

RESTLESS LEGS SYNDROME AND CHINESE MEDICINE

Restless Legs Syndrome (RLS) is often thought of as an inexplicable movement of the legs at night. In fact, it is a neurological disorder characterized primarily by unpleasant sensations, particularly below the knees, that result in the movements. There are many different descriptions of the sensations, among them are: a crawling feeling; a creeping inside the calves; aches and pains in the legs; or pins and needles, a prickly feeling. These sensations are accompanied by an urge, often irresistible, to move the legs in order to provide relief from the discomfort. In other words, the distressing feelings include within them a sense that movement will alleviate them; movement usually does help. Since the restless legs condition occurs most often during inactivity, particularly at night, the best relief-getting up and walking around-disrupts sleep. But, so does the movement of the legs while in bed, which prevents easily falling asleep (or falling back to sleep after waking). Restless legs syndrome is commonly discussed in the field of sleep disorders

Restless Legs Syndrome may have a genetic component (especially when onset is before age 50), and it is partly related to dopamine activity in the brain affecting function of the cerebral cortex; this is the same neurotransmitter involved in Parkinson's disease. Dopamine agonists (drugs that stimulate the dopamine receptors in the same way dopamine does) and dopamine itself (e.g., l-dopa) are often effective in treating the condition. However, studies suggest that the specific dopamine systems in the brain differ in Restless Legs Syndrome versus Parkinson's disease; the two disorders can coexist when dopamine levels are quite low.

Restless Legs Syndrome mainly occurs past age 50, and affects about 10% of those in that age group; it is particularly common in women. Poor circulation in the legs-which may result from history of smoking, diabetes, lack of exercise, and other factors-contributes to the development of the condition. Nutritional deficiency, particularly lack of bound iron, is known to exacerbate the disorder. The syndrome may also occur temporarily during late pregnancy, possibly as the result of reduced circulation in the legs and lower levels of folate.

Nowadays we made a large progress in treating this problem using Chinese medicine and Acupuncture.

Here is a letter coming from a RLS sufferer

Hello!

I'd like to take this opportunity to tell other RLS (Restless Leg Syndrome) sufferers about my experiences with acupuncture and herbal medicine.

18 years ago I began to have very uncomfortable feelings in my legs at night. To the point that it was painful and impeding my sleep. I remember trying to sleep with my legs propped up along the wall (I was desperate by this point!). Sleeping in a sited position was another of my "poses". When neither worked, I would pound on my legs with my fists to try to alleviate the discomfort. Also Advil and Tylenol were frequently used. Anyway, this went on for nearly 15 years. In the meantime, I tried to find alternative medicine to solve my problem, but none of them worked. One day I found a clinic on the internet occasionally, that the doctors can treat this kind of problem. It aroused my last hope,. Next day I went there. To my surprise, having got three times of treatment, I could sleep better, although it still disturbed me. After having been treated for a month, my restless-leg syndrome disappeared completely. Five months later, my legs still rested and then I could pronounce my legs were absolutely all right.

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