

An Interview with Zhiyun Bo, inventor of Abdominal Acupuncture (Fu Zhen)

By Attilio D'Alberto and Eunkyung Kim

Q. So firstly Dr Bo, what is abdominal acupuncture?

A. Well, abdominal acupuncture is a new form of acupuncture in Chinese Medicine. It involves the application of needles according to the Abdominal Meridian System (AMS), as introduced by myself. It is therefore known as 'Bo's Method of Abdominal Acupuncture '(BMAA), (薄氏腹针疗法).

Q. How different is it from other forms of acupuncture?

A. It is built upon a combination of existing TCM theories aswell as new concepts as devised by me. It is a safer form of acupuncture due to the superficial penetration of the needles, much shallower than conventional techniques and so is less painful, as the 'de Qi' is not elicited in the usual way, which patients often find uncomfortable.

Q. Is abdominal acupuncture widely practiced in China?

A. Yes, it is. Such healthcare establishments as the Zhong Ri hospital in Beijing, Guang Dong Sheng hospital, Jiang Su Sheng hospital, Zhe Jiang Sheng hospital and Nanjing Shi hospital. It is also used outside China, in countries such as Italy and Greece with excellent results. There have been a number of studies conducted that prove abdominal acupuncture's success, with plans to launch more in the future.

Q. What disorders can it treat?

A. There are many disorders it can treat, particularly in relation to the following: osteo-muscular-articular disorders such as a stiff neck, cervical-dorsum-lumbar-spondylopathy, scapulohumeral periarthritis, tendinitis, rheumatoid arthritis, lumbar pain with sciatica, cervical spondylotic syndrome and arthrosis. Cerebrovascular disorders including thrombosis hemiplegia, senile dementia, cerebral arteriosclerosis, angiocardopathy, hypertension, hysteria, cerebral-haemorrhage and atrophy of the cerebellum. Disturbances of the nervous system such as anxiety, depression, headaches, neuritis and dizziness. Ocular disturbances, for example; atrophy and retrobulbar neuritis, degeneration of the retina, optic atrophy, cataract and glaucoma. Other disorders include Parkinson's disease and diabetic-neuritis.

Q. When is it contraindicated?

A. Well of course, you cannot practice abdominal acupuncture on pregnant patients! It is also contraindicated in acute abdominal disorders such as

peritonitis and in cases when varicomphalus induces splenomegaly and hepatomegaly. In instances of a malignant celiac tumour, abdominal acupuncture should also not be administered.

Q. So when did you discover this new technique?

A. Let me see, about two decades ago, I came across a resistance case of low back pain with sciatica. Both western and Chinese medical techniques failed to help the patient. I decided to apply needles at the acupoints Qihai (Ren 6) and Guānyuán (Ren 4), which are part of the Abdominal Meridian System (AMS) and has a connection with the meridian of the lumbar regions. The pain disappeared within 5 minutes. This was followed with further successes using the same treatment strategy. I then dedicated my time to the further understanding of AMS. Following decades of research into AMS, in 1991, I perfected the AMS theory and established the present protocols for the clinical practice of BMAA.

Q. What are the characteristics and mechanisms of abdominal acupuncture that make it so unique?

A. Acupuncture needles are applied to the AMS, with the acupoint Shénquè (神阙) at its centre. Varying the degree of penetration depth can dramatically alter the therapeutic outcome. This high level of efficacy is explained in my paper 'The importance of the acupoints Shénquè (神阙) in the study of the Abdominal Acupuncture' ¹.

In this paper, four main criteria were established:

1. The acupoint Shénquè (神阙) at the embryological stage, has formed the cornerstone of all the macroscopic regulation of the body.
2. It forms the mother-system of all the meridians in the body known as the Shénquè (神阙调控系统) system or "AMS".
3. The Shénquè system is also responsible for the Qì (communication) between the meridians, the auto regulation of blood vessels and therefore the body's circulation.
4. It also acts as the core centre of the Meridian System.

Q. What is the abdominal meridian system (AMS)?

A. The AMS is a network of meridian acupoints governed by the Shénquè system. The system regulates the distribution of Qi and Blood to the whole body. By puncturing specific acupoints on the abdomen, the Shénquè system can be employed to correct disharmonies and achieve a holistic balance. There are three different levels of puncturing depth, unlike the standard levels of Heaven, Man and Earth used in the Jing Lou system, which are used to treat various disorders. Each level has its own functional mechanism and therapeutic effect.

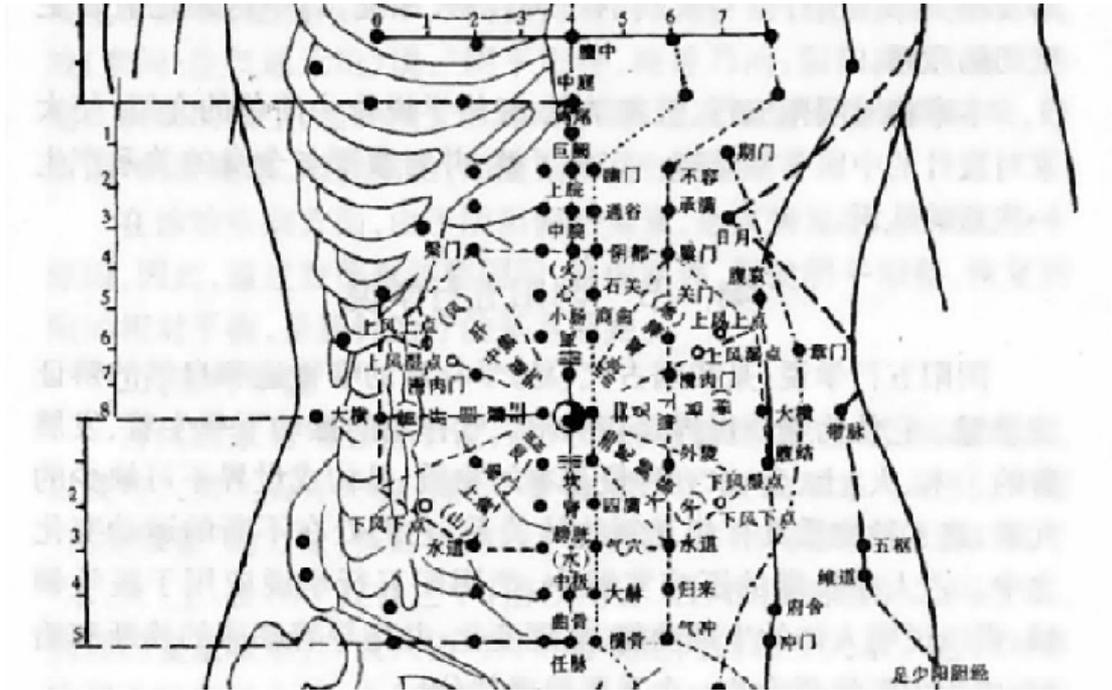


Figure 2. The Ba Gua on the abdomen ².

Q. What acupoints do you puncture when using the BMAA system?

A. We use a variety of acupoints located on the abdomen. They include points on the Ren, Stomach and Kidney meridians as well as new points on the new system, which I discovered during my twenty years of research.

Q. You mentioned before that there have been various studies conducted to prove abdominal acupuncture's effectiveness in clinical practice. Can you give an example?

A. Yes, of course. A study examined the effects of abdominal acupuncture against electro-acupuncture in 98 cases of a prolapsed lumbar intervertebral disc. The number of males was recorded at 57, with 41 females. The age ranged from 20 to 41+. The duration of the disorder ranged from 1 month to over 1 year. The number of subjects assigned to the abdominal acupuncture was 50 and 48 in the electro-acupuncture group. The results are shown in the table below ³.

Acupuncture Technique	Number of patients	Completely Effective	Significantly effective	Slightly effective	Not effective
Abdominal Acupuncture	50	20 (40%)	24 (48%)	6 (12%)	0 (0%)
Electro-Acupuncture	48	14 (29.2%)	20 (41.7%)	10 (20.8%)	4 (9.3%)

Q. Have you written any books on abdominal acupuncture?

A. Yes, I have written two comprehensive books on this new technique as well as books on the Shénquè theory. At the moment, the abdominal acupuncture books are available in two languages, Chinese and Italian. English and Korean versions are in the pipeline.

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Biographies

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