

treatment of migraines. These studies confirm that Chinese medicine, both acupuncture and Chinese herbs, are safe and effective for this type of headache. The following are just a few examples of this voluminous research. Wang Xian-qi and Sun Qing treated 52 cases of recalcitrant migraines with a Chinese herbal formula as described in *New Chinese Medicine* (#7, 1996). Using this protocol, 36 cases were cured, and another 13 cases improved for a total amelioration rate of **94.2%**. Huang Cheng-yun, writing in *Heilongjiang Medicine & Medicinals* (#5, 1996), described his treatment of 36 cases of migraine with another Chinese herbal formula. Twenty-four of these cases were cured and the other 12 all improved for a 100% effective rate. Bai Hui-min treated 65 cases of migraine with acupuncture (*Tianjin College of Chinese Medicine Journal*, #2, 1996). Twenty-two cases were cured, 29 cases got a marked effect, and 11 cases improved for a total amelioration rate of **95.3%**.

Acupuncture works for Migraines!

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Treating Migraines with



Chinese Medicine

WHAT ARE MIGRAINES?

Migraines are a specific type of headache that lasts 4-72 hours, throbbing in nature and moderate to severe in intensity, often initially one-sided, and worse with exertion. Migraines may also be associated with nausea, vomiting, or sensitivity to light, sound, or smell. In order to be diagnosed as suffering from migraines, one only needs to experience 3-4 of these symptoms. Currently, it is estimated that 24 million Americans have migraines. They occur more in women than men and mostly between 10-40 years of age. More than 50% of migraineurs have a family history of this disorder.

WHAT CAUSES THEM?

According to Western medicine, the cause of migraines is unknown and their mechanisms are poorly understood. Triggers include cycling estrogens, insomnia, changes in barometric pressure, and hunger. While there is a widespread belief that certain foods, such as chocolate, cheese, and red wine, may trigger migraines, research has not confirmed this belief.

HOW DOES CHINESE MEDICINE VIEW MIGRAINES?

In Chinese medicine, most migraines are due to an upward counterflow of qi into the head. This upwardly counterflowing qi is usually due to liver depression and its various complications. In women, blood vacuity not nourishing the liver is often the cause or trigger of this upward counterflow. As this yang qi ascends to fill up the bony box of the head, it may draft with it dampness, phlegm, and turbidity. If this congestion recurs over a long period of time, it may also lead to the formation of blood stasis in the channels and network vessels of the head.

Often, acupuncture can halt or decrease migraine pain within minutes of insertion of the needles.

HOW DOES CHINESE MEDICINE TREAT MIGRAINES?

As each patient presents with their own unique combination of Chinese medical disease mechanisms, the first step in treating migraines with acupuncture and Chinese medicine is to do a personalized pattern discrimination. It is professional pattern discrimination which allows the Chinese medical practitioner to determine the exact right combination of therapies for each patient. This combination of therapies may consist of acupuncture, Chinese herbal medicine, or both. It will typically also consist of diet and lifestyle modifications to treat the underlying root of the condition. Acupuncture may be used either preventively or remedially during an acute attack. Often, acupuncture can halt or decrease migraine pain within minutes of insertion of the needles.

Chinese herbal medicine may be administered in the form of desiccated, powdered extracts or bulk herbs brewed and drunk as a "tea" several times per day.

IS THERE ANYTHING I CAN DO FOR MYSELF?

Yes, plenty. Bob Flaws' *Curing Headaches Naturally with Chinese Medicine* gives numerous no or low cost Chinese home remedies for all types of headaches, including migraines. These include Chinese aromatherapy, Chinese herbal pillows, poultices and plasters, Chinese self-massage, and Chinese herbal wines, porridges, and teas.

HOW DO I KNOW CHINESE MEDICINE WORKS?

Several scores of research studies have been conducted in the People's Republic of China on the Chinese medical