

CASE REPORT

Spleen Qi Deficiency in a Cat with Megacolon

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Signalment: 10 years old spayed indoor domestic short hair cat.

Owner's Main Complaint and History: The cat had a long history of constipation with worsening symptoms prior to presentation. She had no bowel movements for a week and was weak and dehydrated. She had not eaten any food for 2 days.

Physical Examination: The cat was weak and lethargic upon presentation. She had an impaction of colon and a full abdomen with hard feces in the abdomen. The owner tried some enema at home without success. A few days later she was treated at a vet clinic with perfusion and enema. Radiographs were taken which revealed an excess of hard feces in the colon and a spine deformation (scoliosis) at the thoracic vertebra level. The owner reported that the cat had fallen from a bed when she was a kitten but had no additional details to share regarding the fall. As she still had not passed any stool, acupuncture therapy was introduced to the owner who decided to try it before electing for surgery as the last option.

Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) Examination: The cat was shy, not moving during examination and appeared scared. She was a typical Water cat. She eats dry food but had only been drinking water for a few days with no food. She was dehydrated (grade 2/3). She had no temperature preference and did not feel cold or hot. She was an indoor cat but was not in a cage, and she roamed freely at home. Her coat was quite shiny and clean, no dandruff. Her paws were normal, and she had no body odor. Her tongue was pale and wet. Her pulse was weak, deep and stronger on the left side. At palpation, very impacted stools in lower abdomen could be felt. Even if the cat didn't look comfortable, she didn't seem to be in pain. Sensitivity was noticed at Back-shu point BL-20.

TCVM Diagnosis:^[1] The cat was diagnosed with Spleen Qi Deficiency due to her megacolon, weakness, anorexia, old age, tongue and pulse. She also had some Kidney Qi Deficiency due to her spine malformation and Water Constitution. Kidney belongs to the Water Element which is the grand child of the Earth Element.

TCVM Treatment:^[2] Based upon the TCVM diagnosis the following acupuncture points were selected for treatment:
 1-Local point: GV-1, *Bai-hui*, ST-25
 2-Pattern point:
 Energetic point: ST-36, LI-10, CV-4, CV-6, ST-25

Back-shu and front Mu alarm point: BL-20, BL-21, BL-26, ST-25, CV-12, CV-4, ST-25 and BL-23

3-distal point: ST-37, ST-39, *Shan-gen*, KID-3, SP-3, GV-14

The treatment principle was to tonify Qi, strengthen the spleen and promote bowel movements. Dry needle (DN) and electrical acupuncture (EA) at low frequency 20 HZ for 10 minutes and then at high frequency with DD wave 80/120 Hz for 10 minutes were used. Aqua-acupuncture using diluted Vitamin B12 (1:4 with saline) was also performed. Treatment were conducted daily in the beginning (for two treatments), then weekly and then every 2-3 weeks for maintenance.

Food therapy was discussed, and the owner agreed to stop dry food and switch to wet food with fish.

Mild exercise was encouraged as well as some massage around ST-25.

She had 6 sessions over a 10-week period and was able to have a bowel movement after the second session (and get her appetite back after the initial session).



Case Summary and Conclusion:^[1] This case represents a common presentation of megacolon in a cat.

Usually in TCM, megacolon is due to Qi Deficiency or Yin Deficiency (not enough moisture). This cat didn't have any signs of Yin Deficiency. She also had some Kidney Deficiency issues but her main complaint was the constipation and anorexia, so we focused on this issue only as the cat was weak and also reluctant at first. She responded well to the session and after 3 sessions she was able to have bowel movements on a regular basis.

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References:

1. Xie H, Preast V. Traditional Chinese Veterinary Medicine: Fundamental Principles 2nd Ed. Tianjin, China: Chi Institute Press 2013.
2. Xie H, Preast V. Xie's Veterinary Acupuncture. Ames, Iowa: Blackwell Publishing 2007.