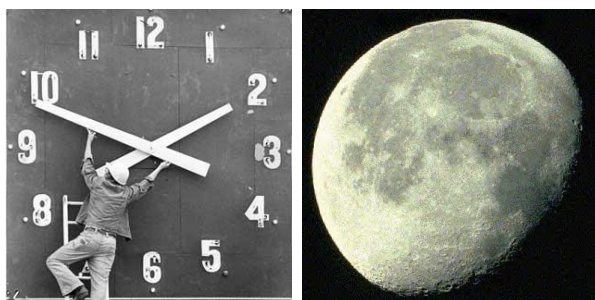




Do longer nights leave you “SAD”?

With the clocks going back this coming weekend, nights will be drawing in and we will soon be experiencing darkness in the afternoon. This causes a problem for the many people who suffer from Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD).

SAD is a type of depression that affects an estimated 1 in 20 people every year, most often between the months of September and April ^[1]. Besides depression, SAD may cause sleep problems, lethargy, irritability, anxiety, loss of libido and extreme mood swings ^[2]. SAD can be severe or, in mild cases, may manifest as a general feeling of unhappiness.



From the perspective of Traditional Chinese Medicine, depression is frequently associated with the liver and heart.

If the liver is involved then moods will tend to be unstable and there may be feelings of gloom and despair with frequent sighing. If the heart is implicated then there may be bouts of sadness, worry, crying and daydreaming.

Acupuncture and Chinese herbal medicine have shown excellent results in soothing depression and easing its symptoms.

A recent trial in Guangzhou, China, found the therapeutic effect of acupuncture on depressive neurosis to be possibly better than that of Prozac, but with fewer side-effects ^[3].



“Danzhi xiaoyao san” is a Chinese formula often used to treat depression. It is sometimes called “free and easy powder” or “happy wanderer powder” in the West.

This traditional Chinese herbal formula contains substances like peony, angelica and liquorice.

Scientists conducting clinical trials in Beijing found the symptoms of depression were significantly improved in patients taking a regular prescription of danzhi xiaoyao san ^[4].

Don't let the ever-shortening days get you down. A relaxing acupuncture treatment and bespoke herbal prescription may be all you need to dispel the blues.

Gary Minns
Barbican Acupuncture
1 Wallside, Barbican, London, EC2Y 8BH
T 020 7638 4322
E Gary@BarbicanAcupuncture.com
W www.BarbicanAcupuncture.com

References:

- [1] BBC. *Time to change!* [Online]. Available from: http://www.bbc.co.uk/weather/features/science_nature/clocks.shtml [accessed 23 October 2008].
- [2] SAD Association. *Symptoms*. [Online]. Available from: <http://www.sada.org.uk/symptoms.htm> [accessed 23 October 2008].
- [3] Fu, W.B., Fan, L., Zhu, X.P., He, Q., Wang, L., Zhuang, L.X., Liu, Y.S., Tang, C.Z., Li, Y.W., Meng, C.R., Zhang, H.L. & Yan, J. (2008). 'Acupuncture for treatment of depressive neurosis: a multi-center randomized controlled study'. *Chinese acupuncture and moxibustion*. 28, (1), pp3-6.
- [4] Li, Y.J., Luo, H.C. & Qian, R.Q. (2007). 'Effect of danzhi xiaoyao powder on neuro-immuno-endocrine system in patients with depression'. *Chinese journal of integrated traditional and Western medicine*. 27, (3), pp197-200.



23 October 2008
© Barbican Acupuncture 2008