



## ACUPUNCTURE TREATMENT FOR TENNIS ELBOW

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### ABSTRACT

Tennis elbow or lateral epicondylitis is a painful condition in the area of the elbow due to damage of the extensor muscles and tendons of the hand and fingers. These muscles are located on the outer side of the forearm and are joined with the tendons on the lower outer part of the forearm. Causes are various but most common are repetitive movements and overuse of the arm. In this study are included 6 patients. 5 male and 1 female, all with syndrome of tennis elbow, on age from 43 to 70. All patients were treated with fire needle acupuncture in a clinic for Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) and acupuncture in Skopje, Macedonia by a doctor specialist in acupuncture. Treatments were done on Ashi points (trigger points) that were found on palpation on the most painful places in the area of the elbow. Treatments were done indoor on a room temperature. Three patients needed only 1 treatment, one patient 2 treatments, one patient 3 treatments and one patient 6 treatments. With a very few acupuncture treatments we succeeded to get very fast and positive results, to improve the condition significantly and reduce the pain and symptoms completely.

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### INTRODUCTION

Tennis elbow is a syndrome of overuse of the arm. The condition is very common, not only in tennis players but in many other working areas and workers like hockey players, golf, computer workers, surgeons, musicians, carpenters, dentists, dactylography and etc. Basically, the condition appears because of strong, monotonous and long movements of the muscles which in turn burden the lateral epicondyle. The condition is manifested with mild to intense pain in the area of the outer epicondyle which may persist longer. The local pain is usually followed by muscle weakness that occurs in minor activities like handshake, picking up a cup of coffee or turning the key to the lock. According to the Western, the patient primary must stop with any activity, rest and apply cold compresses. [1] [2]

In the Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) the treatment for tennis elbow is acupuncture either with normal or fire needle. In our clinic we use the fire needle acupuncture, because it gives faster results, removes the blockage in the blood quickly and all the toxins physically are let out (thrown away) with the blood from the body. The acupuncture treatment can help relieve and minimize the pain and discomfort in the elbow by removing the blockages in that area and unblocking the pathways where the energy flows. When the energy flow in the body is blocked then the pain and other symptoms characteristic for tennis elbow appear. [3]

The aim of the treatment is to relieve the patient from the pain and other symptoms, harmonize the body, improve the circulation, strengthen the muscles and tendons and reduce the inflammation. [4]

### MATERIAL AND METHODS

In this research are included 6 patients, 5 male and 1 female, on age from 45 to 70. All patients are treated with fire needle acupuncture in the past year with certain number of treatments. Before coming to the clinic they were all with symptoms of tennis elbow. Treatments were done in a clinic for Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) and acupuncture in Skopje, Macedonia by a doctor specialist in acupuncture. Treatments were done on Ashi points (trigger points) that were found on palpation on the most painful places in the area of the elbow. Treatments were done indoor on a room temperature.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The treated patients before coming to our clinic were experiencing pain in the area of the elbow. The pain in some patients was present during some movements, some couldn't do certain movements, others felt pain in the fingers, weakness, achy discomfort and etc. Most of them had pain in the right arm, presumably the dominant hand. Some of them before the treatment were using medications for pain. According to the cause of the condition, the reasons are lifting weight, playing tennis, injury caused by fall and etc. After certain (individual) number of treatments with fire needle acupuncture the patients were relieved from the pain and they

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were able to move the joint in all directions with no limitation.

Three patients needed only 1 treatment, one patient 2 treatments, one patient 3 treatments and one patient 6 treatments. The same results are shown in table 1.

**Table1** Number of treatment done with fire needle acupuncture

Number of treatments	Number of patients
1	3
2	1
3	1
6	1

If the treatment is made with normal (cold) needles then the points might be located away from the elbow, on other locations of the body, because the blocked energy in one part the body can have affect in the other parts of the body. In that case the healing process starts and the blood flow is increased in the whole body. [2] When using fire needle acupuncture, needles are inserted into trigger points located in the area where the pain is strongest, in this case in the area of the elbow. A study done for tennis elbow, showed very positive long-term results in 22 patients of which 19 were cured and relieved from the pain after four acupuncture treatments. [3] According to the age groups, patients were on age from 43 to 70 - 3 patients in age group from 40 to 50, two in 50-60 and on patient (the female patient) on age >60. The same results are shown in table 2.

**Table 2** Age groups

Age groups	Number of patients
40-50	3
50-60	2
>60	1

Before starting the treatment the doctor must understand the patient's general health and find the underlying factor of the imbalance. The factors that have influence on the health can be internal and external. Internal are Qi and blood stagnation in the body and external are external trauma or pathogenic factors like Wind and Cold.

According to the TCM, when there's internal imbalance the health problems occur. In the TCM the tendons are connected to the Liver, so the main purpose of the treatment will be to nourish and relieve the stagnated blood and Qi energy in the Liver meridians and remove all the obstacles. Points that can be treated in the area of the arm and elbow are Li5, Li6, Li10, Li11, Li12, Lu5, Lu6, Ht3, Tw6 and Tw10. Acupuncture as part of the TCM is exceptionally effective in treating musculoskeletal injuries, enabling the body to heal itself and stimulating the energy to flow smoothly. [5-8]

## CONCLUSION

With a very few acupuncture treatments we succeeded to get very fast and positive results in our treated patients with tennis elbow. We were able to improve the condition significantly and reduce the pain and symptoms completely.

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