

The Needle

Regular clinical insights from amanualofacupuncture.com

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Deep Needling for Lumbar Disc Herniation (Pain Research and Management)

Summary: This original randomized controlled trial evaluated the efficacy of deep needling at the foramen acupoint ([see article](#) for location details) for lumbar disc herniation, using CT scans to verify precise needle placement. The findings reveal that safely reaching the outer intervertebral foramen at a depth of 60-70 mm provided significantly better pain relief and functional improvement than conventional shallow needling or standard [Huatuoji](#) points.

Traditional Context from A Manual of Acupuncture: While traditional practitioners might occasionally overlook purely anatomical needling in favor of distal channel treatments, targeting the physical lesion itself is fully supported by our [foundational texts](#). "Local points are those which lie over, on, or in close proximity to the diseased area. This is perhaps the most obvious method of point selection, yet one which is of great importance in acupuncture treatment, and it should not be dismissed, as it sometimes is, as simplistic or symptomatic."

Clinical Application: While you likely do not have a CT scanner in your clinic, this study reinforces the clinical value of anatomical precision and depth when addressing recalcitrant lumbar pathology. Rather than relying solely on a standardized prescription, consider integrating safely executed, deeper local insertions at the specific spinal level alongside your tailored traditional distal points, such as [Weizhong BL-40](#) or [Houxi SI-3](#).

[Read the full piece](#)

A Pearl from the Clinic

In this new section, active practitioners share some of their favourite tricks and tips.

'For a long time, my routine with a new patient was always the same: interview first, then check the pulse and tongue, and finally begin treatment. There is nothing wrong with this method, but a while ago, I experimented with swapping the order. I discovered that looking at the tongue and taking the pulse before we even talk strips away the preconceptions that build up during an interview. Not only does this yield a more accurate reading, but it also allows me to tailor my questions based on what the body is already telling me.'

[Tom Kennedy](#) (Editor of The Needle) runs a clinic in Bristol, UK.

Want your pearl of wisdom to be considered for a future issue? Just reply to this email, keeping it to no more than a few sentences. Remember to include your full name, location, link to your website if you have one, and number of years in practice.

Acupuncture for Functional Dyspepsia: Does Experience Matter? (Frontiers in Medicine)

Summary: This secondary analysis of a randomized clinical trial investigated whether an acupuncturist's years of clinical experience (comparing junior practitioners to those with over five years of practice) influenced treatment outcomes for functional dyspepsia. The findings reveal that patients treated by senior acupuncturists achieved significantly greater improvements in postprandial fullness, early satiety, and overall quality of life at both the 4-week and 12-week follow-ups.

Traditional Context from *A Manual of Acupuncture*: This study suggests that clinical efficacy deepens with years of practice. As the [Spiritual Pivot](#) says, "The twelve channels are where beginners start and masters end. To beginners it seems easy; the masters know how difficult it is."

Clinical Application: While foundational point selections for digestive issues remain vital, this study suggests that your refined manual techniques, palpatory sensitivity, and cultivated clinical presence can directly translate into superior patient outcomes.

[Read the full piece](#)

Acupuncture for Mild to Moderate Depression: Remodeling the Prefrontal Cortex (Neuropharmacology)

Summary: This original randomized sham-controlled trial investigated the efficacy of acupuncture for mild to moderate depressive disorder and its impact on brain activity using functional near-infrared spectroscopy. The findings reveal that eight weeks of real acupuncture provided significantly greater and more sustained relief of depressive and anxiety symptoms than sham treatment, directly enhancing activation and connectivity within the brain's prefrontal cortex.

Clinical Application: Consider complementing your traditional distal point selections with points on the anterior scalp that anatomically correspond to the prefrontal cortex, such as Shenting DU-24 or Benshen GB-13, for patients

experiencing low mood. Additionally, sharing with patients that acupuncture actively improves blood flow and connectivity in the brain's emotional centers can be a powerful, evidence-based way to build their confidence in the treatment process.

[Read the full piece](#)

Which point am I?

I am a jing-well point renowned for my ability to revive consciousness from collapse, such as in cases of windstroke. Because my channel's internal pathway reaches its highest point at the throat, I am frequently pricked to bleed for acute, excess-type throat disorders. Furthermore, due to my ability to treat stasis and heat in the Heart, I was included among Sun Si-miao's thirteen ghost points under the alternative name *Ghost Faith* for the treatment of mania and epilepsy.

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