

good point

Spleen 4

GONGSUN – GRANDFATHER GRANDSON. PRINCE'S GRANDSON

What's good about it?

So many things! Apart from having a powerful action on its own channel/organ; it is the *luoxue* 络穴 (connecting point) of the spleen, thereby influencing the stomach; it is one of the *bamai jiaohui xue* 八脉交会穴 (eight confluent points), linked to the *chongmai* 冲脉 (thoroughfare vessel); it is also in an easily accessible location. With so many positives and possibilities, Sp 4 gongsun is never far from my thoughts when I'm in clinic.

When would you choose it?

I find Sp 4 gongsun to be indispensable when treating problems related to the abdomen and/or stomach. I tend to use it with patients who are feeling stagnant and bloated caused by overeating or sluggish digestion; or anyone suffering from counterflow of stomach qi, with symptoms such as nausea, vomiting, hiccups, belching etc. Because of the link between Sp 4 gongsun and the *chongmai* (thoroughfare vessel), I also occasionally add it to gynaecological treatment plans.

How would you use it?

I tend to use a neutral needling method as many patients find Sp 4 gongsun to be a relatively sensitive point. However, some sources recommend the use of reducing techniques due to Sp 4 gongsun principally being employed in the treatment of excess conditions. If the patient is amenable, I would generally give a little reduction. Sp4 gongsun is also a good point at which to administer some gentle *tuina* for anyone suffering abdominal pain, stomach ache, nausea, belching etc.

Would you combine it with anything else?

As one of the *bamai jiaohui xue* (eight confluent points), Sp 4 gongsun is paired with P 6 *neiguan* 内关. I very often use these two points in combination when confronted with problems relating to the heart and/or chest and/or stomach. If the ailment is more specifically related to digestion then I often combine Sp 4 gongsun with Ren 12 *zhongwan* 中脘 and/or St 25 *tianshu* 天枢 and/or St 36 *zusanli* 足三里.

What happened one memorable time you used your good point?

A friend had been suffering hiccups for some hours. Being dubious of my chosen profession they refused my offer of assistance, instead choosing such remedies as drinking out of the back edge of a cup... all to no avail. They eventually succumbed to a gentle needling of Sp 4 gongsun which very soon solved the problem. Unfortunately, being an acupuncture sceptic, they claimed it was the shock of the needling that had cured the hiccups rather than the acupuncture treatment!

sore point

EX-HN-5 (WHO), MN-N-9 (Deadman et al)

TAIYANG 太阳

OK, what's your problem with this point?

I've never been a big fan of extra points that are positioned off-meridian. Ex-hn-5 taiyang might be close to the gall bladder, *sanjiao* and small intestine channels but it isn't actually on any of them. Some texts try and claim it sits on the small intestine meridian of hand taiyang. The point and channel may share the name of taiyang but accepted wisdom suggests the Ex-hn-5 taiyang acupoint is positioned very slightly above the hand taiyang pathway.

Tell us about it...

I've always thought the reputation of Ex-hn-5 taiyang was somewhat exaggerated. Maybe it has a good PR agent?! It can be useful for local problems, such as headaches, but I've often found patients to be illatease with needling around the temple area. It's also an acupoint that is relatively susceptible to bruising. Call me oldfashioned, but I have a healthy paranoia when it comes to patients departing my practice with more facial blemishes than they possessed upon arrival.

So what do you expect?

For some reason Ex-hn-5 taiyang seems to be one of the easier points to remember. I recall being taught that it was good for treating headache, migraine, dizziness, toothache, painful/red eyes and facial deviation/paralysis. The *Suwen* 素问 (Plain Questions) and *Lingshu* 灵枢 (Spiritual Pivot) both suggest pricking Ex-hn-5 taiyang in order to clear heat through bleeding. I have no doubt this form of treatment works well, however, I've never had much call to use it.

Are you sure you are doing it right?

Certainly! But, then again, you wouldn't expect me to admit I was doing it wrong, would you?! I think my issue with Ex-hn-5 taiyang stems from patient response. I've never found it to be a popular acupoint with patients and so I've always tended to steer clear of using it. There are plenty of alternative points, for example, I personally prefer GB 8 *xuanli* 悬厘 when it comes to clearing heat from that general area.

What would it take to make this one of your good points?

A bit more humility! I have this peculiar perception that Ex-hn-5 taiyang is a smug little acupoint. It always seems to be somewhat full of its own selfimportance. It's only an extra point and it should remember its place in the great scheme of things. No doubt I will occasionally use Ex-hn-5 taiyang in the future, however, I don't envisage it will ever become a firm favourite of mine.

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