

CASE REPORT

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Fire needle acupuncture treatment for hand tendonitis

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Abstract

Hand tendonitis is a condition that occurs when the tendons in the hand become irritated or damaged. This can result from a sudden injury or develop gradually due to repetitive motions or overuse. Tendons play a key role in enabling movement by connecting muscles to bones. When they become inflamed through hand tendonitis, a person can have painful symptoms such as: weakness, swelling, stiff movement, tenderness. Many research studies and clinical findings have strongly supported acupuncture as an effective treatment for managing tendonitis. Acupuncture reduces the symptoms of tendonitis through a few mechanisms. Acupuncture has anti-inflammatory effects, it enhances blood circulation and stimulates the nervous system to release chemical compounds like endorphins. In this case, for this kind of problem such as hand tendonitis is used fire needle treatment. Fire needle therapy involves heating specially made thick or thin needles until they glow red-hot, then rapidly inserting the needle into specific points on the body. This research paper includes a case of a 61-year-old man who had trouble curling his fingers into a fist on his right hand. When bending his fingers, he experienced symptoms of pain and tingling. He had this problem for about 1 month. He came to the acupuncture center in May 2025 and has had 8 treatments with fire needle acupuncture. The patient felt improvement and relief in his fingers after the eighth treatment. The fire needle treatment gives positive results in the treatment of inflammatory processes of tendons, joints, sports injuries, etc.

Key words: fire needle, treatment, acupuncture, tendons

Introduction

Tendinitis, also known as tendonitis, is a condition where a tendon becomes inflamed or irritated, typically due to repetitive motion or overuse. Tendons are connective tissues that link muscles to bones and play a key role in movement. Tendonitis is fairly common, often resulting from jobs, sports, or hobbies that involve repetitive movements or place strain on the tendons. [1]

Many tendon conditions affecting the hand and wrist arise without a known cause. Symptoms often appear suddenly, without any prior injury or noticeable change in physical activity. In some cases, patients may recall engaging in unfamiliar hand-related tasks or experiencing minor local trauma shortly before symptoms begin. People with diabetes, especially, are more likely to develop tendon problems - trigger finger being a

common example. Symptoms include pain, swelling, weakness, tingling in fingers and etc. [2]

The main objectives in treating tendinitis are to ease pain and minimize inflammation. In many cases, simple self-care measures such as resting the affected area, applying ice, and using over-the-counter pain medications can be effective. However, complete healing may require several months. Medicines which are used for tendinitis include pain relievers, steroids, platelet-rich plasma. Physical therapy can also help for many tendon conditions. If symptoms persist despite physical therapy, the healthcare provider may recommend additional treatment options like dry needling or surgery. The diagnosis of tendinitis is based on the patient's history and physical examination. When the diagnosis is unclear, the patient may undergo an ultrasound, MRI, or X-ray. [3]

Acupuncture is a medical practice and healing philosophy that involves stimulating specific points on the body using fine needles or pressure. This method has its roots in traditional Chinese medicine. According to this belief system, good health depends on the balanced flow of *qi*, or 'vital energy,' which represents the dynamic interplay between yin and yang present throughout the physical world. This concept is grounded in the five elements wood, water, fire, earth, and metal, which form the basis of *qi* theory. When *qi* becomes blocked or excessive, it can lead to imbalance and illness. Acupuncture works to restore harmony by clearing blockages or reducing excess *qi* along specific pathways in the body, known as meridians. By influencing immune cell activity and regulating the release of immune signaling molecules, acupuncture helps reduce inflammation, which can in turn ease or lessen pain symptoms. [4,5]

Case report

This research paper includes a case of a 61-year-old man who had trouble curling his fingers into a fist on his right hand. When bending his fingers, he experienced symptoms of pain and tingling. He had this problem for about 1 month. By profession he is a gas station worker. As a therapy for this problem he used analgesics (with no success) and after one month he came to the center for Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) where he started his treatment with fire needle acupuncture. The treatments were performed once a week, his condition required eight treatments. Acupuncture needles were applied to certain points on the hand where there was already an inflammatory process. After the treatments, the patient began to slowly curl his fingers into a fist, the swelling decreased, and the flexibility of his fingers increased.

Treatments were done in a center for TCM and acupuncture in Skopje, North Macedonia by a doctor specialist in acupuncture and TCM. Treatments were done indoor, on a room temperature, with duration of 5 - 10 minutes. For the fire needling was used sharp heated needle made of tungsten steel, which was heated by ethanol lamp and quickly inserted on the points and removed instantly.

The human body has a remarkable capacity to store toxins, stress, and the effects of trauma, often embedding them deep within the joints, bones, and blood vessels. This is why uncovering and addressing certain conditions and symptoms can take time, patience, and thorough investigation. Acupuncture remains widely practiced in China, thanks to its deep-rooted history, straightforward technique, proven effectiveness, affordability, and relative safety. Globally, it is increasingly recognized as a form of complementary and alternative medicine. A unique branch of acupuncture fire needle therapy is viewed in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) as offering dual benefits: it stimulates the meridians through needling and dispels cold through applied heat. This combined approach is believed to promote the flow of both blood and *qi* throughout the

body, effectively relieve tissue edema and muscle spasms by promoting chronic inflammation reduction and enhancing tissue regeneration. Fire needling is a form of acupuncture therapy first documented in the *Huangdi Neijing*, one of China's oldest medical texts. While the exact origins of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) remain unclear, some evidence suggests it dates back over 5,000 years. Archaeological discoveries, including early acupuncture needles and signs of herbal medicine use, indicate that these practices may have existed between 4,000 and 8,000 years ago. [6,7,8]

Conclusion

In the treatment of hand tendinitis, the fire needle acupuncture gave the fastest results in our TCM practice. The fire needle treatment gives positive results in the treatment of inflammatory processes of tendons, joints, sports injuries, etc.

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Conflict of interest

The author have declared that no competing interests exist.

Acknowledgement

None.

Statement of Informed Consent

Written informed consent was obtained from the patient for his anonymized Information to be published in this article