

## The Acupuncture Treatment of Pediatric Night-crying

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Night crying<sup>1</sup> is a frequently seen illness in children of around six months of age. As the report below indicates, the author [achieved] satisfactory results by puncturing *Zhong Chong* (Per 9) in the treatment of 100 cases [of night crying].

### Clinical data:

Among the 100 cases, 58 were male and 42 were female. The age ranged from 30 days to 3 years. Eighty-seven cases were less than two years old. [Their main] symptoms were crying in the middle of the night, fright jerking<sup>2</sup> while sleeping,

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<sup>1</sup> Night crying (*ye ti*) is defined in *A Practical Dictionary of Chinese Medicine* by Feng and Wiseman (Paradigm Publications, 1998) as persistent abnormal crying of infants in the night and is most commonly due to spleen cold or heart heat. The spleen cold pattern commonly manifests with a green-blue or white complexion, cold limbs, no desire for milk or food, and bending of the waist when crying (pumping the legs against the abdomen). The heart heat pattern manifests with a red facial complexion, warm hands and abdomen, warm breath, vexation and agitation, aversion to lights and fire, and crying in supine posture. Night crying in Chinese medicine is the traditional disease for what in the West is referred to as colic.

<sup>2</sup> The word ‘fright’ in fright jerking is used to explain the type of jerking or spasm the child experiences and does not

heart vexation, fear of heat, thirst, red eyes, a greenish blue facial complexion, red lips, more severe crying upon seeing light, constipated and bound stools, short, reddish urination, and a greenish blue, purple, or normal finger vein. [Children] crying at night due to causes such as hunger, urination, fever, or other illnesses were eliminated [from this study].

### Treatment method:

The treatment method was to extract a drop of blood with a three-edged needle from *Zhong Chong* (Per 9), located at the tip of the middle finger. After disinfecting the area, the doctor pricked [the point] using a fine three-edged needle or a size 5 hypodermic needle. The puncture was performed quickly with an oblique slant about 1 *fen*<sup>3</sup> deep. Then, 3-5 drops of blood were squeezed out. For the most part, crying of the children stopped a minute or so after this treatment.

### Therapeutic effects:

Treatment effect criteria: Cure [meant that] the child’s sleep was calm and quiet. Because [there

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necessarily mean that the child experienced excessive fright prior to the jerking; rather, fright jerking refers to jerking or spasm of the child as if frightened. Hence, fright is used as an analogy for the spasms. However, because children’s spirits are immature and timid, their jerking may well be due to excessive stimuli causing fright. Also interesting (especially with respect to the acupuncture point selection) is the fact that fright is governed by the liver (terminal yin). This is so because fright, like wind, causes spasm, since the sinews (muscles) of a person subjected to a frightening stimulus will tense. Hence, wind and fright both manifest with hypertonicity of sinews, which are governed by the liver.

<sup>3</sup> One *fen* is equal to one tenth of a body inch, or *cun*.

exist different] objective reasons that lead to crying at night, once these requirements were satisfied, [the child] fell asleep quietly and had thick [*i.e.*, firm, but] soft stools, clear urination, a normal finger vein, and a red and moist facial complexion. A turn for the better [meant that] there was still occasional fright jerking and fright crying, but that the accompanying signs had lessened.

Out of this group, 90 cases were cured after one treatment, eight cases were cured after two treatments, and two cases were cured after three treatments. This yielded an efficacy rate of 100%.

### **Discussion:**

Children manifest with a surplus of the heart and liver and an insufficiency of the spleen. The heart governs the spirit brilliance, belongs to yang, and

governs fire. [Therefore], heart fire is easily engendered. If [such heart] fire harasses the spirit brilliance, then there is vexation and agitation. Children's spirit qi is insufficient and heart qi is timid and weak. Particular noises and strong external stimuli lead to the heart spirit not being calm and the spirit mind not being quiet. Thus, crying arises. *Zhong Chong* belongs to the hand jue yin pericardium channel. It is this channel which is the point of exit of qi and blood. [Talking] on channels, [the author of the *Ling Shu* says:] "If the illness is in the viscera, use the well point." (*Ling Shu [Spiritual Pivot]*, "*Sun Qi Yi Ri Fen Wei Si Shi*"). If evil heat affects the pericardium, then bleeding its well point can be used to clear its heat and drain its fire, calm the heart and quiet the spirit. This treatment method is simple and convenient and is safe and easy to perform. [Thus] its application deserves to be popularized.

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