

CLINICAL APPLICATION SLIDING CUPPING

by Zhang Hong

Concept

Sliding cupping is a form of cupping therapy in which the local area of pain, or the affected channels and points, are lubricated and the cup is applied and then slid up and down until the skin becomes hyperaemic.

Principle

Many diseases are caused by imbalance of yin and yang and stagnation of qi and blood. Sliding cupping therapy is able not only to affect specific acupuncture points but also channel pathways. It increases both the size of the area treated, as well as the potential therapeutic efficacy of a single cup. It can regulate yin and yang, dredge the channels, promote the flow of qi and blood, eliminate the pathogenic qi and harmonise the function of the zangfu.

Modern medicine holds that in the course of metabolism the body constantly eliminates waste. If metabolites are not eliminated in time, they will become pathogenic factors. Sliding cupping therapy can speed blood circulation, accelerate metabolism and improve the permeability of the skin, speeding elimination of wastes and toxins.

Sliding cupping therapy possesses the dual effects of cupping and massage and is wide in its range of application, for example, influenza due to both wind-cold and wind-heat evil can be drawn out.

The Bladder channel belongs to taiyang which dominates the surface of the entire body. It runs through the body from the head to the foot, whilst the channel qi of the five zang and six fu are all transmitted to the back-shu points of the Bladder channel. Sliding cupping therapy along the Bladder channel of the back can therefore regulate the channel qi of the five zang and six fu, and adjust the qi and blood of the whole body.

The Governing vessel (Du Mai) runs along the midline of the back and ascends to enter the brain. "Du" means viceroy, and the Governing vessel (where all the yang channels meet), has the function of governing the qi of all the yang



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channels. It is therefore known as "the sea of the yang channels" and "the viceroy of all the yang channels". Sliding cupping therapy along the Governing vessel on the back can therefore modulate the qi of all the yang channels and transport clear qi to the brain.

Method of operation

The patient adopts a prone position or sits with their back fully exposed. Lubricant is applied to the back, then a suitably-sized cup with a smooth edge is applied to the patient's back and slid to and fro repeatedly along the Bladder

channel and Governing vessel until the skin becomes congested with a purplish colour. Generally, the treatment is given once every 3 to 5 days. The speed and suction force of the sliding cupping should be varied according to the nature of the disease and the condition of the patient, i.e. less intense when treating children, the elderly, weak patients and those with thin skin and weak endurance, and stronger if the patient has a better condition and stronger endurance.

Indications

Respiratory system diseases

Sliding cupping can treat influenza, fever and cough etc. Whilst treating the entire Bladder channel and Governing vessel on the back, special attention should be given to points such as Dazhui DU-14, Dingchuan (M-BW-1), Fengmen BL-12, Feishu BL-13 and Shenshu BL-23. Sliding cupping is suitable for diseases due to both wind-cold and wind-heat.

Case example

A 32 year-old woman suffered from low fever for 3 months. She was hospitalised for one month and had comprehensive examinations without any definite diagnosis. After receiving the above treatment 3 times, her temperature was restored to normal.

Digestive system diseases

Due to its regulating function on the qi of the Spleen, Stomach, Liver and Gall Bladder, this method can treat such disorders as chronic gastritis, gastrointestinal diseases, indigestion in children, infantile malnutrition etc. Treatment should especially focus on points such as Pishu BL-20, Weishu BL-21 and Dachangshu BL-25.

Case example

A 7 year-old boy suffered from emaciation of the limbs, abdominal distention, anorexia, pale complexion and malnutrition with chronic indigestion due to deficiency of the Spleen and Stomach. After five treatments using the above method, his appetite increased, his complexion was ruddy, his limbs gradually thickened, his abdomen gradually shrank and his body weight increased. After 3 months, the patient's health was restored to normal.

Diseases of the five sense organs

This method can treat facial acne, congestion, swelling and pain of the eyes, sore throat, deafness and tinnitus etc. Fire is a yang pathogenic factor characterised by upward movement, and five-sense organ diseases are mainly due to excess fire of the body, moving and burning upwards to disturb the upper orifices. This treatment method can drain fire from the body, dredge qi and blood in the channels, and

restore balance of yin and yang. Treatment should especially focus on points such as Feishu BL-13, Ganshu BL-18, Pishu BL-20 and Weishu BL-21.

Case example

A 38 year-old man suffered from sudden deafness and tinnitus as a result an acute bout of anger. After a single treatment his symptoms were markedly reduced, and after two treatments he recovered entirely.

Lumbar pain

Lumbar pain is mostly caused by invasion of wind-cold-damp or strain. This therapy can be used to eliminate pathogens and regulate the channels. Treatment should mostly focus on the local area.

Case example

A 42-year-old woman had suffered acute back pain for one week. She was unable to work and had to rest at home. Her disease was diagnosed as attack of wind-cold whilst sleeping. After one treatment, her backache markedly improved and she was able to take part in normal activity. After two treatments the backache had disappeared completely.

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