
AI translation · View original & related papers at
chinaxiv.org/items/chinaxiv-202411.00027

Observation on the Efficacy of Modified TCM Meridian Balance Fire Cupping Combined with Head Gua Sha in Patients with Wind-Cold Common Cold

Authors: Yang Jing, Wu Ying, Wu Ying

Date: 2024-10-29T00:00:00+00:00

Abstract

Objective: To observe the therapeutic effect of modified meridian balancing cupping therapy combined with head gua sha in treating wind-cold type common cold.

Methods: Thirty patients with wind-cold type common cold admitted between September and December 2023 were selected and treated with modified meridian balancing cupping therapy combined with head gua sha. Changes in symptoms and signs before and after treatment were observed.

Results: Among the 30 patients, 17 cases were cured after one treatment session, 5 after two sessions, and 2 after three sessions, achieving a total cure rate of 80%.

Conclusion: Modified meridian balancing cupping therapy combined with head gua sha can effectively treat wind-cold type common cold.

Full Text

Preamble

“Characteristic Nursing Techniques of Traditional Chinese Medicine”
Special Column (Issue 2) Call for Papers

Abstract

Objective: To observe the therapeutic effects of a modified meridian balancing cupping method combined with head scraping for wind-cold common cold.

Methods: Thirty patients with wind-cold type common cold admitted between

September and December 2023 were treated with the modified meridian balancing cupping method of Traditional Chinese Medicine combined with head scraping. Changes in cold symptoms and signs before and after treatment were observed. **Results:** Among the 30 patients, 17 were cured after one treatment, 5 after two treatments, and 2 after three treatments, achieving a total cure rate of 80%. **Conclusion:** The modified meridian balancing cupping method combined with head scraping can effectively treat wind-cold common cold.

Corresponding Author: Wu Ying, E-mail: 526552253@qq.com

Keywords: Modified meridian balancing cupping; Head scraping; Wind-cold common cold; Traditional Chinese medicine nursing

Common cold [1] is a condition caused by exposure to external pathogenic factors or untimely atmospheric influences. Wind-cold common cold results specifically from exposure to wind-cold pathogenic factors, occurring predominantly in autumn and winter. Its main clinical manifestations include aversion to cold, fever, nasal congestion, rhinorrhea, cough, dyspnea, headache, and body pain. The *Huangdi Neijing* states: “When vital qi resides within, pathogenic factors cannot cause disease; where pathogenic factors gather, the qi must be deficient.” Therefore, Traditional Chinese Medicine holds that when the body’s vital qi is weak and resistance declines, it becomes susceptible to invasion by the six excessive pathogenic factors.

Balancing cupping [2] originates from traditional cupping therapy and integrates ten cupping methods based on the foundation of ordinary cupping, demonstrating efficacy in warming and unblocking meridians while expelling pathogenic factors. The Governor Vessel (Du Meridian) regulates qi and blood of the yang meridians and is known as the “sea of yang meridians.” The Bladder Meridian of Foot-Taiyang has the longest superficial circulation pathway and possesses the most vigorous yang qi among the twelve regular meridians. Treatment applied to the back can stimulate the body’s yang qi, harmonize the zang-fu organs, and balance yin-yang through meridian transmission, ultimately achieving therapeutic goals. This study modified the balancing cupping technique through clinical observation by replacing petroleum jelly with scraping oil as the medium, eliminating the cold sensation of applying petroleum jelly to the back in cold weather. Combined with back pushing and scraping on the Governor Vessel and Bladder Meridian after applying scraping oil, this approach unblocks meridians and opens the interstitial spaces [2], enabling the body to expel wind-cold pathogenic factors and thereby treat wind-cold common cold. The report follows below.

1.1 General Data

Patients were selected from the respiratory outpatient clinic of Loudi Hospital of Traditional Chinese Medicine between September and December 2023. Inclusion criteria: Met the diagnostic criteria for common cold with wind-cold pattern according to the *Guidelines for Diagnosis and Treatment of Common Cold*

in *Traditional Chinese Medicine (2015 Edition)* [3]; no comorbid respiratory diseases such as bronchial asthma, interstitial lung disease, or bronchiectasis; no severe hepatic or renal dysfunction; not psychiatric patients, pregnant, or lactating; and no allergies to materials used in the procedure.

A total of 30 patients were enrolled, aged 18–55 years (mean 44.9 years), including 14 males and 16 females. Disease duration ranged from 1–3 days (mean 2.8 days). Clinical manifestations included fever with aversion to cold (11 cases), nasal congestion with rhinorrhea (11 cases), cough with itchy throat (7 cases), thin white sputum, absence of sweating, headache and body pain (11 cases), and stiff neck and back discomfort (6 cases). None had coronary heart disease.

1.2 Methods

Pre-procedure: Reviewed patient medical records and inquired about contraindications for cupping such as coronary heart disease. Advised patients to maintain good mood, adjust clothing according to seasonal changes, and establish healthy lifestyle routines. Avoided staying up late, maintained healthy diet without spicy, cold, raw, or greasy stimulating foods, and encouraged drinking warm water. Explained the main procedure and effects of balancing cupping to patients.

Specific Procedure:

- 1. Flash Cupping:** The patient assumed a prone position with complete relaxation. Flash cupping was performed along both sides of the Bladder Meridian on the back from bottom to top, alternating left and right, for three rounds, with each round ending at Dazhui (GV14) and Changqiang (GV1) points on the Governor Vessel.
- 2. Rubbing Cupping:** Utilized the warming effect of the cups after flash cupping to perform rubbing movements on the Governor Vessel and Bladder Meridian on the back.
- 3. Essential Oil Back Massage:** The practitioner wore gloves, applied an appropriate amount of essential oil to the palms, warmed it by rubbing, then evenly applied it to the patient's back using point-pressing techniques. Finger-pushing, palm-pushing, and knuckle-pushing techniques were employed (three repetitions each).
- 4. Scraping:** A tiger-symbol copper scraping tool was used to scrape along the Governor Vessel, the first and second lateral lines of the Bladder Meridian, and the neck and shoulder region. The pressure was light and appropriate to patient tolerance.
- 5. Moving Cupping:** A size-3 cup was used for moving cupping along the Bladder Meridian, top to bottom for three repetitions, then along the midline of the back outward to the intercostal spaces from left to right.
- 6. Rubbing Cupping at Acupoints:** Moderate rubbing cupping was applied at Feishu (BL13), Dazhui (GV14), Dingchuan (EX-B1), Gao Huang (BL43), Dachangshu (BL25), and other points until warmth was generated.
- 7. Shaking and Vibrating Cupping:** A size-3 cup was used for shaking cupping along the first and second lateral lines of the Bladder Meridian (corresponding to zang-fu organ points), followed by Z-shaped vibrating cupping (three repetitions).
- 8. Retained Cupping:** Essential oil was wiped from the patient's back, and cups were retained sequentially along the Bladder Meridian

for 5 minutes. The patient was then instructed to lie supine without a pillow, expose the chest, relax completely, and close the eyes. Cups were retained at Danzhong (CV17), Tiantu (CV22), Zhongfu (LU1), Yunmen (LU2), and other points for 5–10 minutes. 9. **Head Scraping:** Performed simultaneously with retained cupping. Aromatic essential oil was applied to the scraping board to awaken the mind and induce relaxation. Point scraping at Yintang (EX-HN3) 3–5 times, Jingming (BL1) 3–5 times, then along the forehead from Zanzhu (BL2) through Yuyao, Sizhukong (TE23), Taiyang (EX-HN5), Tinggong (SI19), Tinghui (GB2), to Touwei (ST8). Scraped from Yingxiang (LI20) to Xiaguan (ST7), Jiache (ST6), grasped Fengchi (GB20) and Fengfu (GV16). With one hand supporting the head, the other hand scraped the three yang meridians of the head to Baihui (GV20), then scraped the Gallbladder Meridian bilaterally from Taiyang (EX-HN5) to Fengchi (GB20), alternating hands. Finally, rubbed the scalp roots with ten fingertips until warmth was generated, tapped the fontanelle 10–15 times with both hands, and pressed Hegu (LI4) and Quchi (LI11) for one minute. After this treatment, patients experienced warmth in the head and entire body with mild sweating.

Treatment Frequency: Balancing cupping every 3–5 days, each session lasting 40–50 minutes, with 3 sessions constituting one treatment course.

1.3 Observation Indicators

Improvements in seven symptoms were observed: fever with aversion to cold, nasal congestion with rhinorrhea, cough with itchy throat, thin white sputum, absence of sweating, headache and body pain, and stiff neck and back discomfort. Outcomes were recorded as either cured or not cured.

1.4 Statistical Methods

SPSS 22.0 software was used. Count data (%) were analyzed using chi-square test, with $P < 0.05$ considered statistically significant. Statistical analysis showed that the cure rate of the modified meridian balancing cupping combined with head scraping for wind-cold common cold patients increased progressively with treatment duration (see Table 1). Seventeen cases were cured after one treatment, 5 after two treatments, and 2 after three treatments, achieving a total cure rate of 80%. The remaining 6 patients were considered not cured due to ineffective improvement in thin white sputum symptoms.

Cupping therapy [4] is a folk therapy that treats disease by warming meridians, dispelling cold, and relaxing muscles and collaterals. Its principle is based on yin-yang theory, uses neurotransmission theory as its pathway, and centers on self-balance. It promotes blood circulation, dilates skin capillaries, and expels pathogenic factors, achieving effects of dispelling wind and dispersing pathogenic factors while activating blood and unblocking collaterals. Moving cupping along the Governor Vessel, Bladder Meridian, and bilateral back aims to open the interstitial spaces and induce sweating [5]. The negative pressure

stimulation from cupping causes local tissue hyperemia and subcutaneous ecchymosis, producing wind-dispelling, cold-dispelling, and pain-relieving effects [6]. The human Governor Vessel governs yang qi throughout the body, and the head is the confluence of all yang meridians. Scraping the Governor Vessel and head can harmonize whole-body yang qi, expel pathogenic factors, and ensure smooth blood flow. Scraping Fengchi (GB20), Hegu (LI4), and Quchi (LI11) can relieve exterior symptoms and alleviate pain. Balancing cupping therapy [7] employs diverse cupping techniques, primarily including flash cupping, rubbing cupping, sliding cupping, pushing cupping, moving cupping, rubbing cupping, vibrating cupping, shaking cupping, and retained cupping. The cup mouth is placed on corresponding acupoints of back meridians to implement pulling, squeezing, plucking, and kneading stimulation. Combined with back pushing and scraping on the Governor Vessel and Bladder Meridian after applying scraping oil, this unblocks meridians and opens interstitial spaces [8], enabling the body to achieve a state of “yin balance and yang secrecy.” Li You’e’s research [9] confirmed that balancing cupping therapy can dispel wind and dampness, warm meridians and disperse cold, producing significant improvement in nasal congestion, rhinorrhea, sneezing, and aversion to cold symptoms in wind-cold common cold after cupping. Yang Jingang’s study [10] verified that scraping can expel pathogenic factors, release exterior symptoms, and dispel wind and cold. Gu Shengqin’s research [11] confirmed that head scraping can improve blood circulation, open orifices and calm the mind, relieve pain, promote qi and blood circulation, and unblock several important head meridians (Governor Vessel, Bladder Meridian, Gallbladder Meridian, Triple Burner Meridian), helping to quickly relieve fatigue and improve disease symptoms.

In summary, the modified meridian balancing cupping method combined with head scraping for patients with early-stage wind-cold common cold is simple to perform, demonstrates reliable efficacy, and shows high patient compliance, making it worthy of clinical application and promotion. This method shows significant effects only for early-stage wind-cold common cold, while its clinical efficacy for wind-heat common cold patients requires further in-depth research. Future work will expand the sample size and include control groups for further investigation.

[1] Dong Ligu, Chen Guangkun. Gegen Tang Granules for Improving 100 Cases of Wind-Cold Common Cold Patients. *Guangming Journal of Chinese Medicine*, 2023, 38(18): 3500-3503.

[2] Liu Qiaofeng, Chen Junmin. Observation on Curative Effect and Nursing of Meridian Scraping Combined with Balancing Cupping Therapy in Cervical Bi Syndrome of Cold-Dampness Obstruction Type. *Cardiovascular Disease Electronic Journal of Integrated Traditional Chinese and Western Medicine*, 2019, 7(34): 7-9.

[3] Li Jiansheng, Yu Xueqing. Guidelines for Diagnosis and Treatment of Common Cold in Traditional Chinese Medicine (2015 Edition). *Journal of Traditional Chinese Medicine*, 2016, 57(8): 716-720.

- [4] Dong Jingjun, Liu Li'an, Wang Zhaoqin, et al. Preliminary Exploration of Cupping Therapy. *Massage and Rehabilitation Medicine*, 2015, 6(21): 39-40.
- [5] Jue Xinyu. Preliminary Exploration of Treating Early-Stage Wind-Cold Type Common Cold with Diaphoresis Method. *Chinese Community Doctors*, 2017, 33(36): 93-95.
- [6] Li Yang. Study on Application of Exterior-Releasing and Bowel-Unblocking Method in Pediatric Common Cold. Dissertation, Shandong University of Traditional Chinese Medicine, 2022.
- [7] Luo Qingye, Liu Xiangchao, Mo Da, et al. 100 Cases of Exogenous Wind-Cold Cough Treated by Balancing Cupping Combined with Acupoint Application of Chinese Medicine. *Guangming Journal of Chinese Medicine*, 2018, 33(20): 3044-3046.
- [8] Liu Qiaofeng, Chen Junmin. Observation on Curative Effect and Nursing of Meridian Scraping Combined with Balancing Cupping Therapy in Cervical Bi Syndrome of Cold-Dampness Obstruction Type. *Cardiovascular Disease Electronic Journal of Integrated Traditional Chinese and Western Medicine*, 2019, 7(34): 7-9.
- [9] Li You'e. 60 Cases of Wind-Cold Common Cold Treated by Pepper Water Foot Soak Combined with Balancing Cupping. *Modern Distance Education of Chinese Medicine*, 2012, 10(5): 38-39.
- [10] Yang Jingang. Application of Tujia Medicine External Treatment in Clinical Practice—Study on Mechanism of Scraping with Alcohol as Medium in Tujia Medicine for Viral Common Cold. Dissertation, Hubei Minzu University, 2015.
- [11] Gu Shengqin. Application Effect of Head Scraping in Nursing of Headache Patients. *Guide of China Medicine*, 2021, 19(7).

Note: Figure translations are in progress. See original paper for figures.

Source: ChinaXiv — Machine translation. Verify with original.