**Shock wave acupuncture**

An option for treating **coxarthrosis and gonarthrosis**

*CONSTANCE* The principle behind acupuncture, the stimulation of points on the body surface to influence deep-seated diseases, is one of the oldest methods of treatment in all of medicine and has been known in different forms in all cultures. Our traditional medicine is also familiar with similar techniques.

S **cientifically speaking, it involves the stimulation of pressure, temperature or pain receptors in the skin and the tissues beneath it, which are thought to induce reflex responses in other regions of the body.** The most accurate mapping of the body. The most accurate mapping of the body surface to influence deep-seated diseases, is one of the oldest methods of treatment in all of medicine and has been known in different forms in all cultures. Our traditional medicine is also familiar with similar techniques.

Shock waves are a new form of therapy for which medical uses emerged only 30 years ago. Their first application was the disinfection of kidney stones. For some years now, new techniques have been available for generating shock waves using far smaller devices which enable ‘gentler’ waves — known as ballistic shock waves — to be produced. I had the notion that ballistic shock waves could also be highly suitable for exerting pulsating pressure on acupuncture points. Perhaps the pressure receptors of certain acupuncture points would respond better to this kind of stimulation than to needles.

This method would also be less painful. In 2002, Swiss-based manufacturer STORZ MEDICAL provided me with a device that was, to my specifications, equipped with a particularly small shock transmitter. This enabled me to direct shock waves onto very small areas of skin and the underlying tissue. The method was complemented by the additional stimulation of peripheral acupuncture points with needles, in line with traditional theory on distant points. Using this device, therefore, I developed a new method of treatment combining ancient knowledge of acupuncture with the new technique of shock wave therapy.


Both studies revealed that shock wave acupuncture was more efficacious than simple needle acupuncture. The main impact: contractures of the joint system could be relieved more easily. Joint mobility also improved, thus also enhancing the scope for physiotherapy and training. These patients diagnosed with incipient coxarthrosis benefited the most. In these cases, there was lasting improvement or even complete freedom from pain after 12 treatments, if not before. In older patients with advanced osteoarthritis, however, there was often no alternative to arthroplastic intervention. With gonarthrosis, too, the best outcomes were observed in younger patients suffering from postoperative restriction in mobility of the knee joint, for example.

However, it became evident from further observations that shock wave acupuncture is not a suitable treatment where joints are inflamed or excessively irritated. Needle acupuncture is far superior in such cases. Over the last ten years, in more than 1,000 treatments, I have not encountered any significant side effects. This is undoubtedly due to the ‘gentleness’ of the method. As I recently published, however, a number of other applications for this technique have been discovered (10 Jahre Akupunktur mit Stoßwellen, 10 years of acupuncture with shock waves – An option for treating coxarthrosis and gonarthrosis). 

Not only can lumbago, cervical syndrome, herl spur and other forms of tendinitis be treated highly effectively, but also asthma, dry coughs and poorly healing wounds. Interest in this method is now growing, as indicated by the increasing number of enquiries from patients and the abundance of Internet references – to other practitioners as well. I would be delighted if I have succeeded in adding a string to our collective therapeutic bow.

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