

Case Study Research on Nausea and Vomiting in Pregnancy and the Benefits of Hinaishin Needles at Kidney 27

by Coleen Smith

Abstract

Research Question: How effective are *hinaishin* needles at Kidney 27 (KI-27) following a regular acupuncture treatment for the treatment of morning sickness?

Background: Morning sickness affects 50-90 percent of women in varying degrees during their pregnancy. Existing medications help but there is no perfect remedy. Women continue to suffer with nausea and vomiting and this fact prompted this case study research.

Methods: Four patients were treated over a one-year time period. The data in the case study was compiled using multiple methods: questionnaires, then direct and participatory observations.

Results: This paper may advance two insights: firstly, treating morning sickness with acupuncture is effective. Secondly, while valuing acupuncture and Chinese medicine, the respondents experienced significant improvement with tiny imbedded skin needles at (KI-27). The data will reveal that the *hinaishin* needle treatment had a more significant outcome than regular acupuncture treating morning sickness.

Conclusion: *Hinaishin* acupuncture is a Japanese approach and at the time of this study, little to no research was available in English about it. The immediate and long-term relief resulting from treatments using the subcutaneous needle technique suggests that this area needs to be developed and more widely used. The implications of this case study propose an entirely new way of treating nausea during pregnancy and may help further the usefulness of acupuncture. Further studies could be done using (KI-27) for all types of nausea and vomiting.

Case Studies

Materials and Methods

The four subjects of this study were receiving acupuncture on a regular basis at my clinic in Spokane Washington prior to getting pregnant. The length of treatment time prior to pregnancy

was between two and seven months. None of the subjects were taking any medications for nausea and vomiting, but had a physician monitoring their early pregnancy. Each subject came for acupuncture because of difficulties in conceiving and then continued their care throughout the pregnancy.

In this case study, I chose Japanese Seirin brand intradermal needles. There are different sizes (3-8 mm), materials (silver, gold, stainless steel) and gauges 40-44. The Japanese intradermal needles are 3-6mm stainless steel, individually packaged and tooled for relatively painless insertion. In *Japanese Acupuncture: A Clinical Guide* (Birch and Ida, 1998) we are told the angle of insertion follows the natural fold of the skin. When using intradermal needles on the chest, the authors suggest the needle point outward toward the limbs. Needle selection recommended by Birch and Ida for the chest is 3mm (Birch and Ida, 1998). In these case studies, 3mm intradermals were used and inserted subcutaneously toward the limbs.

Case Study One

Introduction/Chief Complaint

TIC, a 28-year-old female, presented to the clinic with morning sickness that started with both nausea and vomiting at six weeks of gestation.

Present Illness: The patient is a yoga instructor and part time retail sales person. She began getting sick this week with nausea building quickly to sudden violent bursts of vomiting. Sickness lasts all day, patient feels embarrassed and miserable. She had lost some weight: she believes three to five pounds.

History: TIC had trouble conceiving prior to her pregnancy. She tried to conceive for three years (Western medical diagnosis was diminished ovarian reserve). Her progesterone was low and her follicle-stimulating hormone (FSH) was high. On her initial visit prior to her pregnancy she said she had problems with anxiety, cramping, cravings, night sweats, low energy, hair loss, oily skin, and PMS symptoms.

Significant History Negatives: No complaints of lower back pain, hypertension, digestive issues, respiratory illness, or urinary discomfort.

Medications/Supplements/OTC: Prenatal vitamins, Vitamin C, Vitamin D, probiotics.

Dietary Information: TIC does not drink coffee. She does eat limited dairy, but enjoys vegetables; she does not drink alcohol or use recreational drugs or cigarettes. She eats only organic meats and vegetables. She has recently eliminated soy products.

Bowel and Urinary Habits: One BM daily, formed. Leans toward constipation, dry stool; normal urinary habits, denies any frequency or urgency.

Sleep Habits: Normal sleep 8 hours on average.

Activity/Exercise: Yoga five to six times a week.

Physical Appearance: Patient is physically fit. Thin build.

Vital Signs: Ht: 5'4" Wt: 115 lbs BP: 110/60 Pulse: 92 Respiration Rate/min: 20.

Tongue: Red thin tongue body with a thin white coat.

Pulse: Slippery, full, slightly rapid.

Physical Exam: Patient has thin dry skin, tender on palpation at KI-21 and soft and deficient at CV-12.

Diagnosis: TCM: Qi and Blood Deficiency (of Heart and Stomach) leading to Liver Qi Stagnation.

Western: Morning sickness.

Treatment

Principles: Strengthen Spleen and Stomach; tonify the Chong Mai and soothe Liver Qi. Benefit the Heart.

Acupuncture Treatments:

Seven Weeks' Gestation: PC-6, CV-14, ST-21, KI-6, ST-36, moxa at CV-12 (5-6 cones).

Diet: Reduce high fat or greasy foods, maintain some protein intake, small frequent meals, drink plenty of sips of fluid, and avoid dehydration.

Follow up/Plan: Clinic visit as needed, booked for once a week.

Eight Weeks' Gestation: The prior treatment was effective for four days; nausea built back up and patient vomited once yesterday. Came in today feeling badly, tearful and upset.

KI-6, KI-16, KI-27, ST-36, PC-6, LR-14. Felt better while on the table. Bilateral *hinaishin* needles inserted at KI-27 following treatment.

Nine Weeks' Gestation: Patient said she felt better overall with some nausea but no vomiting this week until needles fell out yesterday; vomited this morning.

KI-6, KI-16, KI-27, ST-36, PC-6, CV 14. Bilateral *hinaishin* needles inserted at KI-27 following treatment.

Ten Weeks' Gestation: 80 percent better, only sick twice this week; needles fell out two days before appointment.

PC-6, ST-36, CV-14, CV-13, KI-21, ST-20, GB-34, ST-34. Bilateral *hinaishin* needles inserted at KI-27 following treatment.

