

## Alternative to Treat Diarrheal Syndrome in Dogs Using Acupuncture and Moxibustion in Cuba

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### Abstract

A picture of digestive disorders (diarrhea) was diagnosed in a 6-year-old German Shepherd Dog with vomiting, diarrhea and lack of appetite, in the first presentations of her conventional treatment was applied. Because she was frequently ill, it was decided to change her medication for acupuncture treatment, to seek balance, harmonize her energy and the function of the stomach and spleen. I improved after 5 days, the vomiting and diarrhea disappeared and my appetite returned, so acupuncture could be considered for this treatment.

**Keywords:** Digestive Disorders; Diarrhea; Diarrhea Syndrome in Dogs; Acupuncture; Moxibustion

### Introduction and Case Report

On January 2, 2020, a 6-year-old female German Shepherd presented for consultation with a clinical picture of loss of appetite, watery diarrhea, weight loss, sadness, after ingesting large quantities of a pre-meat product made to which she was not used to.

Laya was easily tired, cold limbs. She received drug therapy for seven days where she recovered according to her owner.

In February she was fed again with pre-prepared meat by-products and began to present digestive disorders, vomiting and diarrhea with food remains during this time, she presented chills, sudden pains, she preferred to lie down in the sun, sleepy, lassitude, cold extremities, loss of appetite and weight loss, a rectal temperature was taken and there was no fever.

Her owner is concerned about oral drug therapy because she has suffered from digestive problems since she was little, so she valued acupuncture therapy.

### Western exam and diagnosis

During the examination, she had a good general condition, with a normal temperature of 38°C, a heart rate of 70 beats per minute and a respiratory rate of 25 breaths per minute. On auscultation of the chest there were no pathological sounds and frequent rumbling sounds from the abdomen. The dog had a history of frequent digestive disorders. These disorders were treated with drug therapies (digestive tonics, appetite stimulant, and antimicrobial therapy).

Laboratory analysis was indicated which in the first presentation was positive for salmonella and in the second there were no microorganisms.

### Oriental exam and diagnosis

The patient showed low energy and had a calm personality, but she looked concerned; Poor attention and affection, fire type constitution that she was changing as time went by due to the health problems that she frequently presented, she was sad and worried.

Upon palpation of the Shu and Mo points of the spleen and stomach they were tender; the pulse weak and slow, and the tongue pale and flabby. The owner said that she had a tendency to eat more than she should and that later it caused vomiting and diarrhea, her lifestyle was very stressful as she was trained to detect drugs in an airport, she drank little water and spent her time sleeping near the hot.

This patient was showing patterns of cold [1] and deficiency of the qi of the spleen and stomach [2], since diarrhea with rest of food shows difficulty in the transport and transformation of food, indicating acupuncture therapy for dissipate the cold and tone the qi together with a change of environment, lifestyle and nutrition.

### Treatment

During the 6 years he was frequently ill with digestive disorders, being treated with drug therapy and the owner decided to start acupuncture therapy, allowing him a normal life.

### Point selection

The TCM diagnosis is of cold that invades the stomach and blocks the flow of qi, in addition it affects the yang function of the spleen with the result of a damage of the food transformation so the pathogen must be expelled and the spleen qi must be toned and stomach.

### Points used

ST36 (Zusanli) located 3 cm distal to ST35 distal to the tibial tuberosity and lateral to the cranial border of the tibia in a depression approximately in the middle of the cranial tibial muscle.

Use. It tones the qi of the stomach, harmonizes, strengthens the spleen, regulates and strengthens the flow of energy and blood, regulates the ying energy, tones the general energy, calms the shen [3-5].

CV12 (Zhogwan) Located midway between the umbilicus and the xiphoid process in the midline.

Use: Tone up the stomach and spleen qi with moisture, resolve the cold moisture in the middle burner [4-6].

ST25 (Tian Shu) located lateral to the center of the navel midway between the navel and the nipple line.

Use. Heats the cold (moxa), regulates the stomach, spleen and intestine, stops diarrhea [3,5-7].

BL20 (Pishu) located 1 cun lateral to the caudal border of the spinous process of the 12 thoracic vertebra [3,5-7].

Use: Spleen back shu point, tones the spleen qi.

BL21 (Weishu) Located 1 cun lateral to the caudal border of the 13<sup>th</sup> thoracic vertebra.

Use: Stomach back shu point, tones the stomach and spleen qi [3,5-7].

CV6 (Qihai). Located 1.5 cun caudal to the umbilicus, in the midline.

Use: Sea of qi, tones the spleen and stomach qi.

In addition, the lifestyle, nutrition, environment and stress must be changed, which we consider to be the root of the problem.

### Main treatments and results

Acupuncture therapy together with the change in lifestyle, nutrition, environment, stress was eliminating the symptoms and with it the diarrhea that was the result of the action of an external pathogen (cold) that had blocked the flow of qi and together with a deficiency of the qi of the spleen and stomach [1,2] that hindered the transport and transformation of food that could also be given by the lifestyle of this patient who is very stressed since his job consists of detecting drugs at an airport.

Acupuncture treatments began on the second presentation of the patient, taking into account the patient's symptoms and the use of the points. ST36 (MOXA) was selected to harmonize and tone the stomach qi, in addition to being the master point of gastrointestinal disorders, it calms the Shen [3-5]. CV12, resolves the cold - humidity in the middle burner and tones the qi of the spleen and stomach [4-6]. ST25 (MOXA), warms the cold, regulates the intestines, stops diarrhea [5,6]. BL20, spleen back shu point, tones the qi of the spleen and stomach, warms the cold [6,8]. BL21, stomach back shu point, dries moisture, regulates stomach and spleen, needles heated with moxa [6,8,9]. VC6, sea of qi, tones the qi of the spleen and stomach [6,8,9]. The needles were applied for 20 minutes, and the moxa for 15 minutes.

The western treatment applied in the first presentation was a parasympatholytic (Atropine 0.03 mL/kg) every 12 hours until the diarrhea ceased, since it controls motility. Chlorpromazine 0.1 ml every 12 hours (vomiting center depressant). Chloramphenicol 30 ml x Kg was used as antimicrobial in the first presentation since in the laboratory analysis in this case it showed the presence of *Salmonella*. It was hydrated with lactated Ringer to replace the loss of electrolytes (200 ml every 12 hours). Vitamin B12 every other day to avoid anemia that Chloramphenicol can cause. Vitamin B Complex to restore appetite. Antidiarrheal was not applied since its use is contraindicated in infectious diarrhea. In addition, the change in nutrition was indicated, observing improvement after seven days [10-12].

### Discussion

The points used with this patient were to evaluate acupuncture therapy in cold patterns [1] and deficiencies of stomach and spleen qi [2]. Cold is a pathogenic factor of yin, it is likely to consume yang and therefore will lead to the body not being able to keep warm, resulting in chills, cold limbs, diarrhea with undigested food and a pattern of qi deficiency of the stomach and spleen in which the patient has loss of appetite, prolonged diarrhea, pale tongue, slow pulse, weakness in the extremities, due to poor transformation and transport of nutrients from the spleen to the extremities, laxity showing poor transformation of food [2], taking into account these symptoms, acupuncture and moxa were applied to some acupuncture points. Moxibustion according to TCM makes blood and energy circulate well, neutralizes cooling, relieves pain, makes the meridian work and has action on cold diseases [13,14].

The points used are aimed at harmonizing the energy and function of the stomach and spleen, as well as dissipating the pathogen (cold). Consecutively acupuncture and moxa were applied to point ST36 (Zusanli), taking into account that this is the master point of gastrointestinal problems, which in addition to toning the stomach qi and strengthening the spleen; regulates yin energy and tones general energy [3-5]. CV12 (Zhongwan) point, solve the cold-humidity in the middle burner. The CV6 point (Qihai) which is the sea of qi, as well as the back shu points of the spleen and stomach: BL20 (Pishu) to tone the spleen qi and BL21 (Weishu) to tone the stomach qi. Point ST25 (Tianshu) was applied moxa for 15 minutes to warm the cold, regulate the spleen, stomach and intestine and stop diarrhea [13,15].

In addition to acupuncture and moxibustion therapy, the root of the problem was corrected by indicating to the owner the change in lifestyle, environment and nutrition, observing on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day, symptoms of improvement and on the 5<sup>th</sup> day he already had a normal behavior.

For the above reasons, we consider that acupuncture and moxibustion therapy can be considered for the treatment of digestive disorders (diarrhea in dogs).

According to Western medicine, there are several predisposing and determining causes of diarrhea that cause increased intestinal motility causing fluid stools with the consequent loss of undigested food and fluids that complicate the patient with weight loss and dehydration, assessing the Symptoms that the patient presented in the first consultation, a parasympathetic (Atropine 0.03 mL/kg) was indicated every 12 hours until the diarrhea ceased since it controls motility. Chloropromatization 0.01 mL/kg every 12 hours since the laboratory analysis showed the presence of *Salmonella*. It was hydrated with lactated ringer to replace the loss of electrolytes (200 ml every 12 hours). Vitamin B12 (Cyanocobalamin) every other day to avoid anemia. Vitamin B complex to restore appetite. The antidiarrheal was not applied, since in case of diarrhea being infectious is contraindicated; In addition, the change in nutrition was indicated, observing improvement in the 5<sup>th</sup> treatment day [7,11,12,16].

We consider it appropriate to point out that acupuncture therapy has advantages over conventional therapy, since it has no side effects, it is less expensive and the patient's recovery is quick.

### Conclusion

The alternative treatment was effective in treating the diarrheal syndrome and improved the general state of health of the canine patient; being cheaper and free of side effects.

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