

# *Clinical experience with acupuncture in the treatment of intractable allergic rhinitis*

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**Abstract:** Intractable allergic rhinitis is a disease caused by allergic rhinitis that has not been cured for a long time. This paper analyzes Professor Wang Ruihui's experience in acupuncture treatment of intractable allergic rhinitis, in order to expand the clinical treatment of intractable allergic rhinitis. Professor Wang Ruihui's acupuncture treatment is accurate. While eliminating external pathogens, the three organs of the lung, spleen and kidney are supplemented to achieve the purpose of treating the disease, in order to completely cure refractory allergic rhinitis.

## 1. Introduction

Allergic rhinitis (AR), also known as allergic rhinitis, is a non-infectious inflammatory disease of nasal mucosa mainly mediated by immunoglobulin E (IgE) after individual exposure to allergens. The main clinical manifestations are paroxysmal sneezing, nasal congestion, nasal itching, runny nose, and may also be accompanied by symptoms such as cough[1]. At present, the treatment of allergic rhinitis in modern medicine is mainly based on environmental control and symptomatic treatment, avoiding or reducing exposure to allergens and various irritants. The commonly used drugs are glucocorticoids, antihistamines, mast cell membrane stabilizers, decongestants, anticholinergic drugs, etc. There are problems such as unsatisfactory efficacy, many adverse reactions, and non-standard medication[2]. Due to the repeated clinical attacks of allergic rhinitis, it is difficult to cure, and it is easy to develop into refractory allergic rhinitis. In contrast, acupuncture treatment of the disease has many advantages such as small side effects, long-lasting efficacy, and simple operation. Relevant research results show that acupuncture can not only significantly improve the symptoms of allergic rhinitis, but also improve the therapeutic effect and reduce the incidence of adverse reactions and recurrence rate[3,4].

Professor Wang Ruihui is a second-level professor and doctoral supervisor of Shaanxi University of Traditional Chinese Medicine. He has been engaged in teaching and clinical research of traditional Chinese medicine for more than 30 years. He has rich experience in clinical diagnosis and treatment. He has a deep research on the combination of classical medical books and modern medical research, and has a unique view on the treatment of this disease. The author is fortunate to follow the tutor's outpatient clinic on weekdays and benefits a lot. Now, Professor Wang Ruihui's experience in acupuncture and moxibustion treatment of refractory allergic rhinitis is summarized as follows.

## 2. Cause and mechanism of disease

Allergic rhinitis is called “allergic rhinitis”, “allergic sneezing” and “allergic water”. Congested nose was first mentioned in “Suwen - Pulse Explanation”[5]. In “Su Wen Xuan Ji Yuan Disease Style - Six Qi for Disease”, it is explained that: “Congested nose is also clear snot coming out of the nose”; “Sneezing, the breath in the nose is made in the sound because of itching”[6]. Traditional Chinese medicine believes that the etiology and pathogenesis of refractory allergic rhinitis mainly involve the interaction of internal and external factors, mainly due to the weakness of the viscera and the weak wei surface, and the invasion of external evil such as wind-cold evil heat. Professor Wang Ruihui believes that the occurrence of intractable allergic rhinitis is closely related to its living environment and physical factors, the lung, spleen and kidney of the body are deficient, and the physiological function of the viscera is abnormal. It can be caused by the deficiency of the body and the weakness of the evil, the six evils of the external evils, the latent evils, and the long-term onset.

### 2.1 Weak lung qi, weak guardianship

The strength of lung qi directly affects the solid protection function of wei qi. The lung disperses the qi of ying and wei in the fur through the function of releasing, and exerts the defensive function of wei qi. If the lung qi is weak, the wei qi cannot protect the body surface, resulting in the easy invasion of external pathogens into the human body. Exogenous evil mainly refers to the evil of wind-cold. The wind evil invades the muscle surface of the human body, the fur is affected by the evil, the evil gas enters, and the lung is the first to be invaded. As “the source of miscellaneous diseases - the source of cold” states: “the wind evil attacks people, no matter where it feels, it must be internalized to the lung”[7]. The lung is a delicate organ, which is not resistant to cold and heat, and the cold evil is easy to invade the lung. As “Plain Question - Xuanming Five Qi” states: “The five internal organs are evil, and the lung is evil”. The lung governs the fur, opens the orifices in the nose, and the wind-cold evil enters by taking advantage of the deficiency. The lung fails to disperse and descend, and the opening and closing are unfavorable, resulting in the loss of nasal orifices, causing nasal itching, sneezing, runny nose and other symptoms. In addition, lung qi deficiency also affects immune function, so that the body's response to external allergens is enhanced, thereby inducing allergic rhinitis[8].

### 2.2 Lack of health in the spleen, with phlegm stagnating internally

“Su Wen - Yu Ji Zhen Zang Theory” states: “The spleen is a solitary organ ... which is not as good as it should be, then people will not be able to get through the nine orifices”[9]. The spleen is the acquired foundation, the source of qi and blood biochemistry, and the essence of water and grain. It nourishes and moistens the limbs and meridians of the human body and maintains its normal physiological function. If the spleen qi is weak, qi and blood metaplasia is insufficient, the water valley essence cannot be glorified in the lung, the lung qi deficiency is less, the head and face orifices are lost, and the nasal orifices are not nourished, so the nose is stuffy; spleen deficiency transportation is not healthy, resulting in water wet stop, body fluid transport disorders, and thus the formation of phlegm turbidity, spleen and stomach lifting dereliction of duty, Qingyang does not rise, turbidity Yin does not fall, phlegm turbidity on the nose for the nose. Long-term spleen deficiency will also lead to damp-heat accumulation, damp-heat fumigation of nasal orifices, further aggravating the disease.

### 2.3 Insufficient kidney yang, loss of receptivity

Intractable allergic rhinitis persists for a long time, lung and spleen qi deficiency for a long time,

and kidney yang is injured for a long time. In the “ Plain Questions - Xuanming Five Qi Theory ”, it says : “ Five qi is sick, and the kidney is owed to sneeze ”. The kidney is the root of qi, the main gas, kidney yang deficiency, the lung qi descending into the kidney disorder, the kidney 's absorption function is weakened, can not normally fix the air machine, so that the air floats on, causing frequent sneezing ; when the kidney yang is insufficient, its warm function is weakened, and it can not effectively warm water and dampness, resulting in water metabolism disorders, cold water flooding to the nose, causing symptoms such as long runny nose and nasal congestion. As “ Medical truth - Volume II ”said : “ After the disease suddenly nasal runny nose more than, waging, take all the external dissolving drugs should not be worse, why? Answer: This is not the cold evil of external feeling, but the qi of naive Yang is insufficient on the first, and can not control the semen on it”[10].

### 3. Practice acupuncture points

Intractable allergic rhinitis is characterized by nasal congestion, nasal itching, runny nose, and even red eyes, tears, itchy jaws, and sneezing. With the development of industry and the aggravation of environmental pollution in recent years, the number of patients has increased year by year. This physiological disease has greatly reduced the quality of life of patients.

Professor Wang Ruihui believes that the occurrence of intractable allergic rhinitis is due to the deficiency of the body's viscera, the lack of healthy qi, the invasion of external evils, the inability of healthy qi to resist evils, the long-term difficulty in healing, and repeated attacks. Professor Wang Ruihui advocates acupuncture and moxibustion for the treatment of intractable allergic rhinitis, according to “the treatment must be based on the root cause”. In addition to tonifying the spleen and benefiting the lung, the treatment should also warm the kidney essence, so as to achieve the purpose of strengthening the body and eliminating the evil, treating the disease and seeking the root cause.

#### 3.1 Acupuncture and moxibustion points

##### 3.1.1 Hegu

Professor Wang believes that the treatment of intractable allergic rhinitis should first treat the symptoms, disperse wind and disperse evil, so that patients can avoid the disturbance of disease attack, and first choose Hegu point. Hegu, first seen in “ lingshu - benshu ”, belongs to the original point of the large intestine meridian of hand yangming. It is located in the hand and has the effect of dispelling wind and heat dissipation. The large intestine meridian of hand yangming is exterior and interior to the lung meridian. Evil qi invades, lung qi is damaged, clear qi does not rise, and nasal orifices are obstructed. Acupuncture at Hegu can dissipate evil qi and dredge nasal orifices. The meridians pass through the main treatment, and the large intestine meridian of hand yangming passes through the nose, so hegu acupoint has the effect of treating nasal diseases. “Miscellaneous disease acupoint method song ” records : “ head, face, ear, eye, mouth and nose disease, Quchi and hegu are the main ; bright eye Yingxiang bleeding Qi, Linqi, Taichong, Hegu couple ; nasal obstruction, nasal hemorrhoids and nasosinusitis, Hegu and Taichong were taken at hand ”. “Acupuncture Dacheng - Yulongge ” said : “ Head and face longitudinal various diseases, a needle Hegutongtongshen ”. Therefore, Hegu acupoint was selected to improve the symptoms of patients[11].

##### 3.1.2 Quanliao through Yingxiang

Professor Wang believes that the treatment of Quanliao through Yingxiang has a very good effect on relieving refractory allergic rhinitis. Quanliao has the effect of dispelling wind.“ Yulong Fu ” recorded : “ Yingxiang attack nasal suffocation is the most ”. Yingxiang plays a very important role in the treatment of rhinitis, and quanliao belongs to the hand sun small intestine meridian, yingxiang

belongs to the hand yangming large intestine meridian, which is also located on the face, lung and spleen qi deficiency, then the clear qi does not rise, nasal obstruction, phlegm and drink each other, so it is necessary to replenish qi, so that the clear qi can rise, the water can be transported and transformed, and the nasal orifice can be unobstructed, “Yilin rope ink” cloud: “nose is the disease, lung disease is also the main treatment to clear qi”. The small intestine meridian of the hand sun is the pulse of more blood and less gas, while the large intestine meridian of the hand yangming is the pulse of more blood and more gas. The operation of gas starts from the lung, passes through the large intestine, stomach, spleen and heart to the small intestine meridian, and passes through the zygomatic liao to meet the incense. As a channel for the operation of gas and blood between the large intestine meridian and the small intestine meridian, the large intestine meridian is connected with the small intestine meridian, and the operation of gas can be directly transmitted, so that the lung qi and spleen qi are unobstructed, the clear gas rises, and the nose is unobstructed.

### 3.1.3 Zanzhu

Allergic rhinitis prolonged unhealed into intractable allergic rhinitis is mainly because the lung and spleen qi deficiency gradually affect the kidney, making the kidney essence deficiency, so the treatment of intractable allergic rhinitis, should also consider the kidney essence, take Zanzhu point. Zanzhu, belonging to the bladder meridian of foot sun, is located on the face. Zan bamboo, zan, gather bamboo, bamboo of mountain forest. Zanzhu's name means that the wet and cold water vapor absorbs heat and goes up, so the water-dampness qi that causes allergic rhinitis to runny nose can become yang-heat qi, thereby alleviating the symptoms of runny nose. “Acupuncture and moxibustion A and B” record: “Head wind pain, nasal bleeding, eyebrow pain, crying, good sneezing”[12]. There is a cloud in the “Miraculous Pivot - Meridian”: “The nickname of the foot sun is Feiyang, go ankle seven inches, don't go Shaoyin. In fact, the nose is suffocating, head and back pain, deficiency is allergic bleeding, take the other also.”[13]. It can be seen that Zanzhu does have a good effect on the treatment of refractory allergic rhinitis. On the other hand, the bladder meridian of foot Taiyang and the kidney meridian of foot Shaoyin are exterior and interior, and taking Zanzhu points can also nourish the kidney essence, so that the yang qi is sufficient and the qi is clear.

### 3.1.4 Other auxiliary points

In the treatment of refractory allergic rhinitis, in addition to the above main points, some auxiliary points should be selected to enhance the curative effect, making the treatment more effective. If Yintang point is taken, Yintang has the effect of opening the nose, dispelling wind and heat dissipation. Acupuncture Yintang can regulate lung qi to achieve the purpose of treatment. The wind pool has the effect of dredging the orifices, which has a good effect on nasal congestion. It also has the effect of strengthening yang and replenishing qi, which makes the deficiency of yang qi caused by intractable allergic rhinitis be supplemented; zusanli is located in the stomach meridian of foot yangming, which is related to the spleen meridian of foot taiyin. Zusanli can be a good point for invigorating spleen and replenishing qi; taking Yongquan point, Yongquan point has the effect of nourishing yin and cooling blood, and is also located in the kidney meridian of foot Shaoyin. It has a good effect on supplementing the essence of kidney, and Yongquan has the effect of weighing qi movement, which can also play a good role in dredging nasal orifices.

## 4. Typical case

Example 1: Shang, female, 32 years old. She was diagnosed with allergic rhinitis due to “nasal itching, nasal congestion, runny nose, and sneezing for 3 years”. The allergen was tested for pollen allergy. The patient had been treated in a local hospital. After treatment in the local hospital, she

improved and then came into contact with allergens. The above symptoms recurred and she came to see a doctor. The symptoms are as follows : the patient sneezes frequently, and there are repeated watery nasal discharge, shortness of breath, laziness, dry nose, sallow complexion, loose stool, soreness and weakness of waist and knees, lassitude, pale tongue, thin white fur, and pulse deficiency. Because of its yellow complexion, loose stool, pale tongue, thin white tongue coating, for Lung-Spleen-Qi deficiency; recurrent, tinnitus and insomnia, for Kidney-Qi deficiency. TCM diagnosis : epistaxis. Syndrome type : Deficiency of lung, spleen and kidney. Treatment: Tonifying spleen and lung, warming and tonifying kidney yang. Acupuncture acupoints : Hegu, Zanzhu, Quanliao through Yingxiang, Yintang, Fengchi, Zusanli, Shenshu. After routine disinfection, 0.30 mm × 38 mm disposable sterile acupuncture needles were used for routine acupuncture. The needles were stopped for 40 minutes, and the needles were stimulated with tonifying method every ten minutes, twice a week. After treatment, the symptoms of the patients could be alleviated. On the second day, the symptoms of nasal itching, runny nose and sneezing were significantly alleviated, with ruddy complexion, pale red tongue and thin white fur. Continuing Hegu, Zanzhu, Quanliao through Yingxiang acupuncture, the patient recovered.

Commentary: The patient had nasal itching, nasal congestion, runny nose, sneezing and other symptoms, all of which were in line with the clinical symptoms of allergic rhinitis. It was not cured for 3 years, and it could be judged that it developed into refractory allergic rhinitis. The patient had sallow complexion, loose stool, pale tongue, thin white tongue coating, pulse deficiency, clear nasal discharge such as water, shortness of breath, and laziness to speak. The soreness and weakness of waist and knees and mental fatigue are the signs of kidney qi deficiency. To sum up, so the syndrome differentiation is the type of deficiency of lung, spleen and kidney. Therefore, acupuncture is applied to Hegu, Fengchi, Yintang to disperse wind and evil, improve nasal congestion, runny nose, shortness of breath and so on. Then, the symptoms of lung and spleen qi deficiency were supplemented by quanliao tongyingxiang and zusanli tonify qi and yang ; finally, Shenshu, Zusanli, Cuanzhu kidney, stimulate the body 's healthy qi, so that yang qi rise. In the “ Yellow Emperor 's Inner Canon - Plain Questions ” ,it is said that “the righteous qi exists in the body, and the evil cannot be dry ” [14].Therefore, when treating intractable allergic rhinitis, Professor Wang usually acupuncture points such as Zusanli to stimulate the body 's vital qi. In general, tonify the spleen and benefit the lung, tonify the kidney and raise the yang, so that the lung qi can be released, the yang can be raised, and the disease can be cured, so that the refractory allergic rhinitis can be cured.

Example 2: Zhang, male, 38 years old, visited a doctor on July 20, 2022. The patient complained of nasal obstruction caused by a cold two years ago, nasal discharge, nasal itching, pharyngeal itching, cough, phlegm yellow, dry mouth, loss of appetite, fatigue, normal sleep, normal tongue size, red tongue, thin yellow fur, and stringy pulse. The patient 's nasal congestion, runny nose, pharyngeal itching, cough, yellow sputum, red tongue coating, thin yellow, and pulse string showed heat in the lung meridian. Therefore, the diagnosis is : allergic rhinitis, the syndrome type is lung meridian latent heat, spleen and kidney yin deficiency type. Acupuncture acupoints : Hegu, Zanzhu, Quanliao through Yingxiang, Fengchi, Lieque, Zusanli, Yongquan. After routine disinfection, 0.30 mm × 38 mm disposable sterile acupuncture needle was used for routine acupuncture. The needle was stopped for 40 minutes, and the needle was stimulated with reinforcing method every ten minutes, twice a week. Three weeks later, the patient 's symptoms of nasal itching, runny nose and sneezing were significantly relieved, with ruddy complexion, pale red tongue and thin white fur. Continue to Lieque, Sanjian, Fengchi, Hegu, Zanzhu, Yongquan, Quanliao to Yingxiang acupuncture, three weeks after the patient recovered.

Commentary: “ Qixiao Liangfang - Volume 59 ” said : “ Nasal congestion and itching, hot guests Yangming stomach meridian ; biqu, hot guest taiyin lung by”, it can be seen in patients with cold caused by nasal congestion, nasal itching, runny nose. Cough, phlegm yellow and other symptoms

are caused by pathogenic heat attacking the lung. The course of the disease is long, and the root of the disease is the spleen and kidney. In the treatment, acupuncture was applied to Sanjian, Hegu, Fengchi, Lieque to disperse wind and dissipate heat, and to unblock the nasal orifice; acupuncture Quanliao through Yingxian and zusanli, in order to achieve the lung solid table, replenishing qi and invigorating spleen, promoting diuresis ; intractable rhinitis for a long time its root in the kidney, so acupuncture Zanzhu, Yongquan to nourish the kidney essence, tonic its yin and yang, its source, to treat its root.

## 5. Conclusions

With the development of society and the change of people 's living environment, the prevalence of allergic rhinitis is increasing year by year, and because people do not pay enough attention to allergic rhinitis, and the treatment often can not achieve the effect of radical cure, allergic rhinitis will slowly transform into intractable allergic rhinitis. The course of disease is long, although it is not life-threatening, it affects the quality of life of patients. In the late stage of the disease, it often develops into asthma. In severe cases, obstructive sleep apnea may occur, and even affect the development of the maxillofacial region. The clinical efficacy of acupuncture in the treatment of allergic rhinitis is significant, with no adverse reactions and side effects. Compared with western medicine or drug treatment, the cost is low and the patients are easy to accept. Professor Wang believes that the occurrence of refractory allergic rhinitis is based on the deficiency of lung, spleen and kidney, and the treatment is based on tonifying spleen and lung, warming kidney and essence. After treatment, patients were instructed to pay attention to their usual life, adjust their diet, improve their physique, and prevent the invasion of evil qi from causing the lack of healthy qi to lead to the occurrence of the disease again.

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