

# *Research progress of acupuncture treatment of acne in recent five years*

Zhou Xiaoru<sup>1,a</sup>, Liu Jing<sup>1,b</sup>, Xu Yaming<sup>1,c</sup>, Wang Ruihui<sup>1,d,\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Shaanxi University of Chinese Medicine, Xianyang, 712046, China*  
<sup>a</sup>*1139085905@qq.com*, <sup>b</sup>*19503852213@qq.com*, <sup>c</sup>*846438505@qq.com*,  
<sup>d</sup>*wangruihui1963@126.com*  
<sup>\*</sup>*Corresponding author*

**Keywords:** Acupuncture; Moxibustion; acne

**Abstract:** Acne is a kind of chronic inflammatory disease, which occurs in the hair follicle sebaceous gland. In clinical practice, it is often manifested by whitehead, blackhead, papule, pustule, etc. Serious acne can cause inflammatory plaques, even abscess infection, which affects the beauty of individual face. In the past five years, the progress of acupuncture and moxibustion treatment of acne accelerated, acupuncture and moxibustion treatment of acne in different forms, this paper summarizes the progress of acupuncture and moxibustion treatment of acne clinical research progress, from the acupuncture, buried thread therapy summary of acupuncture and moxibustion treatment of acne, clarify the effectiveness of various methods to treat acne.

## 1. Introduction

Acne is an inflammation of the skin's hair follicles and sebaceous glands, which can manifest as whiteheads, blackheads, pustules, pimples, or severe nodules on the face. Physiologically, androgens, bacterial infections, diet, inflammation, and immune responses can all contribute to acne. The cause and mechanism of acne have long been described in Yellow Emperor's Neijing. It is written in the Treatise on Suwen and Angry People, that is, there is seat heat rash. "When you sweat, there is seat dampness, there is seat heat rash". Modern Chinese medicine believes that acne is related to wind, dampness, heat and blood stasis. Because acne is easy to damage the appearance of the patient's face, the patient's social and emotional will have a certain impact, and acupuncture treatment than western medicine treatment has fewer side effects, the cost of treatment is relatively low, so acne acupuncture treatment is a worthy of in-depth discussion of the problem, the recent five years of acupuncture treatment of acne clinical research progress summarized as follows.

## 2. Acupuncture therapy

Geng Hongyue<sup>[1]</sup> et al. divided acne patients into an experimental group and a control group. In the experimental group, acupuncture was used to select acupoints, such as Dazhi, Hegu, Sibai and Taiyang. The control group was treated with retinoic acid cream for A total of one month. The skin lesion scores before and after treatment were calculated respectively to evaluate the clinical

treatment effect of the two groups. The results showed that the total effective rate of experimental group (96.0%) was higher than that of control group (84.0%) ( $P < 0.05$ ). Yin Dongqian<sup>[2]</sup> selected acne patients for treatment, and acne patients were divided into experimental group and control group. The experimental group of acupuncture therapy treatment, choose Dazhi, sun, Sibai, Xiaguan and other points, control points, the control group of acupuncture combined with local acupuncture treatment, in the experimental group on the basis of the selection of points around the skin prick method, the research results show that the acupuncture treatment effect of the control group is higher than the experimental group, the cure probability of the control group is significantly higher than the experimental group. The probability of side effects in the control group was lower than that in the experimental group, and the comparative data of side effects were significantly different. The experiment showed that acupuncture combined with local circumstabbing treatment could improve the treatment effect and pathological symptoms of acne patients, and reduce the probability of side effects and discomfort. Wu Xia<sup>[3]</sup> et al. divided the acne patients into the experimental group and the control group, with 30 people in each group. In the experimental group, acupuncture points based on Taiyang Yangming meridian were selected, and points such as Dahui, Weizhong, Zhongwan, Xiaogan, Qihai, Guanyuan, Zusanli, Tianshu, Quchi and Hegu were selected. The control group was treated with curcuma Xiaocuo liniment. The experimental results showed that acupuncture Taiyangyangmingjing had better curative effect on acne than the control group applying turmeric Xiaocuo liniment. The above clinical studies indicate that the treatment of acne with Ma acupuncture is worthy of widespread clinical application. Zhi Jiayu<sup>[4]</sup> et al. divided the acne patients into the observation group and the control group. The observation group treated the patients in the treatment group with superficial cutaneous acupuncture. The acupuncture sites were selected from the percutaneous stomach region of the head, face, foot Yangming, stomach channel of the abdomen, percutaneous spleen region of the foot Taiyin, liver channel of the foot jueyin below the ankle joint and percutaneous region of the foot Shaoyang gallbladder, and the acupuncture depth was about 3mm in the head, face and foot. The depth of abdomen acupuncture was about 5mm, and small amplitude and high frequency twistingmanipulation was applied. Control group patients choose conventional acupuncture method for treatment, select Baihui, bilateral Chuze, bilateral Quchi and other acupoints to make patients have a sense of qi. The experimental results show that shallow cutaneous acupuncture has better clinical effect than conventional filiform acupuncture. Fang Jin<sup>[5]</sup> et al. divided acne patients into two groups. The experimental group received abdominal acupuncture combined with facial acupuncture, and the control group received facial acupuncture alone. The results showed that the acne lesion improvement in the experimental group was higher than that in the control group. The experimental results showed that abdominal acupuncture combined with facial acupuncture had obvious effect on acne, and it was worth popularizing in clinical practice.

### 3. Moxibustion

#### 3.1 Moxibustion method with moxibustion sticks

Li Guan hao<sup>[6]</sup> et al. divided the acne vulgaris patients into observation group and control group. The observation group treated the acne patients with moxibustion, disinfected the acne formed by the patients, picked out the acne with disposabl needles, and then disinfected it after the wound clots, a course of treatment for two weeks, followed by moxibustion treatment at Quchi, Hegu, Feishu, Zusanli, Dazi, Sanyinjiao and other points. The control group uses the method of routine acupuncture, which is similar to the method of acne treatment in the control group, and selects the same acupuncture points as the control group. Before and aftertreatment, the acne lesion score, treatment effect and recurrence rate were compared. The total effective rate of the observation

group treated with moxibustion was 92.68%, higher than that of the control group 78.05%. The clinical results showed that acupuncture and moxibustion had a definite effect on the treatment of acne and the recurrence rate was low. In addition, the clinical effect of moxibustion on acne was more significant and deserved to be widely promoted in clinical practice. Zhang Ruixue<sup>[7]</sup> et al. divided the acne patients into the control group and the experimental group. The control group was guided by the principle of "Yi Yang Tongyuan" and moxibustion with moxa sticks hanging Dahui and Shenque were used three times a week. The experimental group was treated with 0.05% vitamin A ointment for external use, and the skin was cleaned with warm water every night before applying the medicine. The experimental results showed that Yiyang moxibustion could significantly improve the dampness-heat physique of acne patients and improve the quality of life, which is worth promoting. Li Dongfang<sup>[8]</sup> et al. took two sides of Zusanli, aligned the acupuncture point with moxa sticks for bird pecking moxibustion, moxibustion until the local skin was slightly red and hot. After half a month of treatment, all the papules disappeared and the skin was smooth. Clinical cases show that moxibustion has obvious effect on acne treatment. Mi Jianping<sup>[9]</sup> et al. divided acne patients into observation group, control group and blank control group. All three groups were treated with body acupuncture combined with fire acupuncture. Observation group was given moxibustion moxibustion Guanyuan, Qi Hai, PI Shu; The control group was given isotretinoic acid capsules; The blank control group was given no other treatment. The therapeutic effect and the degree of adverse reactions and lesions in the three groups were observed. The results showed that moxibustion can improve the efficacy of body acupuncture in acne treatment, obviously improve the degree of acne lesions and no adverse reactions.

### 3.2 Medicated moxibustion with thread

Dai Yun<sup>[10]</sup> et al. divided acne patients into two groups. In the medicine line group, moxibustion based on syndrome differentiation of Zhuang medicine line was applied. The main points were local points and hand-foot Yangming meridian points. Clean and disinfect the skin, light the medicine line, shake out the open flame, keep the spark and press it on the skin lesions, and the other group uses the same acupoint to treat with fire needle. The experiment showed that after 2 courses of treatment, the total effective rate of the medicine thread group was 90.0%, and that of the fire needle group was 72.4%. The total effective rate of the fire needle was lower than that of the medicine thread group, and the difference between the two groups was statistically significant. The experiment showed that the effect of medicine line on acne was good, the degree of skin lesions was low, the process was simple, and it was worth popularizing in clinic.

### 3.3 Heat sensitive moxibustion therapy

Wu Guilian<sup>[11]</sup> et al. divided acne patients into two groups: one group was treated with heat-sensitive moxibustion therapy at heat-sensitive points, and the other group was treated with conventional acupuncture therapy. The skin lesions of the two groups were significantly different. This experiment shows that heat sensitive moxibustion has good longterm efficacy, good clinical safety, and is worthy of clinical application.

### 3.4 Cotton moxibustion method

Professor Zhao Lixin<sup>[12]</sup> found that cotton moxibustion in clinical treatment of acne has a good effect. Put the cotton pad on the acne area, lift up a corner and light it, the cotton pad burns immediately, and then the fire is extinguished immediately. Then the ashes left by the burning cotton pad are applied to the affected area, and the face is washed after two to three hours. Among

the three windheat acne patients treated with cotton moxibustion, the itching and pain caused by acne were significantly reduced and the pigmentation was improved, and there was no recurrence after a month's follow-up. Moxibustion with cotton can help Yang with fire, induce heat with heat, disinfected and dissipated pain, while cotton ash can restrain and relieve itching of acne. Clinical studies show that moxibustion with cotton is worthy of clinical application and promotion.

### **3.5 Warm acupuncture therapy**

Professor Fu Jieying<sup>[13]</sup> in clinical acne patients warm acupuncture treatment, take Weizhong, Chengshan, Yongquan three points for warm acupuncture treatment, with 1.5 inches of Ma needle, Pierce Weizhong, Chengshan and Yongquan, then take 2 cm long moxa stick, fixed on the needle handle, about 2 ~ 3 cm away from the skin, from its lower end lit moxibustion. Once a week, four times for a course of treatment, in the whole treatment process told patients to live and rest and diet to be regular, light diet, do not use other excessive cosmetics and skin care products. No new acne was found in the patient's return visit one week later. After two months of treatment, the patient's complications were significantly improved and acne did not recur. This clinical medical record shows that warm acupuncture and moxibustion has obvious effect on acne and is worthy of our wide application in clinical practice.

### **3.6 Moxibustion in isolation of medicine cake**

Zhang Yiming<sup>[14]</sup> selected acne patients, Qingfei drink or Huanglian Tang flavor configuration into Chinese medicine ground powder, mixed with honey to make medicine cake, needle puncture several holes in the middle, moxa cone. Tianshu point, each time 3 ~ 4 strong moxibustion, treatment of 2 to 3 courses, the total clinical recovery of 83.9%, the clinical effect is obvious, worthy of clinical promotion.

## **4. Comprehensive therapy**

### **4.1 Acupuncture combined with moxibustion therapy**

Lin Yunshan<sup>[15]</sup> et al. divided acne patients into A control group and a treatment group. Patients in the control group took isotretinoin pills, and the treatment group retained needles at Yangbai, zygoma and iliac, Dicang, Hegu, Quchi, Taichong, Fenglong and other acupoints for 35 minutes and then suspended moxibustion with moxa sticks on the skin for 5 minutes. The experimental results showed that the total effective rate of acupuncture combined with moxibustion on acne was higher than that of Western medicine treatment group. The results showed that acupuncture combined with moxibustion had a high cure rate and effective rate in the treatment of acne, and it was worthy of clinical application.

### **4.2 Acupuncture combined with puncture of collaterals and cupping therapy**

Yang Suyin<sup>[16]</sup> et al. selected 71 acne patients, one group was treated with acupuncture alone, the other group was treated with acupuncture combined with acupuncture treatment, and compared the clinical efficacy of the two groups. The experiment showed that acupuncture combined with acupuncture and cupping could obtain better curative effect than acupuncture alone.

### **4.3 Acupuncture combined with Shenque salt separation moxibustion therapy**

Liu Dengjian<sup>[17]</sup> et al randomly divided 60 female patients into two groups with 30 people in each

group. Acupuncture combined with Shenque salt moxibustion was used in the treatment group, and oral isotretinoic acid was used in the control group. The results showed that the effective rate of the treatment group was higher than that of the control group, and the difference between the two groups was statistically significant ( $P < 0.05$ ). The experiment showed that the clinical effect of acupuncture combined with Shenque acupoint and salt moxibustion was better than that of oral drug group.

## 5. Other therapies

### 5.1 Fire needle therapy

Fang Yuanzhi<sup>[18]</sup> randomly divided the patients with mild and moderate acne vulgaris into the treatment group and the control group. The treatment group was given the fireneedle for acne differentiation. The fireneedle was burned on the fire until it was white and then quickly inserted into the skin. The acupoints at the top center and base of the acne lesions were selected. They were applied alternately and continuously. The results of the study showed that after 4 weeks of treatment, the number of patients in the treatment group was greater than that in the Western medicine treatment group. The results showed that millifireneedle can effectively reduce the distribution of skin lesions and the curative effect is better than Western medicine. Wu Dian<sup>[19]</sup> et al. divided two groups of acne patients into fire acupuncture group and cleaning group. Fire acupuncture group cleaned the dirt on the skin and sterilized it. The acne lesions were completely exposed, the first 2/3 of the needle body was burned by alcohol lamp, the needle was quickly inserted into the skin lesions vertically, and then the needle was quickly lifted. After the needle was finished, the contents of the skin lesions were moderately pressed with cotton swabs. After cleaning and disinfecting the skin, the cleaning group used No. 5 injection needle, punctured the needle along the center of the acne, and then used a cotton swab to remove pus plug and pus from the skin. The results showed that after treatment, the purple matter and red area of the acne patients in both groups were improved, and the effect of the fire needle group was prominent, and the pain of the fire needle group was lower than that of the cleaning group. The experiment showed that the effect of the fire needle on acne was obvious, and it was worthy of clinical application.

### 5.2 Pricking blood therapy

Wu Huiying<sup>[20]</sup> et al used a randomized controlled method to divide acne patients into two groups. In the treatment group, prick bloodletting therapy was used. Prick the red spots of the patients or the red, swollen, hot and painful spots of the patients. After that, there was no need to immediately use a cotton swab to stop the bleeding and let the blood flow out by itself. The control group was treated with topical metronidazole gel for 6 weeks in both groups. The results showed that the curative effect of acupuncture combined with puncture bloodletting in the treatment of adolescent acne vulgaris was significantly better than that of acupuncture alone, and it could be popularized in clinic. Shi Lihui<sup>[21]</sup> et al. divided the acne patients into two groups. The first group was treated with desloratadine and Chinese medicine twice a day. The other group was treated with ear tip bloodletting, the patient rubbed the ear tip to make it bloodfilled, the doctor sterilized the ear tip from bottom to top with iodophor, folded the ear tip, held a disposable small syringe needle, quickly stabbed the ear tip to make it bleed, wiped with a dry cotton swab, waiting for the blood to flow out, when the blood volume reached 0.3mL with cotton swab to stop the bleeding. Observation and comparison of the treatment effect of the two groups, the total effective rate of the treatment of the ear tip bloodletting method was 92%, and its curative effect was significant. It is worthy of clinical application.



## 6. Summary

To sum up, studies on acupuncture and moxibustion treatment of acne vary. Compared with Western medicine, acupuncture treatment of acne, moxibustion treatment of acne and other various acupuncture and moxibustion related therapies have good clinical efficacy, low cost and low recurrence rate, while the comprehensive treatment of acupuncture can better play the advantages of acupuncture and moxibustion and fire needle therapy. At the same time, acupuncture and moxibustion treatment points are mostly used in the head, neck and limbs below the elbow and knee, mainly in the hand Yangming large intestine, foot Yangming stomach, foot sun bladder, and often choose acne skin lesions and acupoints. In clinical use of different types of methods, different acupoints to treat acne vulgaris, have a good effect; In improving the degree of skin lesions, reducing the recurrence rate after cure and reducing the concurrent symptoms of acne and improving the quality of life of patients have different degrees of effect, but in the past five years on the different methods of acne treatment literature and clinical observation studies are relatively few, especially the use of acupuncture or moxibustion method to treat acne clinical studies are few, usually cite the summary of predecessors. It is hoped that we will carry out more clinical studies on acupuncture and different methods for the treatment of acne in the future, so as to provide a strong theoretical basis for the treatment of acne, so as to further improve the clinical efficacy of acupuncture and moxibustion in the treatment of acne, and carry forward the acupuncture and moxibustion culture of our Chinese nation.

## References

- [1] Geng Hongyue, Liu Liting, and Han Yuhao. *The clinical experience of acupuncture therapy in improving the treatment effect of facial acne [J]*. China Medical Cosmetology, 2018, 8(08):71-73.
- [2] Yin Dongqian. *Clinical observation of acupuncture and moxibustion on acne vulgaris combined with local acupuncture treatment [J]*. Zhihui Jiankang, 2021, 7(02): 179-180.
- [3] Wu Xia. *Clinical Effect observation of Taiyang Yangming Meridian acupuncture in the treatment of Acne vulgaris [D]*. Guangxi University of Traditional Chinese Medicine, 2017.
- [4] Zhi Jiayu. *Observation on the clinical effect of superficial skin acupuncture in the treatment of acne vulgaris in young students [D]*. Tianjin University of Traditional Chinese Medicine, 2022.
- [5] Fang Jin. *Clinical study of Bo's abdominal acupuncture combined with facial acupuncture in the treatment of acne with phlegm-stasis interjunction [D]*. Beijing University of Traditional Chinese Medicine, 2019.
- [6] Li Guanhao. *Study on the value of acupuncture and moxibustion in the treatment of acne vulgaris [J]*. Clinical Research of Chinese Medicine, 2017, 9(16):41-42.
- [7] Zhang Ruixue, Zhang Caiyun, Yuan Yamei, Wang Qian, Fang Zhengqing, Zhu Lin. *Clinical Study on the intervention of "Yiyang Tongyuan" on acne damp-heat body to improve the quality of life [J]*. Journal of Practical Chinese Medicine Internal Medicine, 2021, 34(10):3-6.
- [8] Li Dongfang. *Experience in treating Acne with moxibustion Zusanli [J]*. Journal of Practical Chinese Medicine, 2016, 32(02):176.
- [9] Mi Jianping, Yu Zhaoshen. *Curative effect of warm moxibustion on acne cysts [J]*. Chinese Journal of Acupuncture and Moxibustion, 2010, 30(05):383-386. 4
- [10] Dai Yun. *Clinical study of medicated moxibustion on Acne vulgaris [D]*. Guangzhou University of Traditional Chinese Medicine, 2021.
- [11] Wu Guilian. *Clinical observation of heat-sensitive moxibustion combined with acupuncture in the treatment of acne vulgaris [D]*. Fujian University of Traditional Chinese Medicine, 2016.
- [12] Qiu Yanping, Zhao Lixin, Li Xinwang, Guo Huanqin. *Zhao Lixin's application of cotton moxibustion in the treatment of wind-heat type acne of lung: a case report [J]*. Chinese Folk Therapy, 2022, 30(24): 130-133.
- [13] Liu Yi, Huang Jianhui, Fu Jieying. *Experience of Professor Fu Jieying in treating acne by warm acupuncture at Weizhong Point [J]*. Massage & Rehabilitation Medicine, 2022, 13(10):37-39+42.
- [14] Zhang Yiming, Han Hwa-Qin. *Clinical observation on the treatment of acne vulgaris by moxibustion on Tianshu Point with medicinal cake [J]*. Shanghai Journal of Acupuncture and Moxibustion, 2009, 28(04):217-218.
- [15] Lin Yunshan. *Clinical observation of acupuncture combined with moxibustion in the treatment of acne with phlegm-stasis interjunction [D]*. Guangdong: Guangzhou University of Chinese Medicine, 2016.

- [16] Yang S Y. *Clinical value of acupuncture and moxibustion in the treatment of acne* [J]. *Chinese Journal of Health Standards Management*, 2019, 10(14):85-87. (in Chinese)
- [17] Liu Dengjian, Tian Xin, Wu Jisheng. *Curative Effect of acupuncture combined with Shenque salt moxibustion in the treatment of acne disorder of Chongren* [J]. *Chinese Journal of Health Standards Management*, 2017, 8(24): 112-113.
- [18] Fang Yuanzhi. *Clinical observation on the treatment of adolescent mild to moderate acne vulgaris with milion needle* [D]. *Guangzhou University of Traditional Chinese Medicine*, 2020.
- [19] Wu Fengqin, Wang Li, Liu Mingming, Song Ting, Tan Qiang, Gao Lin. *Efficacy and safety of acupuncture and rationalization in the treatment of acne vulgaris Comparative observation* [J]. *Chinese Journal of Aesthetic Medicine*, 2019, 30(05): 115-118. (in Chinese)
- [20] Wu Huiying. *Clinical effect of pricking collars and letting blood in the treatment of rosacea erythema telangiectasia* [D]. *Chengdu University of Traditional Chinese Medicine*, 2021.
- [21] Shi Lihui, Chen Hui, Zhao Haojun. *Observation on therapeutic effect of ear tip bloodletting therapy on 54 cases of acne* [J]. *Dietetic Science*, 2019(14):57