

氣 Medical Qigong – 功 An Innovative Treatment for Hypertension

By Dr Seth Lefkowitz

In developed countries, hypertension is the number one morbidity factor. Hypertension, the medical term for high blood pressure, is defined as a consistently elevated systolic pressure exceeding 140 mmHg with a diastolic pressure over 90 mmHg.

Chronic high blood pressure leads to death from heart and blood vessel diseases, and is linked to kidney failure, abnormal thickening of the heart muscle, and brain damage.

Allopathic treatments for high blood pressure include aerobic exercise, weight reduction, reduced salt intake and medications.

Despite the abundance of evidence regarding the risk factors associated with hypertension, according to the Society of Geriatric Cardiology, "fewer than 25% of individuals with hypertension >65 years old are being treated effectively. A major new effort is needed to increase the percentage of older individuals who are receiving appropriate treatment for high blood pressure."

The Traditional Chinese Medicine treatment known as Medical Qigong is now being recognized by allopathic medicine as an innovative and highly successful complementary treatment for hyperactive patients to meet that need. Medical Qigong combines breathing techniques, postural movements, spiritual intent and harmonization of Qi energy within the body to reverse the effects of hypertension. Clinical research on medical applications of Qigong has shown that Qigong practice restores normal body functions in people with chronic conditions. Qigong helps the body to heal itself.

Medical Qigong Overview

Medical Qigong views the human body as containing a vital protective field of energy called *Wei Qi*. The *Wei Qi* energy field originates from the internal organs and radiates through the external tissues and out to a protective field around the body. The *Wei Qi* field protects the body from toxic external pathogens, whether environmental, physical, or emotional traumas. Negative interaction with the *Wei Qi*

field creates holes in the matrix of energy field, and when left untreated, allow toxins and disease to take hold in the organs and body tissues.

In Traditional Chinese Medicine, a system of channels exist that integrates all the body's separate parts and functions into a unified organism. The *Qi* travels along these channels as energetic rivers. When the *Qi* is flowing unencumbered there is a state of health. When a channel loses its balance, the function of that channel and its corresponding organ exhibits an imbalance as either excess or deficient. It is necessary to take corrective action to regulate the *Qi* and bring harmony to the energetic *Wei Qi* field and the organs. When an organ is deficient, the corrective Qigong treatment is to tonify, strengthen and regulate the *Qi* energy. If an organ is excess the corrective Qigong is to purge the excess, tonify and regulate the *Qi* energy.

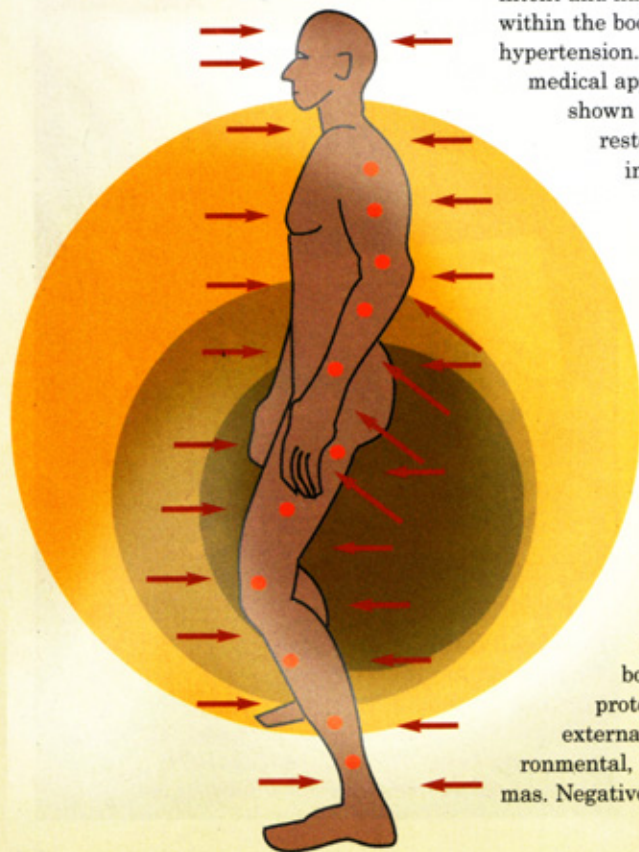
Deficient Kidney Yin and Excess Liver Yang Imbalance

In the case of a hypertensive patient, the heart is impacted as a result of an imbalance of Deficient Kidney Yin and Excess Liver Yang. The hypertension manifests from excessive stress and overthinking, which lead to the Deficient Kidney. As a result the patient craves salty foods. The salty diet creates a rennin imbalance in the kidney, which gives rise to the Deficient Kidney. When the body experiences emotional tension, adrenaline is released, heart rate speeds up, blood vessels then narrow and blood pressure increases. With the consumption of a fat-laden diet, the Liver organ is overburdened, a build-up of plaque occurs, blood vessel electricity is reduced, and the patient experiences high blood pressure.

If the Kidney Yin is Deficient, it fails to properly nourish the Liver Yin and thus leads to the hyperactive Liver Yang. In addition to hypertension, the patient also manifests feelings of fullness in the head, daydreaming headaches, dizziness, tinnitus, insomnia and dysphoria with feverish sensations in the chest.

Medical Qigong Treatment

A Doctor of Medical Qigong treats hypertension with a sequence of techniques to purge and cleanse the Excess Liver Yang energy. Next, *Qi* emission is directed to tonify the insufficient Kidney Yin energy. It is important to open and lead the stagnant unprocessed emotions



to the patients lower Dantian while rooting their Qi. Short inhalation breaths and long exhalation breaths facilitate this process, as well as showing the patient an image that they are floating in warm, calm water pouring down over their head, torso, extremities and feet. The Qigong Doctor then completes the treatment by regulating the Yin and Yang energies into a balanced state.

The Qigong Doctor may prescribe self-therapy via meditations, toning specific resonating sounds into the organs, and Qigong exercises. Additionally, the Qigong Doctor may prescribe adjustments to the patient's diet to facilitate decreased hypertension through avoidance of red meats, dairy products, animal fats, coconut products, sugar, eggs, baked flour products, deep-fried foods, hot spices, alcohol, coffee, tea, sodas and chocolate drinks. All of these are very heating to the body, and thus overburden the liver. Substances such as coffee are not only heating to the liver, but also a stimulant, which further raises blood pressure. It is best to replace these salty, fat laden, stimulating foods with a diet rich in unrefined whole grain cereals, beans, bean products, peas, lentils, chicken, fish, seaweeds, fresh vegetables, fruit, herbal teas, garlic shallots, onions and leeks which seek to cool the over-burdened liver.

Medical Qigong Research, and Hypertension Patients

Researchers from the Shanghai Institute of Hypertension in China investigated the long-term effects of practising Qigong on hypertensive patients. For these studies, the patients practised Qigong for 30 minutes twice a day. The Qigong exercise consisted of a combination of sitting meditations and gentle physical movements that emphasize a calm mind, a relaxed body, and regular respiration. In 1991 The Shanghai group reported a 20-year controlled study of the anti-ageing effects of Qigong on 204 hypertensive patients. Subsequently, they reported a 30-year follow-up on 242 hypertensive patients.¹

In the latter study, patients were randomly assigned to two groups, a Qigong group of 122 patients and a control group of 120 patients. To control blood pressure the patients were given the same hypotensive drug and in the same hospital none of the patients smoked. During the first two months, the blood pressure of all patients dropped in response to the hypotensive drug. Subsequently, and over the period of 20 years, the blood pressure of the Qigong group stabilized, while that of the control group increased. Remarkably, during this period the drug dosage for the Qigong group could be decreased, while the dosage for the control group had to be increased.

The study also reported that Qigong exercise decreased by about 50% the incidence of total mortality, mortality due to stroke, and morbidity due to stroke. At the end of 30 years, 86 patients survived in the Qigong group and 68 in the control group. These results clearly show that Qigong has significant potential for preventing strokes and extending life.

Additionally, the study suggested that Qigong exercise has a beneficial effect on Heart energy and regulation of the blood channel, and Qigong seems to have improved abnormal conditions of blood circulation.

Conclusion

For centuries Traditional Chinese Medicine has recognized the integral nature of man, physical, psychological, energetic and spiritual. Medical Qigong is one modality within TCM that seeks to utilize the ancient wisdom of the masters to heal. On a



A. Wuji Posture

B.

C.



D.



E.



F.

D. Pulling Down Heavens from *Chinese Medicinal Qigong Therapy: A Comprehensive Text* by Dr Jerry Alan Johnson. 2000.

global level we are facing a health care crisis that will deepen as the increasing incidence of chronic and stress-related illness and an ageing population place greater demands on the existing system. Qigong offers a promising innovative, non-invasive answer to bring balance to patients of hypertension.

The nature of Qigong empowers patients to not only partner with a medical Qigong Doctor, but ultimately take control and manage their own healing process.

References

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About the Author

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