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## A Nursing Case Report of Fire Dragon Cupping Comprehensive Moxibustion for Yang-Deficiency Type Insomnia

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### Abstract

This article summarizes the therapeutic efficacy observation and nursing experience of fire dragon cupping comprehensive moxibustion in one case of yang-deficiency type insomnia. Based on the theory of TCM syndrome differentiation and nursing, fire dragon cupping comprehensive moxibustion treatment was administered with dynamic observation, combined with routine nursing measures including emotional nursing care and daily living nursing care, which effectively improved the patient's sleep quality, alleviated the patient's anxiety, and enhanced the patient's quality of life.

### Full Text

## A Nursing Case Report on Huolong Cupping Comprehensive Moxibustion for a Patient with Yang Deficiency Type Insomnia

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### Abstract

This article summarizes the therapeutic outcomes and nursing experience of a patient with Yang deficiency type insomnia treated with Huolong cupping comprehensive moxibustion. Based on the theory of syndrome differentiation and nursing in traditional Chinese medicine (TCM), the patient received Huolong cupping comprehensive moxibustion with dynamic observation, combined with

routine nursing measures including emotional care and daily living support. The treatment effectively improved the patient's sleep quality, alleviated anxiety, and enhanced overall quality of life.

**Keywords:** Huolong cupping comprehensive moxibustion; insomnia; emotional nursing care

Insomnia is a pathological condition characterized by abnormal sleep acquisition, primarily manifested as reduced sleep duration and depth [1]. The etiology of insomnia is multifactorial, including improper diet, emotional disturbances, excessive fatigue, anxiety, and post-illness deficiency [2]. According to TCM theory, the kidney serves as the foundation of Yang Qi throughout the body, and decline of kidney Yang can directly affect the waxing and waning of human Yang Qi, leading to insomnia [3]. Inheritance and innovation constitute essential elements of TCM development [4]. Huolong cupping comprehensive moxibustion is a novel characteristic TCM therapy that integrates scraping, moxibustion, massage, and hot compress, possessing functions of unblocking, regulating, warming, and tonifying [5]. This article reports the nursing experience of one case of Yang deficiency type insomnia treated with Huolong cupping comprehensive moxibustion.

## 1 Clinical Data

The patient, Li, female, 47 years old, presented with a chief complaint of difficulty falling asleep for over one year. The current illness began one year prior when work-related stress and pressure led to difficulty initiating sleep, light sleep with frequent awakenings, and inability to return to sleep after waking, accompanied by vivid dreams. The patient felt as if she had not slept at all upon waking. No specialized treatment had been received during this period. On March 22, 2024, she visited the TCM Nursing Clinic at Zaozhuang Branch of Dongfang Hospital, Beijing University of Chinese Medicine.

**Presenting symptoms:** Difficulty falling asleep (requiring 1-2 hours), light sleep with easy awakening, 4-5 hours of sleep per night, irritability, fatigue, occasional dizziness and tinnitus, poor memory, cold intolerance in extremities, preference for warm drinks. Appetite was normal; bowel movements were dry; urination was normal. Tongue presentation: pale with white greasy coating. Pulse: deep and thready.

**Western medicine diagnosis:** Sleep disorder

**TCM diagnosis:** Insomnia (Yang deficiency type)

**Treatment principle:** Warm Yang and nourish the spirit

**Intervention:** Huolong cupping comprehensive moxibustion, once daily for 40 minutes per session, for 10 consecutive days.

**Treatment progress:**

After the first treatment on March 23, the patient reported that sleep onset time decreased to 30 minutes that night with no nocturnal awakenings. Treatment

was continued.

After the fifth treatment on March 27, the patient reported sleep onset time decreased to 30 minutes, with 6 hours of sleep per night and only occasional awakening once nightly. Symptoms of fatigue, dizziness, and tinnitus improved significantly.

## 2 Nursing Care

### 2.1 Nursing Assessment

**Sleep quality assessment:** The Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index (PSQI) was used [6]. This scale comprehensively evaluates subjective sleep quality, sleep onset latency, sleep efficiency, sleep duration, sleep disturbances, and daytime dysfunction. Total scores range from 0 to 21, with higher scores indicating poorer sleep quality. The patient's PSQI score was 14 points.

**Anxiety assessment:** The Self-Rating Anxiety Scale (SAS) was used to evaluate anxiety levels [7]. SAS total score <50 indicates normal, 50-60 indicates mild anxiety, 61-70 indicates moderate anxiety, and >70 indicates severe anxiety. The patient's SAS total score was 63, indicating moderate anxiety.

### 2.2 Nursing Diagnosis

Based on physical assessment and patient reports, the following nursing diagnoses were identified:

- Sleep pattern disturbance: related to high psychological stress
- Activity intolerance: related to sleep disturbance and anxiety
- Anxiety: related to sleep disturbance
- Knowledge deficit: related to lack of disease-related knowledge

### 2.3 Nursing Plan

To address the identified problems, the following nursing plan was developed:

Emotional nursing care: Enhance communication with the patient to release stress, provide comfort and emotional stabilization, and improve sleep quality

Health education: Provide education about insomnia to enhance disease prevention awareness and self-management capabilities

## 3 Nursing Interventions

### 3.1 Huolong Cupping Comprehensive Moxibustion Technique

**Procedure:** The patient was placed in prone position with the back fully exposed. A large Huolong cup was selected, and scraping oil was evenly applied to the local area. The moxa stick inside the cup was ignited, and after uniform combustion, the cup was maneuvered with both hands using both palms. During application, the therapist's hypothenar eminence first contacted the skin before placing the cup. Various techniques including kneading, grinding,

pushing, pressing, pointing, rocking, flashing, vibrating, and hot ironing were applied to the skin and muscle tissue of the back and waist using clockwise and counterclockwise rotations and rocking manipulations. Key acupoints including Xinshu (BL15), Shenshu (BL23), Geshu (BL17), and Danshu (BL19) received focused rocking manipulation. A therapeutic towel was placed on the head, with focused rocking manipulation applied to Baihui (GV20), Sishencong (EX-HN1), Anmian (EX-HN22), and Fengchi (GB20). A small Huolong cup was used for focused rocking manipulation on Shenmen (HT7) and Neiguan (PC6). Throughout the procedure, continuous cup maneuvering was maintained, with constant skin temperature monitoring via the therapist's hypothenar eminence to make adjustments. Careful temperature control was exercised to avoid excessive heat and improper movements that could cause moxa ash to fall and cause burns. Each moxibustion session lasted 40 minutes, until the skin became slightly red and warm. Treatment was administered once daily for 10 consecutive days.

### 3.2 Syndrome-Based Nursing Care

**Lifestyle and daily living care:** Establish good living and sleep habits. The bedroom should have dim lighting, be noise-free, with appropriate pillow height, and cotton light-colored sleepwear. Avoid irritating odors.

**Dietary care:** Maintain a light diet. Dinner should avoid excessive greasy foods, should not be taken on an empty stomach or overeat. Oatmeal porridge and steamed bread are recommended as they contain abundant tryptophan, which converts to 5-hydroxytryptamine in the body and exerts good sleep-promoting effects.

**Emotional nursing care:** Through education about insomnia-related knowledge and analysis of the relationship between disease and emotions, help patients develop proper coping abilities and eliminate psychological factors causing sleep disturbances.

**Health education:** Avoid electronic products such as mobile phones, computers, and television for 30 minutes to 1 hour before bedtime to reduce blue light interference with sleep quality.

## 4 Efficacy Observation and Follow-up

Before treatment, the patient's PSQI score was 14 and SAS score was 63 (moderate anxiety). After 10 days of treatment, the PSQI score decreased to 8 and SAS score decreased to 48. The patient reported significant sleep improvement, feeling energetic, with rosy complexion and warm extremities. Follow-up at 7 days post-treatment showed no recurrence. The patient was advised to maintain good sleep habits and keep a pleasant mood.

## Discussion

The prevalence of insomnia is increasing annually and has become a significant public health issue in China. According to TCM theory, kidney Yang is the root of all Yang in the body, and the Yang Qi of all organs cannot flourish without it. Kidney Yang deficiency damages the overall Yang Qi, disrupts the balance of Yang Qi waxing and waning, and consequently affects human sleep-wake cycles. The warming Yang method offers unique advantages in treating insomnia. Huolong cupping comprehensive moxibustion achieves therapeutic goals of warming Yang, dispelling cold, and warming meridians through specially designed cup openings combined with cup maneuvering techniques of pressing, pushing, kneading, and grinding [8]. Based on Qi ascending-descending theory, key acupoints were selected for focused rocking manipulation: Baihui, Sishencong, Anmian, Fengchi, Shenmen, Neiguan, Xinshu, Shenshu, Geshu, and Danshu. Baihui, where all head meridian Qi converges, possesses effects of refreshing the mind, calming the spirit, and regulating Yin-Yang, serving as a crucial acupoint for regulating brain function. Combined with the extraordinary points Sishencong and Anmian, it can tranquilize the mind, calm the spirit, and extinguish liver wind [9]. Fengchi, located in the posterior neck, can unblock meridian Qi in the head and neck [10]. The heart stores the spirit; Shenmen on the Hand Shaoyin Heart Meridian is the gateway of the spirit, possessing sedative, spirit-calming, and sleep-promoting effects. Neiguan, the Luo-connecting point of the Hand Jueyin Pericardium Meridian, is a critical pathway for spirit Ming's entry and exit, with effects of calming the heart, tranquilizing the spirit, and harmonizing the stomach to relieve pain. Xinshu, the back-shu point of the Foot Taiyang Bladder Meridian, can regulate Heart Meridian Qi and nourish the heart to calm the spirit. Shenshu, located on the Foot Taiyang Bladder Meridian, is based on the TCM concept that "the kidney governs bones, generates marrow, and the brain is the sea of marrow." When kidney Qi is abundant, the spirit is vigorous and the brain is agile. Geshu and Danshu together form the Sihua points. Geshu, the influential point of blood, belongs to Yin; Danshu governs Qi and belongs to Yang. These two points, one Yang and one Yin, one Qi and one blood, work together to harmonize Qi and blood and regulate Yin-Yang [11]. In summary, Huolong cupping comprehensive moxibustion for Yang deficiency type insomnia offers advantages of being free of side effects, simple to operate, and providing stable therapeutic effects, warranting further in-depth research and clinical application.

**Informed consent was obtained from the patient for this case report. There are no conflicts of interest in this article.**

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