

Response of Common Paediatric Diseases to Child Tui Na Massage: Three Case Studies

Dr Hongchun Yin

Abstract

Tui na massage, one of the main forms of therapy in traditional Chinese medicine, has been widely used in the treatment of paediatric diseases. In this article I present three cases of common paediatric diseases: eczema, insomnia and facial paralysis which responded well to *tui na* massage. In case 2 the insomnia was treated using a unique *tui na* technique passed down from Mr Zhang Xizhen, i.e. massaging with egg white on the three *yang* channels. As the *tui na* massage is safe and promising, it is worthy of further study.

Key words: child *tui na* massage, eczema, insomnia, facial paralysis.

Paediatric *tui na* massage (also called child *tui na* or child massage) as a branch of *tui na* therapy has a long history. *Tui na* massage has been recorded in the *Yellow Emperor Internal Classic (Huang Di Nei Jing)* over 2,700 years ago. In part one – *Plain Questions (Su Wen)*: Blood, *qi*, body, emotion – it says: ‘Disease born from bad circulation, massage it with medicinal liquor’. Paediatric massage has been used since the Sui and Tang dynasties as demonstrated in the *Thousand Ducat Formulas (Qian Jin Yao Fang)*: ‘Newborn babies are easily invaded by pathogenic Wind resulting in high body temperature, or in a worse scenario, convulsion. Massage with five herb liquorice ointment ... even for healthy babies, massaging the fontanel, feet and hands regularly in the mornings, with herbal ointment, also can help to prevent them from being invaded by pathogenic Cold and Wind.’

During the Ming dynasty paediatric massage was developed further and more widely used to treat paediatric diseases. Large numbers of paediatric massage monographs were published during this time. Children are usually not affected by the seven emotions/six desires, but are easily invaded by pathogenic Wind, Cold, excessive Heat/Dampness and food. Therefore paediatric diseases often manifest on the surfaces and usually respond well to massage therapy. *Tui na* massage is safe, painless and well received by children and their parents.

During my over 24 years of practising in the UK and China I have used massage in the treatment of paediatric diseases with good results. Here I present three cases.



Case 1: Newborn Eczema

Baby K, male, 20 days old, was brought to see me in February 2011. He was born at full term with no postnatal complications. Three days after his birth he developed eczema. The mother took him to see the GP who prescribed emollient creams. But his condition got worse.

When I saw him, most of his body was covered in a red skin rash with some areas rough and crusty. Some areas on the face and near his ears were blistery and weeping small amounts of yellowish fluid. He was clearly upset and irritable. He was constantly crying and wouldn't sleep. He kept on passing wind. His tongue was red with slightly thicker, white coating. The Chinese medicine diagnosis was Heat and Dampness in the *yang ming* channels, fumigating and steaming the skin, and disturbing the *shen*. The treatment principle was to clear the Heat and Dampness, to free the obstruction in the Stomach and Large Intestine and to tranquilise the Mind.



Image 1

The treatment method was paediatric *tui na* massage daily for 20 minutes in the following order: Arc-pushing *nei ba gua* (circle in the centre of the palm) anticlockwise (see image 1), followed by clearing *tian he shui* at the medial side of the forearm (see image 1), pushing *liu fu* at the ulnar side of the

forearm (see image 1), rubbing the umbilical button, kneading the abdomen, pinching the spine downwards, kneading St 36 *zu san li* and rubbing Ki 1 *yong quan*. Because the baby was breastfeeding, his mother was asked to avoid hot spicy food.

When I saw him the following day, his mother said the baby slept much better after the first treatment. The skin was less flushing, but the skin rash was the same. Since the baby slept better, indicating that the treatment was effective, the same treatment was given.

On the third visit, the baby was much calmer. He had a good night's sleep and passing wind was reduced significantly. The skin exudates on the face and near the ears had decreased and the redness reduced dramatically. The skin rash on his face and torso area had improved. Same treatment was repeated.

On the fourth visit, he was much better: the skin rash had almost disappeared, the colour was normal and he was sleeping well. He had his last session with the same treatment, plus extra massage on the Spleen channel and pinching the spine upwards to tonify the Spleen *qi*.

Discussion: As this baby suffered from eczema at three days old, the cause could neither be the six exogenous factors nor internal emotional injuries, so I presumed it was from the food. His mother admitted that she always liked to eat spicy/greasy food, the Heat and Dampness of which had been passed to the foetus through the placenta and to the infant through the breast milk. The Heat and Dampness disturbed the *qi* flow in the gastrointestinal tract resulting in the baby's passing of wind. The Heat and Dampness fumigated and steamed up the skin resulting in eczema.

I thought the Heat-Dampness in his body could not be completely

corrected by four sessions of *tui na* therapy and it may recur. I was right. A month later, the mother brought him to me because he had developed a few skin rashes on the face. I gave him the same *tui na* massage. The skin rashes disappeared after one session. To prevent the recurrence, he continued the same treatment once a month for the next six months when the treatment was stopped. He is now one year old without a relapse.

Case 2: Insomnia

Female, six years old, who complained of having difficulties falling asleep and being unable to focus during the day for three months. The girl had difficulties falling asleep and sometimes stayed awake until midnight. Her teacher at school told the parents that she was tired and couldn't concentrate during lessons. The parents were very anxious and upset, hence they brought her to see me.

My first impression: she was well developed, very active and sporty. She had a good appetite and was slightly constipated. Her lips were red and the tongue was red with little coating. Her pulses were wiry and thin, but more powerful on the right hand side.

The Chinese diagnosis was *yin* deficiency and *yang* floating up, the *yang* failing to enter the *yin*, which led to the sleeplessness. The treatment principle was to nourish *yin* to match the *yang*, to tranquilise the mind and to calm the nerves.

The treatment method was paediatric massage on the following channels: the three *yang* channels on the limbs (Stomach, Gall Bladder, Bladder), the Bladder channel on the back and head, plus the hairline around the head, using egg white instead of massage oil. I massaged with both thumbs along the above channels for about 20 minutes, pressing Du 20 *bai hui* ten times, and then rubbing Ki 1 *yong quan* for one minute. After the first treatment the girl went to bed before nine in the evening and had a good night's sleep. She was given one more session of massage to prevent reoccurrence.

Discussion: I learnt the massage technique applying egg white on the *yang* channels to treat child insomnia from Zhang Xizhen, a famous paediatric *tui na* massage doctor in Qingdao. I have applied this massage technique to many children who suffered insomnia and achieved very good results, both in China and the UK, most children responding well after just one session.

This child presented with a red tongue and little coating. She was very active, with slight constipation and a more powerful pulse on the right hand side (the blood is reflected on the pulses on

the left, whilst the *qi* is reflected on the pulses on the right), indicating *yin* deficiency with *yang* excess. The treatment principle was to nourish the *yin* and to suppress the *yang*.

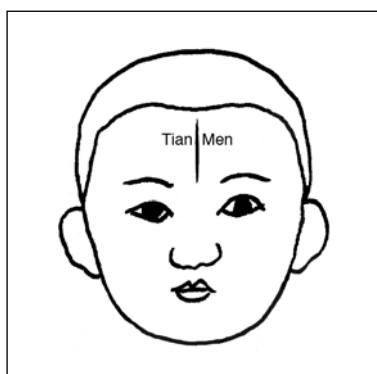


Image 2

Using eggs as medicine has been recorded in the *Treatise on Febrile Disorders (Shang Han Lun)*, such as in the Coptis – e *jiao* – Egg Yellow decoction. Egg white is a colourless, transparent fluid, sweet in flavour and slightly cold. It has been recorded in the *Herbal Classic Extra Record (Ben Jing Bie Lu)* 'to treat heated, red, and painful eyes; to clear Heat from the upper abdomen; to reduce irritability, fullness, cough and breathlessness; to stop child diarrhoea; to treat dystocia and placental retention. After soaking overnight in vinegar the egg white can be used to treat jaundice and excessive heat and irritability.'

In the *Herbal Classic Addendum (Ben Cao Shi Yi)* it is recorded that 'eggs can eliminate Heat and irritability. The egg white can nourish *yin* and clean Heat as well as lubricate the skin. Massaging the *yang* channels with egg white can bring *yang* into *yin* and clear the Heat from all the *yang* channels.'

There are many calming points on the head and along the hairline, such as Du 20 *bai hui*, *tian men*, which is located in a straight line above M-HN-3 *yin tang* just below the hair line (see image 2) and N-HN-54 *an mian*, plus all the *yang* channels which meet on the head. Massaging along the hairline of the head with egg white can calm the nerves and improve sleep. Massaging Ki 1 *yong quan* helps to bring the Heat back to the Kidneys and to clear the Heat.

Case 3: Facial Paralysis

Female, two and a half years old, suffered from facial paralysis for three days. The mother noticed some changes on her daughter's left side of the face. She took her to see the local GP who diagnosed facial paralysis and prescribed an antiviral and corticosteroid. As the mother was concerned about the side effects of these medicines she turned to acupuncture treatment.

Using eggs as medicine has been recorded in the *Treatise on Febrile Disorders (Shang Han Lun)*, such as in the Coptis – e *jiao* – Egg Yellow decoction. Egg white is a colourless, transparent fluid, sweet in flavour and slightly cold. It has been recorded in the *Herbal Classic Extra*

When I first saw the little girl I noticed that the left corner of her mouth was drooping, the left side of her naso-labial fold and the creases on her forehead had disappeared and she was unable to close her left eye. The blowing-out-the-cheeks test was positive as her breath was leaking out on the left. She also had a clear nasal discharge and pain behind the left ear.

The diagnosis was exterior Cold and Wind pathogens invading the passages of the facial channels. The treatment principle was: to expel the pathogenic Wind-Cold and to remove the obstruction from the channels with pungent and warm technique.

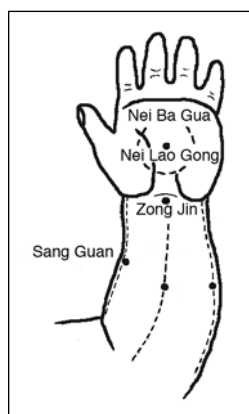


Image 3

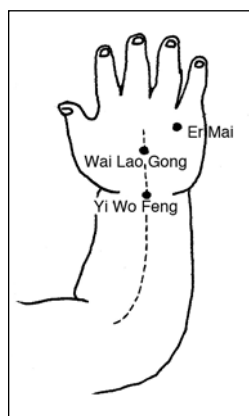


Image 4

Initially I tried acupuncture, but because the girl didn't stop moving I used paediatric *tui na* massage instead. The acu-points and techniques were applied in the following order: rubbing bilaterally *wai lao gong* on the dorsum of the hand opposite to *nei lao gong* (see image 3); *er mai* in the depression of the metacarpo-phalangeal joint of the ring and little finger on the dorsum of the hand (see image 4); *yi wo feng* in the depression in the middle of the transverse wrist crease on the dorsum of hand (see image 4); *zong jin* near the middle of the palmar wrist crease (see image 3) and TH 5 *wai guan*; rubbing along the Lung meridian to clear the channel and pushing *sang guan* midway between wrist and elbow on the radial aspect of the forearm (see image 3); kneading GB 14 *yang bai*, St 6 *jia che*, St 4 *di cang*, St 2 *si bai*, Ren 10 *xia guan*, SI 18 *quan liao*, TH 17 *yi feng* and GB 20 *feng chi* all on the left side; rubbing Du 16 *feng fu* and pinching the spine upwards.

After the treatment, her whole body perspired slightly. The mother brought her back for further treatment two days later. The facial paralysis was significantly reduced, the muscles on the left side of her face could move, the runny nose had stopped and all the symptoms had improved. The same treatment was given. During the third visit three days later her face looked normal and

functioned well. I gave her one more treatment to consolidate the effect.

Discussion: Acupuncture has been shown to treat facial paralysis effectively, but this patient was too young and could not cope with it. Therefore I used child *tui na* massage instead. The aetiology of facial paralysis is often external Wind-Cold invasion into the *yang* channels on the face, which can block the *qi* flow along the channels. The tendons and muscles in the affected areas stop working due to lack of nutrition. In this case, apart from the facial paralysis the girl also showed symptoms relating to external Wind-Cold, like nasal discharge and pain behind the left ear, so relieving the exterior syndrome with pungent and warm technique was the treatment principle.

Rubbing *wai lao gong*, kneading *er ma* and rubbing *yi wo feng* to dispel the pathogenic Wind and Cold; kneading *zong jin* to unblock the facial channels; because the Lungs control the whole body surface, the Lung channel was massaged to clean and tonify the Lungs, to strengthen its dispersing function and help to expel the external Cold; pushing *sang guan* to warm up *yang qi*; rubbing GB 14 *yang bai*, St 6 *jia che*, St 4 *di cang*, St 2 *si bai*, Ren 10 *xia guan*, SI 18 *quan liao*, TH 17 *yi feng* and GB 20 *feng chi* on the affected side of the face to dredge the three *yang* channels and further expel the Wind-Cold; pinching the spine upwards to nourish the *yuan qi* and also help to expel the Cold.

Summary

Paediatric *tui na* massage therapy is simple and easy to apply. To achieve the best results one needs to treat patients according to the correct syndrome differentiation. There are plenty of signs to help us identify the patterns. In case 1 it was the

‘Accurate acu-points choice and the application of the correct techniques are important for the best treatment effects. For example, pinching the spine in different directions usually results in completely different treatment effects’

‘frequent passing of wind’, in case 2 it was ‘the pulse on the right side being stronger than on the left side’ and in case 3 it was the ‘watery and runny nose’, which were the key signs of the respective syndromes.

Accurate acu-points choice and the application of the correct techniques are important for the best treatment effects. For example, pinching the spine in different directions usually results in completely different treatment effects. In case 1 the pinching was applied downwards to cleanse and in case 3 it was applied upwards to warm and nourish the *qi*. In case 2 a unique massage technique involving egg white was used.

References

Chinese Massage – *A Practical English-Chinese Dictionary of Traditional Chinese Medicine*. (July 1996). Shanghai College of Traditional Chinese Medicine.

Images 1 to 4 were copied from tcmdiscovery.com/points-in-infantile-massage

With special thanks to Dr Friedrich Staebler, Dr Xiangyun Zhang and Mr Mark Bovey for editing and correcting the English.

Editor’s note: A Chinese version of this article (with an abstract in English) has also just been published in the Journal of Chinese Medicine in the UK (英国中医), Vol 2, Issue 1, January 2013.