

Exploration and Application of Holographic Traditional Chinese Medicine and Auricular Point Diagnosis and Treatment Techniques

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Abstract

Objective: Through in-depth study of the classic work of traditional Chinese medicine, Huangdi Neijing, we aim to conduct profound exploration and research on holographic traditional Chinese medicine, form a unique theoretical system, and apply it in combination with clinical practice to auricular point diagnosis and treatment techniques. **Conclusion:** Auricular point diagnosis and treatment techniques consist of two parts: auricular point diagnosis and auricular point treatment. The primary concept advocated is “preventive treatment of disease”, which enables rapid disease diagnosis and timely intervention and treatment, guiding people on the path to health without confusion and truly achieving “preventing trouble before it arises”.

Keywords

Holographic traditional Chinese medicine; Auricular point diagnosis and treatment techniques; Auricular point diagnosis; Auricular point treatment; Preventive treatment of disease

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1. Holographic traditional Chinese medicine theory

1.1. Concept of holographic traditional Chinese medicine

Holographic traditional Chinese medicine holds that the human body is an organic whole, with various tissues and organs interconnected and influencing each other. Just as celestial bodies in the universe interact to form a harmonious whole, every part of the human body contains

information about the whole. From a single leaf, one can glimpse the mysteries of the entire forest; from a single ear or palm, one can discern the health status of the entire body. This holistic perspective provides new insights and methods for disease prevention, diagnosis, and treatment.

1.2. Significance of holographic traditional Chinese medicine

By observing holographic reflex zones in the human body,

such as auricular points and foot reflex zones, we can detect potential health risks in advance and make timely adjustments and interventions, thereby achieving the goal of “preventive treatment of disease”. This not only alleviates patient suffering and reduces medical burdens but also effectively improves the overall health level of the population, enabling people to “prevent trouble before it arises” on the path to health^[1].

2. Theory of holographic element special zones

2.1. Special zones of Yin-Yang holographic elements

In “Plain Questions: On Preserving Life and Maintaining the Complete Form”, it is stated, “Human life, in its tangible form, cannot be separated from Yin and Yang”. “Spiritual Pivot: On Longevity, Short Life, Strength, and Weakness” also says, “Thus, there is Yin and Yang internally, and there is also Yin and Yang externally. Internally, the five viscera represent Yin, while the six bowels represent Yang; externally, the sinews and bones represent Yin, while the skin represents Yang”. Yin and Yang holography exists in every part of the human body. Therefore, traditional Chinese medicine can grasp the changes of Yin and Yang throughout the body through the “three-inch pulse” and “five-inch tongue”

2.2. Special zones of meridian holographic elements

The meridians in the human body exist holographically, and similarly, there is meridian Yin-Yang holography. Each acupoint, to a greater or lesser extent, contains information about the entire meridian system. Each acupoint is like a window to the whole body, through which one can glimpse the holography of the entire system. For example, the philtrum can be used for emergency resuscitation.

2.3. Special zones of Zang-Xiang holographic elements

Zang refers to the internal organs, while Xiang refers to the physiological manifestations on the exterior. Zhang Jingyue, a renowned physician of the Ming Dynasty, said, “Xiang means image. The Zang organs reside internally,

while their images are manifested externally, hence the term Zang-Xiang”. “Whatever exists internally will surely manifest externally”. Therefore, from the perspective of Zang-Xiang theory, every holographic element in the human body contains Zang-Xiang holography. For instance, the pulse condition at the Cun region (a specific pulse-taking point on the wrist) can reveal the holographic state of the body’s visceral Qi.

3. Human life information on the ears

3.1. The life code discovered by humankind

In 1956, artifacts from the Tang Dynasty were unearthed in the Astana region of Turpan, Xinjiang. The “Fu Xi and Nü Wa Diagram” bears a striking resemblance to the DNA double helix model proposed by American scientist Watson and British scientist Crick in 1953. Genes decode the secrets of life, proving that every cell in the human body stores genetic and holistic information about the individual. Genes underpin the fundamental structure and functions of life, storing all information related to the processes of race, blood type, gestation, growth, and apoptosis. The interdependence of environment and heredity orchestrates vital physiological processes such as life propagation, cell division, and protein synthesis. All life phenomena in organisms, including birth, growth, decline, illness, aging, and death, are related to genes, which also serve as the internal factors determining life health.

3.2. Life information on the ears

As an important organ of the human body, the ears also contain vital life information. Ear acupoints are significant information points on the ears that are integral to the whole body. Therefore, one can gain insights into the overall condition of a person by examining local areas, which aligns with the holistic perspective of Traditional Chinese Medicine thinking^[2].

4. Exploration of auricular points

4.1. The origin of auricular points

The “Zubi Shiyi Mai Jiujing” (Foot-Arm Eleven Meridian Moxibustion Classic) and “YinYang Shiyi

Mai Jiujing" (Yin-Yang Eleven Meridian Moxibustion Classic), unearthed from the Han Dynasty Tomb No. 3 at Mawangdui in Changsha, Hunan Province in 1973, are the earliest known monographs on meridian theory and moxibustion therapy. The "YinYang Shiyi Mai Jiujing" records the "auricular meridian" that connects the ear with the upper limbs, eyes, cheeks, and throat. Upon studying the "Huangdi Neijing" (The Yellow Emperor's Classic of Internal Medicine), it is found that there are at least more than 30 references to the experiences and theories of treating diseases with ear acupuncture^[3].

4.2. Formation mechanism of auricular points

The formation mechanism of auricular points is a complex and exquisite process. The human body is an organic whole, with the meridian system running throughout the entire body and Qi and blood circulating continuously within the meridians. The ear, as a convergence point of meridian Qi and blood, is interconnected with the meridians throughout the body. When a certain internal organ or tissue experiences pathological changes, the circulation of Qi and blood in the meridians will be affected. This change will be transmitted through the meridians to the corresponding auricular points, resulting in reactions at these points.

4.3. Ancient research on auricular points

In the Tang Dynasty, Sun Simiao recorded in his work "Essential Formulas Worth a Thousand Gold Pieces" that "the auricular point located on the transverse beam above the ear opening can be treated with acupuncture and moxibustion for conditions such as jaundice, epidemic febrile diseases, and other ailments". Based on his personal experiences and observations, he further noted that "those with firm ears have strong kidneys, and strong kidneys are resistant to diseases, thus preventing lower back pain" and "those with thin ears have fragile kidneys, which are susceptible to heat, leading to tinnitus". Medical practitioners in the Ming Dynasty provided even clearer and more detailed experiences and records regarding auricular diagnosis. Yang Jizhou of the Ming Dynasty stated in his work "Compendium of Acupuncture and Moxibustion" that "the ear apex auricular point, located at the tip of the ear, can be found by rolling the ear upwards to locate the tip, and is used to treat eye

conditions such as cataracts". Wang Kentang, also from the Ming Dynasty, further specified in his work "A Guide to Clinical Practice with Medical Records" that "those with rosy ear wheels are alive, while those with yellow, black, or blue and dry ear wheels are dead" and "those with large ears have large kidneys, while those with small ears have small kidneys". This aligns with the principle that "what is internal will manifest externally", indicating that internal ailments will inevitably be reflected on the external auricle.

4.4. Modern research on auricular points

Modern medical research has revealed that the ear has an extremely rich nerve distribution and extensive neural connections with various parts of the body. The close relationship between the ear and the body's internal organs and meridians resemble that of an inverted fetus. In 1956, Dr. Paul Nogier of France published a diagram of auricular acupuncture therapy based on the concept of an inverted fetus^[4]. In December 1958, Mr. Ye Xiaolin published a diagram of an inverted embryo in the Shanghai Journal of Traditional Chinese Medicine. In 1999, a new diagram of auricular points on the back of the ear was presented at the Academic Exchange Conference of the American Association of Chinese Medicine. Huang Lichun systematically organized auricular points related to the five internal organs and six viscera, the endocrine system, the nervous system, specific points, points on the back of the ear, and others. She also proposed concepts such as points, regions, grooves, lines, and meridians, which hold significant importance for the qualitative diagnosis of auricular points^[2,5].

4.5. Several hypotheses regarding the formation of auricular points

Based on repeated study of ancient texts and years of clinical practice, this study proposes several hypotheses regarding the formation of auricular points, as detailed below:

4.5.1. Holographic meridian mesh theory

(1) The mesh-like structure of meridians

Meridians crisscross the human body, forming a three-dimensional network resembling "mesh". Different levels of meridians (such as channels,

collaterals, and minute collaterals) interweave like threads in a mesh, covering the entire body. This mesh-like structure provides a material basis for the storage, transmission, and exchange of information.

(2) Distribution and transmission of holographic Information Each local area of the human body (such as the hands and face) serves as a holographic unit, containing the overall vital information. The meridian meshwork, functioning as information channels, transmits local holographic information throughout the body while also feeding back overall information to each local area. For instance, stimulating acupoints on the feet can regulate the functions of corresponding internal organs through the meridian meshwork, demonstrating the transmission and regulation of holographic information.

(3) Functions and regulatory mechanisms The holographic meridian meshwork system possesses functions such as regulating the circulation of Qi and blood in the human body, balancing Yin and Yang, and defending against external pathogens. When a pathological change occurs in a certain part of the human body, abnormal local holographic information is transmitted throughout the body via the meridian meshwork, leading to overall functional disorders. Conversely, stimulating specific acupoints or holographic units can also correct abnormal information and restore bodily balance through the meridian meshwork.

4.5.2. The theory of key-lock correspondence points in holographic auricular acupoints

(1) Key-lock correspondence points in auricular acupoints

The “correspondence points” present in auricular acupoints are crucial nodes for precise regulation between local and overall areas. Their structural and functional characteristics resemble those of a “lock cylinder”, while appropriate stimulation methods (such as intensity and frequency) act as “keys”. When the two match, an efficient

regulatory pathway is activated, akin to “one key for one lock”. The three core characteristics of correspondence points are specificity, sensitivity, and dynamism.

(2) Implementation pathway of lock-and-key regulation—signal recognition

The trigger points, through their unique nerve endings and chemoreceptors, identify specific stimulus signals (such as the physical parameters of pressure or electrical stimulation), much like a “lock cylinder” recognizing the serrations of a “key”. Subsequently, pathway activation occurs, with the stimulus signals triggering nerve impulses in the trigger points that travel through conducting pathways directly to the regulatory center of the target organ. After integrating the signals, the center initiates a “lock-opening” effect.

4.5.3. Holographic auricular acupoint neurohumoral gate theory

(1) Structure and function of the “gate”

Peripheral Gate: Located in the dorsal horn of the spinal nerve or the trigeminal nucleus, it inhibits the transmission of pathological signals (such as pain and inflammatory signals) through nerve impulses transmitted from auricular acupoints. Central Gate: Situated in the thalamus and cerebral cortex, it regulates emotions and autonomic nervous function by integrating auricular acupoint signals with somatic/visceral information, indirectly influencing pathological processes. Humoral Gate: It extends and amplifies the “gate” effect through humoral factors released by the neuroendocrine network, maintaining the continuity of regulation.

(2) Holographic correspondence and specificity of the gate

The holographic distribution of auricular acupoints determines the targeting of the “gate”: Stimulating the “stomach area” of the auricular acupoint can activate the regulatory gate of gastrointestinal smooth muscle through the vagus nerve-medulla oblongata pathway, improving dyspepsia. Stimulating the “Shenmen acupoint”

(corresponding to the central nervous system) can close the central gate of pain signals by releasing endorphins, alleviating anxiety-related pain. This specificity stems from the homology of auricular acupoint and corresponding organ in terms of embryonic development and neural innervation, that is, the “bioinformation resonance” between the holographic unit and the whole.

5. The relationship between auricular points and meridians, Zang-Fu organs, nerves, and the eight trigrams

5.1. The relationship between auricular points and meridians

The “Ling Shu · Hai Lun” records that “the twelve regular meridians belong internally to the Zang-Fu organs and externally connect to the limbs and joints”. The meridian system is distributed throughout all parts of the human body. Among the eight extraordinary meridians, the Governor Vessel is the “sea of Yang meridians”, governing all Yang meridians and regulating the Qi of the entire body’s Yang meridians, while the Conception Vessel is the “sea of Yin meridians”. Together, the Governor and Conception Vessels regulate limb movement and the opening and closing of the eyelids. The Yin Link and Yang Link Vessels, respectively, maintain the balance between the six Yin and six Yang meridians, thereby integrating the body’s tissues and organs into an organic whole.

5.2. The relationship between auricular points and Zang-Fu organs

The ears have a close relationship with the five Zang and six Fu organs and serve as an important connection between the body’s surface and internal organs. When there is dysfunction in the Zang-Fu organs and stagnation in the meridians, various positive reaction points appear on the corresponding auricular points, primarily characterized by pain sensitivity, low electrical resistance, and high electrical conductivity. These reactions provide a theoretical basis for disease diagnosis.

5.3. The relationship between auricular points and nerves

The auricle is rich in nerves, including the great auricular nerve and lesser occipital nerve from the cervical plexus of the spinal nerves; branches of the auriculotemporal nerve, facial nerve, glossopharyngeal nerve, and vagus nerve from the cranial nerves; as well as the sympathetic nerve traveling with the external carotid artery. The four pairs of cranial nerves and two pairs of spinal nerves distributed on the auricle are all connected to the central nervous system. For example, the auriculotemporal nerve distributed on the auricle is a branch of the mandibular division of the trigeminal nerve. In addition to controlling mastication and head and face sensations, it also connects to the spinal cord. The facial nerve, apart from controlling facial expression muscle movement, also manages some glands.

5.4. The relationship between auricular points and the eight trigrams

The positioning of auricular Eight Trigrams is based on the “Holographic Auricular Point Medicine-I Ching Homology Theory”, following the Eight Trigrams behind the ear for localization. There is a corresponding relationship between the morphology of the auricle and the images of the Eight Trigrams, which can be divided into eight Eight Trigram regions. Each region not only corresponds to specific internal organs but also embodies the attributes of the Eight Trigrams. As a holographic microcosm of the human body, auricular points exhibit an inherent unity in their distribution patterns and functional characteristics with the theories of Yin and Yang, the Eight Trigrams, and the Five Elements in the I Ching. Together, they form a holistic cognitive framework for understanding human life activities.

6. Auricular point diagnosis

6.1. Principles of auricular point diagnosis

Auricular point diagnosis is primarily based on the principles of holism and holography in the human body. As a microcosm of the human body, auricular points can reflect internal pathological changes. In a healthy individual, auricular points exhibit a rosy color, full shape, and no abnormal reactions such as tenderness. However,

when the body is in a sub-healthy state or a specific area is diseased, corresponding auricular points will exhibit positive reactions, such as tenderness, deformation, discoloration, desquamation, etc. For example, individuals experiencing long-term mental stress and insufficient sleep may exhibit slight tenderness or color changes in auricular point regions corresponding to the heart, liver, and kidneys^[5].

6.2. Auricular point diagnosis method

Auricular point diagnosis, abbreviated as auricular diagnosis, is a method of auxiliary diagnosis based on abnormal reactions observed at auricular points. Practice has proven that when there is a disease in the body or internal organs, abnormal changes in color and shape, as well as alterations such as tenderness sensitivity and low skin resistance, often occur at corresponding sites on the auricle.

6.3. Methods of auricular point diagnosis

First, inspection; second, palpation; third, audiometry; and fourth, syndrome differentiation. Inspection refers to the visual examination method; palpation refers to the tactile examination method; audiometry involves using an auricular point detector to measure changes in the bioelectricity of auricular points, serving as a reference for the auxiliary diagnosis of somatic and visceral diseases; syndrome differentiation means combining clinical manifestations to determine treatment based on syndrome differentiation.

6.4. Advantages of auricular point diagnosis

Auricular point diagnosis is characterized by its simplicity, rapidity, and accuracy, providing an important reference for clinical diagnosis. It helps in the early

detection of diseases and timely treatment.

7. Auricular point therapy

7.1. Types of diseases treated by auricular point therapy

Auricular point therapy can treat over 200 types of diseases, covering internal medicine, surgery, gynecology, pediatrics, ophthalmology and otorhinolaryngology, orthopedics, and other fields. It can not only treat functional diseases but also organic diseases, as well as diseases caused by viruses, bacteria, parasites, etc. It is also used for disease prevention, beauty care, health maintenance, anti-aging, smoking cessation, alcohol cessation, drug detoxification, and more.

7.2. Methods of auricular point therapy

There are more than 20 auricular point stimulation methods used for disease prevention and treatment, including auricular point plaster therapy, filiform needle therapy, needle-embedding therapy, electroacupuncture therapy on auricular points, bloodletting at the ear apex, plum-blossom needle therapy on auricular points, auricular point massage therapy, auricular point incision therapy, auricular point drug injection therapy, auricular moxibustion therapy, auricular clip therapy, auricular point pressing pellet therapy, etc.

Auricular point therapy is a concrete practice of the Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) concept of “holistic regulation and treatment”. By stimulating corresponding acupoints on the auricle, it achieves the effects of “dredging meridians, regulating viscera, and balancing Yin and Yang”. It has significant advantages, especially in the adjuvant treatment of functional diseases and chronic diseases, and is worthy of further research and promotion.

Disclosure statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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