Note the protective colouring of the stripes. This species is now almost extinct, owing to the progressive abandonment of the use of bed-canopies; just as the draining of marshes has diminished the number of malarial mosquitoes. These tigers used to suffer very much from the occupational disease of *Canopy Cramp*.

Picture from *Period Piece*
by Gwen Raverat



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Insomnia in babies and children is very common. We are frequently asked to help. Parents kept awake by their children's screams are often desperate to try anything, as they themselves are exhausted - some not having had a decent night sleep for perhaps many years!

Luckily acupuncture is very effective in the treatment of insomnia. To some parents it is regarded as a miracle cure!! A young child that has kept it's parents awake night after night for many months or years can be transformed in a few treatments.

Having said this, however, people are often unaware that acupuncture can be of any help and are left with nowhere to turn. Western medicine has little to offer, except in the form of narcotics which are of limited use. They can be useful after a recent trauma in the life of a child, but they are not suitable for all types of insomnia and often leave the child dull witted in the day.

You may wonder why we have included insomnia so early on the course - one does not think of it as a life threatening illness. We have done so for three reasons:

Firstly, if a child does not sleep properly then it is often the sign of an underlying pathology.

If the condition is Shi - then after a while of poor sleep the child will start to become deficient in energy and it may turn into a Xu condition - leaving the child open to more serious illnesses.

If the child was originally Xu - then without a regular sleep pattern there is little chance of improvement.

Secondly, sleep deprivation can drive parents to distraction, even to violence against their child or other members of the household. Children can also be hyperactive in the day, further exhausting and irritating the parents.



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Obviously if this can be prevented with a few acupuncture sessions then it is well worth it.

Thirdly, insomnia is a very accurate diagnostic tool. As you will see there are only four syndromes - cold, heat, Xu, fright and each has it's special characteristic.

Thus when you ask about the sleep pattern in any child that is brought to you - whether for insomnia or not - you will get an answer that will indicate to you if the child is Xu, Hot, Cold , or has had some emotional trauma, fright.

Often signs and symptoms can appear to be confusing - with a child having some signs of Xu and some of Shi - the sleep pattern can be of great help distinguishing which is the most important.

These notes are a sample to showcase the 500 + pages of accompanying information for the course.