

## Using acupuncture to treat car accident triad

Car accidents have lasting detrimental effects on the human body.

Car accidents inflict a series of rapid and sometimes repeated impacts on the human body, which often results in concussions, spinal disc herniation, and joint disorders that lead to pain along the spinal cord, sciatica, and fatigue induced by headaches and insomnia.

A sudden impact also places the mind under great stress by inducing panic. The brain trauma that accompanies the panic often leaves victims stressed, afraid, and even depressed.

The following symptoms usually occur after the car accident:

1. Pain
2. Insomnia/amenia
3. Anxiety/depression

These three symptoms are interconnected, which means that if one is focused on during the treatment process, the results are often dissatisfactory.

The above only encompasses the patient's own trauma and stress. If we are to expand our vision a little, we can infer the kind of stress the patient's family is going through.

There have been many cases of car accident victims who have gone more than a decade or two without proper treatment. Insomnia leads to heavy fatigue, and often patients will turn to sleeping medication to deal with the insomnia. This makes the patient very tired and sleepy almost all the time, and under such circumstances, even managing their own lives is hard enough without the added stress from the anxiety and depression. This often leads to mood swings, which gradually leads to familial dysfunction and even divorce.

As such, we can see the tremendous impact of a car accident on an individual and a family.

There are many who consider a light accident to be nothing, and this causes them to miss the prime window of treatment because even with a minor accident, the shock from the impact can still damage the body's internal structures. We have seen many cases where the patient reported symptoms a few days or even weeks after an accident. Authorized by ICBC, PolyCan's physiotherapist, kinesiologist, and TCM acupuncture therapists would love to help you out with your health issues.

Now the question is: how does acupuncture deal with the symptoms of an auto accident?

Before we explore how acupuncture deals with car accident-related illnesses, we must first understand how acupuncture works.

Acupuncture is a branch of traditional Chinese medicine. From a traditional practitioner's point of view, the human body can be viewed at different angles, one of which is the meridian system. Acupuncture is the practice of using needles to stimulate certain points along the meridian system. We refer to these points as acupuncture points, or acupoints. In layman's terms, the meridian system can be viewed as a network of pathways along the body, similar to the circulatory system. There are main paths and branches, which connect all of the body's organs. When the needle hits these acupoints, it sends information along the network to the site of pain and initiates the healing process.

In the field of pain management, there have been many studies that have proved the effectiveness of acupuncture as a treatment method for pain management. When the needle pierces the skin and hits the acupoint, signals will travel along the meridian network to the central nervous system and stimulate the bone marrow and brain stem, activating the nerves in various levels of the brain to trigger the body's built-in pain suppression system. This leads to the increased secretion of natural painkillers within the body and produces an anesthetic effect.

By using needles to stimulate specific points on the body, we can also use acupuncture to treat insomnia and anxiety/depression by raising 5-HT (serotonin) and 5-HIAA (the primary metabolite of serotonin) levels while simultaneously dropping norepinephrine and dopamine levels. The latter two are often the main cause of insomnia and anxiety in patients.

Benefits of acupuncture:

- Fast
  - From currently examined cases, most patients show signs of improvement after 1-2 treatment sessions
- Multiple effects
  - By using acupuncture, we can address multiple problems by selecting one set of acupoints for pain management, then selecting another set for insomnia. This allows us to treat multiple problems simultaneously.

Case study:

We received a patient who was in an accident for a second time last year. The patient displayed obvious traits of the car accident triad and reported head, shoulder, neck, waist, and leg pains. Upon examination, there were obvious signs of spinal disc herniation in the patient's 4<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> vertebrae. The patient reported trouble sleeping, and when sleep was achieved, it was shallow and easy to wake up from. The patient was nervous and anxious and had little control over mood swings. After the first needle, the patient reported a significant drop in pain level, and at the end of the treatment, the patient reported almost no pain and a significant improvement in sleep quality for the next three days. The patient's mood also drastically improved as a result.

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