

# Case Report - Acupuncture Treatment for Hyperthyroidism

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## To cite this article:

Jihe Zhu, Blagica Arsovska, Kristina Kozovska. Case Report - Acupuncture Treatment for Hyperthyroidism. *International Journal of Chinese Medicine*. Vol. 1, No. 4, 2017, pp. 121-123. doi: 10.11648/j.ijcm.20170104.13

**Received:** August 5, 2017; **Accepted:** August 28, 2017; **Published:** September 23, 2017

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**Abstract:** Hyperthyroidism is one of the most common disorders of the thyroid gland, which occurs as a result of too much secretion of the thyroid hormones by the thyroid gland. The usual symptoms are: increased appetite, anxiety, tiredness, insomnia, hair loss, weakness in the muscles, diarrhea, weight loss, changes in the menstrual cycle and etc. According to the Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) the condition may appear due Liver fire, Qi and Yin deficiency, phlegm stagnation or Heart, Kidney and Liver deficiency. With the acupuncture treatment it's not treated just the thyroid but the whole body, promoting the health, improving the energy flow through the whole body, boosting the immune system and removing all blockages in the pathways. The treated patients is a 41 year old woman, diagnosed with hyperthyroidism for 9 years. The results from the blood analysis before the treatments showed high T3 (Triiodothyronine) and low TPO (Thyroperoxidase) levels and after the treatment all parameters were in normal range. The patient has done 10 treatments, one treatment every week within three months, with duration of the treatments 35-40 minutes. Treatments were done in a clinic for TCM and acupuncture in Skopje, Macedonia, by a doctor specialist in acupuncture. With the acupuncture treatment was succeeded to get positive results and improve the health condition for a very short time by regulating the hormone levels, diminishing the symptoms and recovering the body balance.

**Keywords:** Acupuncture, Traditional Chinese Medicine, Treatment, Hyperthyroidism

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## 1. Introduction

Hyperthyroidism or overactive thyroid gland is a condition that occurs due to producing increased amount of thyroid hormones - T3 and T4. The most active hormone is T3 (triiodothyronine), because most of the T4 (thyroxine) hormone in the bloodstream is transformed to T3. Hyperthyroidism occurs less than the hypothyroidism. It is more common in young people on age from 20 to 40, more in women than men, as women can develop hyperthyroidism in pregnancy. The causes for hyperthyroidism are different and may be Graves' disease, toxic adenomas thyroiditis, thyrotoxicosis and etc. How will the disease manifest depends on how much are increased the levels of the hormones and the body condition. In 80% of the cases of hyperthyroidism, the diagnosis is made on the basis of the specific clinical picture, due to accelerated metabolism and the occurrence of outbreaks in almost all organs. It manifests itself with general psychic and physical hyperactivity. Symptoms that may appear are: increased appetite and food

intake, anxiety, tiredness, insomnia, rapid heart rate, hair loss, palpitations, weakness in the muscles, tremors, excessive sweating, diarrhea, weight loss, changes in the menstrual cycle, nervousness with psychoblastility, behavioral changes, mild lamentations, inability to concentrate, general weakness and etc. [1-7] The most severe form of hyperthyroidism is the thyroid crisis. The diagnosis of hyperthyroidism is based on the clinical picture, blood analysis by determining the serum level of TSH (Thyroid Stimulating Hormone), thyroxine and triiodothyronine, an echo and a scan of the thyroid gland. The thyroid gland controls the metabolism, body temperature, heart rate, breathing and etc. and when the thyroid gland is overactive i.e. when there's hypothyroidism the body's activities are speeded up and all these symptoms may appear. Early diagnosis of hyperthyroidism is very important. It is recommended that women after 35 years of age should check the hormones and make a thyroid echo and repeat them every 5 years. [7] The younger patients are usually presented with neurologic symptoms like tremors and anxiety and older patients with cardiovascular symptoms. On blood analysis

TSH levels are suppressed and T3/T4 levels are elevated. [4] If TSH levels are low and T3/T4 levels are normal then the patient is considered to have subclinical hyperthyroidism. Subclinical hyperthyroidism can be caused by: subacute thyroiditis, exogenous administration of levothyroxine (used for treating hypothyroidism), thyroid adenomas, multinodular goiters, sometimes Grave's disease and etc. [8] Grave's disease is considered as most common cause of hyperthyroidism. Grave's disease is an autoimmune disorder in which the antibodies are stimulating the TSH receptors, which in turn are leading to overproduction of thyroid hormones, manifesting with hyperthyroidism, ophthalmopathy, diffuse goiter and dermopathy (skin lesions). [9] [10] Ophthalmopathy or exophthalmos is bulging of the eye anteriorly out of the orbit and in Grave's disease is usually bilateral. The eye displacement is due to abnormal connective tissue deposited in the orbit and extraocular muscles, which can be visualized by MRI or CT. [11] Dermopathy is rare symptom which causes red, painless, lumpy skin rash on the front of the legs. [1] The Western medicine as a treatment options offers radioactive iodine, beta blockers, anti-thyroid drugs or surgery. [2] The Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) gives other more natural and safe options for treatments in hyperthyroidism, including acupuncture and herbal treatment. According to the Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) the condition may appear due Liver fire, Qi and Yin deficiency, phlegm stagnation or Heart, Kidney and Liver deficiency. Western medicine considers that stress is one of the possible causes for hyperthyroidism and from Chinese point of view stress is causing the imbalance in the Liver. Liver can be blocked in many ways: by Phlegm accumulation which blocks the throat and causes goiter, anger or too much spices which make the Liver too hot and heat rises and etc. [12] With the acupuncture treatment it's not treated just the thyroid but the whole body, promoting the health, improving the energy flow through the whole body, boosting the immune system and removing all blockages in the pathways.

## 2. Case Report

The treated patients is a 41 year old woman, diagnosed with hyperthyroidism 9 years ago. Before coming to the clinic and starting with the acupuncture treatment the patient was taking medications - Tirozol and homeopathic therapy. The main symptoms were hair loss, increased appetite, anxiety, sensitivity, menstrual period changes (19 days menstrual cycle), low blood pressure (100/60), allergy, pain in joints and worsening of the symptoms on weather changes. Before starting with the treatment, on 11th of July 2016 the patient has done blood analysis test by ELISA method and the results showed T3=5.60 (high), TPO=<10 (low), TSH=0.571 T4=1.06. On table 1 are shown the same results. The treatment started on 25th of July 2016. In the treatment were used fine sterile needles for one use 0,25x25mm for the acupuncture treatment, with duration of the treatment 35-40 minutes both sides of the body. The patient has done 10

treatment, one treatment every week. Treatments were done in a clinic for TCM and acupuncture in Skopje, Macedonia, by a doctor specialist in acupuncture. After finishing the 10 treatments the patient has done another blood analysis test (serum) on 21st of October 2016 and the results after the treatment are very satisfying T3-5.01, TSH-1.10, T4-15.82. The results are shown in table 2. The blood test analysis are done in two different laboratories by different methods and results are determined by the given parameters shown in table 1 and 2.

*Table 1. Results before the treatment.*

Test	Result	Ranges
fT4	1.06	0.90-1.80 ng/dL
TSH	0.571	0.400-4.00 uIU/mL
fT3	5.60 (high)	1.80-4.20 pg/mL
Anti-TPO	<10.0 (low)	10.0-35.0 IU/mL

*Table 2. Results after the treatment.*

Test	Result	Ranges
fT4	15.82	12.00-22.00 pmol/l
fT3	5.01	3.10-6.80 pmol/l
TSH	1.10	0.270-4.20 uIU/ml
IGE	113.1	0.100-200.0 IU/ml

Acupuncture points that were used in the treatment are located on the meridians of Pericardium, Dumai, Liver, Stomach and Large Intestine. According to our theory, the disorder appeared due to overly tiredness of the body and the organs that resulted with Qi defect. The aim of the treatment was to add more Qi in the treated meridians, reactive the energy and balance the Yin and Yang.

Low TPO levels are usually sign for toxic multi-nodular goiter or toxic adenoma, but in our patients these signs are not present. Elevation of T3 levels only, indicates to milder thyrotoxicosis. [4] Thyrotoxicosis applies to the existence of too much thyroid hormone, including hyperthyroidism. Hyperthyroidism can be effectively treated with acupuncture by good examination, finding and identifying the root of the condition and treating the affected specific organs. It is not only the thyroid gland that is treated, but the whole body and therefore starting from the symptoms it is important to find which organs are affected so the thyroid function can be rebalanced effectively. Although the thyroid is located in the neck, it affects the whole body. There are 8 channels (San Jiao, Liver, Kidney, Bladder, Gall Bladder, Spleen, Stomach, and Small Intestine) that are connected to the thyroid and if there's some deficiency in any of these channels it can also affect the rest of the body. [13] According to the TCM theory the main three affected organs in hyperthyroidism are Heart, Liver and Kidney and the root of the disease is deficiency. It also can be caused by phlegm stagnation and Qi and Yin deficiency. Liver fire contributes to excessive thyroid hormones, phlegm to enlarged gland and Qi and Yin deficiency to fatigue and weakness. Coming from this, the aim of the treatment is to nourish the Qi and Yin energy, to clear the heat, clear the symptoms and treat the root of the disease. [14] In our patient the possible cause is Qi and Yin

deficiency, which on examination is presented with deep rapid pulse and red tongue with thin coating. Acupuncture points that were used in the treatment were selected to calm the heart, soften the liver and tonify the Qi and Yin. In combination with the acupuncture treatment can be used the herbal treatment too. When Liver fire is present, herbal formula that can be used is Zhi Zi Qing Gan Tang to clean the Liver and purge Fire. If there's Qi and Yin deficiency, herbal formula that is used in the treatment is Yi Guan Jian to tonify the Qi and Yin, calm the Heart and soften the Liver. For Qi and Phlegm stagnation are used Chai Hu Shu Gan Tang and Ban Xia Hou Po Tang to regulate Qi circulation, resolve phlegm and soothe the Liver. For Liver, Kidney and Heart Yin Deficiencies are used Tian Wang Bu Xin Dan and Zhi Bai Di Huang Wan to tonify the Heart. For Liver fire with Phlegm and underlying Qi and Yin deficiencies is used Imperial Formula for Hyperthyroidism. [5] With good examination and recognition of the root cause, the overall health can be improved, the hormonal balance can be successfully restored and various other underlying health problems can be corrected. [15] [16]

### 3. Conclusion

With the acupuncture treatment was succeeded to get positive results and improve the health condition in the treatment of hyperthyroidism for a very short time by regulating the hormone levels, diminishing the symptoms and recovering the body balance.

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