

Healing Your Eyes with Chinese Medicine

*Acupuncture, Acupressure,
& Chinese Herbs*

Andy Rosenfarb, LAc



North Atlantic Books
Berkeley, California

Healing Your Eyes

with Chinese Medicine

Acupuncture,
Acupressure,
& Chinese Herbs



Andy Rosenfarb, LAc



North Atlantic Books
Berkeley, California

Copyright © 2007 by Andy Rosenfarb. All rights reserved. No portion of this book, except for brief review, may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise—without the written permission of the publisher. For information contact North Atlantic Books.

Published by

North Atlantic Books

P.O. Box 12327

Berkeley, California 94712

Healing Your Eyes with Chinese Medicine: Acupuncture, Acupressure, and Chinese Herbs is sponsored by the Society for the Study of Native Arts and Sciences, a nonprofit educational corporation whose goals are to develop an educational and cross-cultural perspective linking various scientific, social, and artistic fields; to nurture a holistic view of arts, sciences, humanities, and healing; and to publish and distribute literature on the relationship of mind, body, and nature.

North Atlantic Books' publications are available through most bookstores. For further information, visit our website at www.northatlanticbooks.com or call 800-733-3000.

MEDICAL DISCLAIMER: The following information is intended for general information purposes only. Individuals should always see their health care provider before administering any suggestions made in this book. Any application of the material set forth in the following pages is at the reader's discretion and is his or her sole responsibility.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Rosenfarb, Andy, 1972–

Healing your eyes with Chinese medicine : acupuncture, acupressure, and chinese herbs /
Andy Rosenfarb.

p. cm.

eISBN: 978-1-58394-469-1

1. Vision disorders—Treatment. 2. Low vision—Treatment. 3. Retinal degeneration—Treatment.
4. Medicine, Chinese. I. Title.

RE51.R68 2006

617.7'1206—dc22

20060359961

v3.1

This book is dedicated to my father Sam Rosenfarb,
my greatest teacher, who guided me toward
acupuncture and Chinese medicine.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

MY EDUCATION AND UNDERSTANDING of nutrition and Western supplementation are based on the work of Marc Grossman. Thank you for your years of research and dedication.

I would like to offer special thanks to Per Otte for teaching me special acupuncture methods for degenerative vision loss. These methods are the “nuts and bolts” of cutting-edge acupuncture for progressive vision loss.

To my teachers at Pacific College of Oriental Medicine in San Diego and at Zhejiang College of Traditional Chinese Medicine in China, thank you for sharing your extensive knowledge and expertise. I would especially like to thank Dr. J. Min Fan, Greg Bantick, and Steve Levitt for sharing your great insights and clinical applications with me.

Most importantly, I thank my friends and family, who have been my guiding light. Gina, David, and Dalton, thank you for all the love and greatness you share with me every day of our lives.

CONTENTS

Cover

Title Page

Copyright

Dedication

Acknowledgments

Foreword by Marc Grossman, OD, LAc

Preface

Introduction

Chapter 1: The Basics of Chinese Medicine

Origins of Chinese Medicine

Yin and Yang

Qi: The Force of Chinese Medicine

The Blood: The Food Source of Chinese Medicine

The Essence: The Substance of Chinese Medicine

Chinese Meridians: The Vessels That Transport Qi

The Five Elements

Causes of Disease: Qi, Blood, and Fluid Congestion, and Organ Imbalance

Chapter 2: Chinese Medicine and the Eyes

The Eyes and the Vessels

The Eyes and the Internal Organs of the Body

Liver and Gall Bladder

Heart and Small Intestine

Kidney and Urinary Bladder

Spleen/Pancreas and Stomach

The Lung and Large Intestine

Causes of Vision Loss According to Chinese Medicine

Environmental Causes of Degenerative Vision Loss

Emotional Causes of Degenerative Vision Loss

Non-Environmental, Non-Emotional Causes of Degenerative Vision Loss

Treatment of Eye Disease According to Pattern Discrimination

Liver Patterns

Gall Bladder Patterns

Kidney Patterns

Spleen and Stomach Patterns
Heart and Liver Blood Stagnation Patterns

Chapter 3: Acupuncture and Moxibustion

The Modern History of Acupuncture
Acupuncture Gains Popularity in the US
How Acupuncture Works
Choosing Acu-Points
A Safe and Natural Method
Acupuncture Methods
Acupuncture Systems for Eye Conditions
Chinese Moxibustion

Chapter 4: Chinese Herbal Medicine

Chinese Herbal Medicine for Degenerative Vision Loss
Age-Related Macular Degeneration
Retinitis Pigmentosa
Diabetic Retinopathy
Retinal Vein and Artery Occlusion
Open-Angle Glaucoma
Individually Prescribed Chinese Herbal Formulas vs. Patent Formulas
Side Effects of Chinese Herbal Medicine

Chapter 5: Chinese Acupressure, Eye Exercises, and Qigong

Acupressure
Chinese Exercises for Healthy Eyes
The Chinese Eye Massage
Near-Far Focus
Scanning
Neck Rolls
Chinese Qigong and Healthy Living
A Brief History of Qigong
What Is Qigong?
Yin-Yang Theory and Qigong
Internal Qigong vs. External Qigong
Qigong Cultivation
Qigong for the Eyes
Qigong to Strengthen the Liver
Transmit Healing Qi through Laogong Qigong
Beijing Eye Qigong

Transmitting Universal Healing Light through the Eyes
Qigong for Health and Longevity

Chapter 6: Ancient Wisdom for Healthy Eyes and Longevity

Moderation

Overwork/Overstrain

Diet and Eating Habits

Rest and Relaxation

Stretching and Exercise

Cultivating Mental Power

Reduce the Risk Factors for Degenerative Vision Loss

Tiger Balm for Eye-Strain Headaches

Chapter 7: Cases and Clinical Applications

Diagnosis and Testing

Visual Acuity Testing: The Eye Chart

Vision Field Testing

Color Vision Testing

Amsler Grid

Subjective Findings

Objective Findings

Chinese Medical Diagnosis

Clinical Cases

Age-Related Macular Degeneration (ARMD): Wet and Dry Type

Stargardt Macular Dystrophy

Diabetic Retinopathy

Retinitis Pigmentosa

Usher Syndrome

Open-Angle Glaucoma

Optic Nerve Atrophy

Myopia (Nearsightedness)

Combined Eye Conditions

Chapter 8: Home Therapies

Micro Current Stimulation

Safety and Efficacy of MCS

Research Studies on MCS

FDA Position on MCS

Contraindications for MCS

Chinese Aromatherapy: Essential Oils for Vision Loss

How Essential Oils Work
Safe Use of Essential Oils
Useful Oils for Degenerative Vision Loss

Chinese Moxibustion at Home

Moxa Sticks

Moxa Cones/Thread Moxa

Moxa Glasses

Moxa Shells

Chinese Color Therapy

Chinese Reflexology (Foot Therapy)

Chinese Magnet Therapy

Chinese Acupressure and Self-Massage

Chinese “Q-Tip” Eye Massage

Chinese Qigong for Health

Chinese Herbal Steam Bath for the Eyes

Appendix 1: Eye and Acupuncture Research

Appendix 2: Chinese Herbal Formulas: Ingredients and Dosages

Appendix 3: Resources

Bibliography

About the Author

FOREWORD

THE WORLD IS CHANGING. Our concepts of Western medicine have shifted in recent decades, and the public is demanding much more of our health care providers. The reductionist method of referring each symptom to the domain of a particular specialist, isolated from the whole person, is being replaced slowly with more complementary forms of health care like acupuncture. We are beginning to look at the whole person, his or her dietary preferences, exercise regimens, types of relationships, as well as the particular symptoms that brought them in for treatment in the first place.

We believe that our eyesight does not happen in a vacuum. Rather it has its roots in our total being, our genetic makeup, the food we eat, our work environment and exposure to airborne toxins, as well as our general belief systems about ourselves and the world we live in. Each of us is unique and literally takes the world in through our senses, primarily vision; moreover, the way we take in the world is, to some degree, a reflection of who we are and which symptoms we might manifest.

Using the theories of Traditional Chinese Medicine, this book addresses a wide array of visual problems from myopia to macular degeneration and glaucoma. It will offer a bridge where Western medicine and complementary medicine can come together to help people keep their precious gift of sight.

The body does not work as a series of parts in isolation, but as a whole, dynamically integrated living system. Every cell in the body has receptors for neurotransmitters, so in a real sense every cell is a nerve cell. We do not see with our eyes or think with our brains, but rather live in a “minding body.” This biological awareness of every cell is really the foundation of vision—the ability to derive meaning and to direct action based on patterns of electromagnetic stimuli that we call light.

The skin of the entire body is covered with tiny electric eyes known in Chinese medicine as acupuncture points. Each is a window of heightened sensitivity of the organism to its energetic environment.

This book is intended to be used as a practical manual to help to understand the eye and vision more comprehensively. Chapters are devoted to eye disorders such as glaucoma, macular degeneration, retinitis pigmentosa, and many more.

As an optometrist for more than twenty-five years, I see Andy Rosenfarb as one of the emerging leaders in complementary and innovative approaches to vision care. His zest for learning and integrating the ancient traditions of eye care with modern scientific knowledge of the body and the eyes is a great contribution to the emerging paradigm of twenty-first-century vision care.

—Marc Grossman, OD, LAc
Author of *Natural Eye Care*, *Greater Vision*,
and *Magic Eye, Beyond 3D*

PREFACE

MY INTEREST IN STUDYING and helping people with degenerative eye conditions began in 1994 when I was an acupuncture student at Pacific College of Oriental Medicine in San Diego, California. As a result of the intense reading, writing, and studying, my eyesight was noticeably deteriorating.

I began a program of self-treatment using acupuncture, followed by a routine screening by my optometrist. The eye exam revealed that the astigmatism in both of my eyes had been corrected. The optometrist was astounded, and questioned me on what I had been doing. I explained that my eyes had been feeling tired and blurry, and that I was getting regular headaches from studying. I had been using acupuncture to try to help with these symptoms, and as a result the health of my eyes had noticeably improved.

As I started my professional practice of acupuncture and Chinese medicine, I took on a few cases of degenerative eye conditions including glaucoma, cataracts, diabetic retinopathy, retinitis pigmentosa, Stargardt Macular Dystrophy (aka Stargardt's), and macular degeneration. Some cases were mild, and some were severe (legally blind). I found that I became rather disappointed that the condition of most patients was not improving with our treatment. A few patients showed some minor improvement, but nothing I did led to significant improvement.

Frustrated, I sought the aid of colleagues who had reported success with treating eye conditions. For the most part, everyone seemed to have the same classic acupuncture point combinations, herbs, supplements, and eye exercises. I found them to have a minimal effect.

One day I was reading a health magazine and came across a report about an acupuncturist in Arkansas who was treating people with various degenerative eye diseases, and claiming to have excellent results. Of course I called to find out what his

method was. The long and short of that story is that I would have to wait three years before I would train with him. I traveled to his clinic and was amazed at the success rate and the overwhelmingly positive responses given by each patient I spoke with.

“Wow!” I thought, “This is incredible. This form of acupuncture (Micro Acupuncture™) is really helping a lot of people regain their lost vision.”

Having learned the method, I went back to my practice in New Jersey and started working on myself, friends, family, current patients, etc. The results I got were nothing short of amazing!

A few years into clinical practice I decided to take a sabbatical to Mainland China. I did post-graduate work at Zhejiang College of Traditional Chinese Medicine in the city of Hangzhou. Here I trained and worked alongside the Chinese doctors who had been trained in both Chinese and Western medicine, of various specialties. I had the opportunity to learn a few effective methods for treating eye conditions, from masters in the “heartland.”

Using Micro Acupuncture and other methods I had learned in China, I was now having a great deal of success treating medical conditions such as wet- and dry-type Age-Related Macular Degeneration (ARMD), retinal detachments, retinitis pigmentosa, diabetic retinopathy, Stargardt’s syndrome, and others. The success of the treatments varied from patient to patient, depending on health history, compliance, and how well the patient responds to the treatment. The only cases that seemed not to respond well were those with severe head and eye traumas and those with multiple surgical eye procedures. The procedures often cause some scarring, making good results more difficult to achieve with my natural methods.

For many with these degenerative eye conditions, special methods of acupuncture and Chinese medicine may be the last and only hope. Conventional medicine has little (or nothing) to offer people suffering from chronic, degenerative vision loss. Most doctors do not understand the genesis of such conditions, and therefore fail to effectively help patients affected in this way. These specific

methods of acupuncture therapy offer hope, and it is my goal to educate people about the benefits of these methods. The more people we educate, the more we can help. There are no other known safe and natural methods to offer people with degenerative vision loss conditions. Through the information and applications introduced in this book, natural healing and vision restoration can be achieved without drugs or surgical procedures.

INTRODUCTION

CHINESE MEDICINE WAS DESIGNED thousands of years ago to prevent as well as treat disease. Each person is born with inherent strengths and weaknesses that are affected by the stress of inner emotions and external environmental factors. When we learn to protect our weaknesses and conserve our strengths, we can live a long and healthy life. Chinese medicine can help reveal each person's strengths and weaknesses.

This work is not an exercise book to correct near- or farsightedness. Generally such books will provide exercises and good advice geared mainly toward improving vision affected by myopia and presbyopia (nearsightedness and farsightedness, respectively). Some highlight eye exercises that developed in the West, such as the Bates Method. Readers may find the Eye Qigong exercises in this book to be just as effective for those eye conditions. But while people with nearsightedness and farsightedness will find useful information in this book that improves the eyes and visual acuity, the main focus is degenerative eye conditions like macular degeneration, retinitis pigmentosa, and diabetic retinopathy. These vision disorders are rarely addressed with any efficacy in the literature or in practice.

There are many factors that cause degenerative vision loss, including genetic predisposition, metabolic diseases, poor circulation, and overuse. Chinese medicine may lead you to fully understand your constitutional strengths and weaknesses, showing you how to safeguard your health and vision.

Personal accountability is the hallmark of Chinese medicine whereby the patient goes through a process of learning about himself or herself in relation to his or her environment. Once this understanding is brought about, the responsibility ultimately lies within each person to maintain care. Chinese medicine offers effective therapeutic modalities (acupuncture, moxa, herbs,

Qigong) that may help restore health and function; however, the ultimate goal is to teach each patient to effectively care for him- or herself. Unlike our modern system of health care, the foundation of the theories and practices in this book is the taking of greater personal responsibility for one's own health.

The book is designed to educate the reader about Chinese medicine and how it can help people with degenerative vision loss. Those already familiar with Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) can skip introductory parts if they want and go ahead to specific information about the eye conditions. This is also intended to act as a self-help book from which the reader can learn to apply certain "home care" therapies that may help improve vision. None of the therapies offered in this text are meant to be quick fixes, and, in fact, success with most of them requires dedication, lifestyle change, and willingness to learn the principles behind the recommendations. It's not something to undertake halfheartedly or with passing interest.

Many of the therapeutic modalities discussed may require the assistance of a qualified practitioner to help you along the way. Some people may not respond to the suggestions in this book and/or their condition may require integrative care. In the appendix there are a few recommendations of practitioners who have a lot of experience in helping people with vision problems. For a more complete list of practitioners who specialize in specific modalities, you can visit the resources sections at www.acupuncturehealth.net.

It is my recommendation that all people interested in incorporating these therapies continue to retain an ophthalmologist. I find more and more Western ophthalmologists opening up to the integration of acupuncture and other modalities for degenerative vision loss. *My most important suggestion is to stay with an ophthalmologist who respects your needs!* Find someone who will support what you're doing, and if your current eye doctor is opposed to your trying the suggestions in these pages (or is too egotistical), find someone who is open to helping you to help yourself.

If you have tried everything and are ready to take an entirely different approach, or if you already have a holistic approach to your health and understand that vision problems can represent systemic imbalance and lack of harmony on a larger plane, this book offers options for treatment that are rarely explored in a Western eye clinic. If, however, you are not interested in balancing your life as a whole and simply want a quick fix to a nagging vision problem, you may not find what you are wishing for in the following pages.

—Andy Rosenfarb
Warren, New Jersey

CHAPTER 1

The Basics of Chinese Medicine

Origins of Chinese Medicine

Taoism is the foundation of Chinese medicine and Chinese philosophy, and it has been around for at least five thousand years. Taoism has been described as “natural law” or “natural order,” and it asserts that balance and harmony are essential to health and wellness. Natural laws were created by nature and must be observed by man. Chinese medicine takes these laws and patterns and applies them to the human body. The body is viewed as a whole, where both internal and external stress and trauma inflicted to one part will affect the body in its entirety.

The human body is self-healing and self-regulating by nature and constantly moves toward balance and homeostasis. Each person (the microcosm) is a part of nature (the macrocosm). Each and every person is born with the ability to self-heal and regenerate.

Illness is caused by organ imbalance and poor circulation of *qi* (life force), blood, and fluids. Too much or too little *qi*, blood, and fluids in one part of the body at any given time will give rise to disease. Chinese medicine seeks to correct dysfunction through restoring proper circulation and by balancing organs of the body.

In Chinese medicine, the best cure is prevention. The body almost always gives us early warning signs of illness and dysfunction. Chinese medicine seeks to detect these subtle “indicators” through a detailed evaluation of each patient.

Yin and Yang

According to Chinese medicine, everything is composed of two complementary forces, *yin* and *yang*. *Yin* and *yang* cannot exist alone—they are inseparable. *Yin* and *yang* do not necessarily “oppose” one another; rather they are interdependent, interconnected, and intertwined. This is the simplest and most fundamental of the natural laws governing Chinese medicine.

The entire body is under the control of the forces of *yin* and *yang*. A person is healthy when *yin* and *yang* are balanced. Since *yin* and *yang* are in constant motion, there is never a true “perfect balance.” However, medical practitioners seek to find the *yin-yang* imbalance and correct it (using acupuncture, herbs, exercise, and massage). The basic healing principle of *yin-yang* theory is to first *balance* the existence of each, and then to *harmonize* (or blend) the two forces. Harmony is the ultimate goal. Lack of harmony in the human body usually results in symptoms of illness and patterns of disease.

Here are some basic examples of what is generally considered *yin* and what is *yang*:

YANG	YIN
Hot	Cold
Male	Female
Day	Night
Summer	Winter
Awake	Asleep
Heal	Degenerate
Function	Structure
Positive	Negative
Peripheral vision	Central vision
Far sight	Near sight



Classic *Yin-Yang* Symbol, called *Taiji*

Yin (structure and substance) and *yang* (function) need to work in balance for optimum health to manifest. An imbalance will ultimately lead to degenerative illness and death.

***Qi*: The Force of Chinese Medicine**

The ancient Chinese referred to the animating life force as *qi*. For obvious reasons the early Chinese physicians were unable to determine that oxygen is a key component of this so-called “Vital Air.” They understood that this air is absorbed into the body (through the lungs) and is necessary to the metabolic functioning and immune response.

It’s no mystery that we cannot live without air (oxygen) and food. Most of the human body’s aerobic (oxygen-utilizing) activity takes place in the cell’s “powerhouse,” called the mitochondria. *Vital air qi* (oxygen) and *nutritive qi* (glucose derived from food) make energy (ATP). ATP-energy is distributed throughout the body’s vessels to the organs, glands, and tissues. Distribution of this energy allows for healthy function of your entire system.

Qi circulates through a series of networks called “meridians.” These meridians can become congested like a traffic jam or drained of vital energy. In Chinese medicine, *qi* and blood are inseparable—the *qi* feeds off the blood, and the blood is moved by the force of

the Qi-energy. When the *qi* and blood congest in one area of the body, energy cannot flow smoothly to or from its appropriate location. The result is most often localized pain and dysfunction. When the *qi* is drained or becomes deficient, Chinese medicine can be used to pinpoint the “tired organ.”

Acupuncture and adjunctive therapies attempt to restore the flow of *qi* to these areas where there is *qi* congestion or *qi* depletion. The *qi* brings the oxygen, nutrients, and water to the cells and eliminates wastes, allowing for cellular regeneration and restoration. Good health depends on the balanced distribution of *qi* throughout the energy channels.

In Chinese medicine, *qi* has five distinct functions:

1. Defense: Protecting the body from illness
2. Transformation: Metabolizing substances for the body’s use
3. Warming: Distributing heat throughout the body
4. Restraint: Holding all organs and structures in place
5. Movement: Carrying out all of the body’s physical processes

The Blood: The Food-Source of Chinese Medicine

In Chinese medicine, “blood” carries some meanings that are different from the Western medical definition. The blood is the substance that nourishes and moistens every organ, tissue, and cell in the body. The blood transports *vital air qi* (oxygen) and *nutritive qi* (micro-nutrients) to the entire body. It also carries out waste products, carbon dioxide, and metabolic cellular waste. If the blood becomes deficient, the body loses *yin*-nourishment and starves. The *yang* function that the *qi* provides is useless without the *yin*-nourishment. Sufficient levels of both *qi* and blood must be sustained in order to maintain optimal health and clear vision.

In Chinese medicine the blood has three distinct functions:

1. Nourish: Distributes food and water to all cells of the body
2. Moistens: Keeps all structures from drying out

3. Structure: Provides a material foundation for the mind/spirit

The Essence: The Substance of Chinese Medicine

The three most important constituents of the body are the *qi*, blood, and essence (*jing* in Chinese). The essence is stored in the kidneys. Essence is the most refined material that the body uses for growth, development, maturation, and reproduction. There are two kinds of essence, the “prenatal essence” and the “postnatal essence.” Prenatal essence we inherit from our parents, and postnatal essence is produced from the food we eat, the liquids we drink, and the air we breathe.

Our prenatal essence is similar to our DNA in the sense that it carries the information that determines our basic constitutional makeup. We only have a finite supply of the inherited, prenatal essence that should be protected and conserved. It is similar to an inherited trust fund obtained at birth. If we spend carelessly the funds will run out, and they can't be replenished.

All functions of the body depend on the prenatal essence, and when we run out, our health rapidly declines and we die. Conservation of this precious commodity is paramount to good health. The postnatal essence derived from food and drink helps to support the prenatal essence. The postnatal essence is more like pocket change or spending money. If you have more spending money earned, you will not have to dip into your trust fund.

If we eat well, exercise, practice moderation, get plenty of rest, practice mental equipoise, and minimize the use of drugs (prescription and recreational) and alcohol, we can age gracefully. If we overeat, don't exercise, and overwork, overstress, and overstimulate ourselves, abuse drugs, alcohol, and tobacco, this will deplete and exhaust the prenatal essence and may cause degenerative vision loss. Aging will be difficult, and death may come early.

Having a balanced, healthy lifestyle will conserve essence and greatly reduce the probability of degenerative vision loss.

Degenerative vision loss is a clear indicator that the essence “reserves” are low. Restructuring your life and making yourself healthier (by replenishing postnatal essence) can slow, arrest, and even restore vision loss.

Chinese Meridians: The Vessels That Transport *Qi*

Just as blood flows through blood vessels, lymph flows through the lymphatic system, and nerve conduction follows pathways, *qi* flows through invisible energy pathways. *Qi* circulates and is distributed throughout the body in vessels, or “meridians.” There are fourteen main vessels that carry *qi* to every cell of the body. Twelve of these vessels are connected with an organ (lung, liver, and stomach).

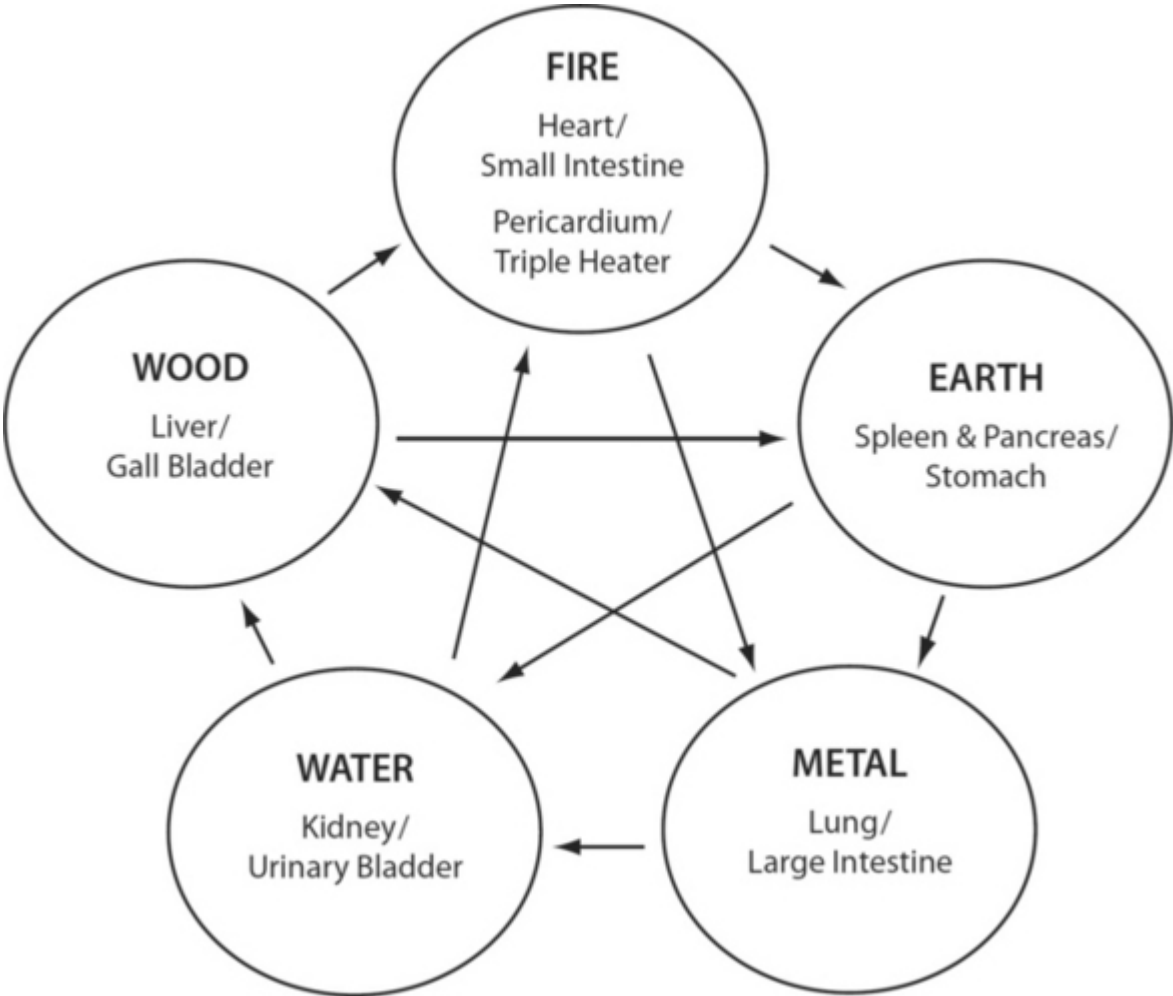
The meridians were mapped out more than five thousand years ago by the ancient Chinese. It is said that the vessels were seen by Buddhist and Taoist monks while deep in meditation. The *Qi*-energy moves through the channels faster than the speed of light, and this is why it cannot be seen by the naked eye. Through meditation, the monks were able to slow down the *qi* flow in their bodies to the point where the meridian maps could be observed and recorded. It is possible through proper training for anyone to develop the sensitivity to become aware of the flow of *qi*.

The Five Elements

Another natural law that Chinese medicine observes is the division of everything into five elements: fire, earth, metal, water, and wood. Each element has a corresponding major organ, bowel organ, sense organ, body tissue, color, season, emotion, taste, direction, and virtues. Five Element theory is applied to both physical and emotional problems.

The five major organ systems have two basic connections: generation and control. The generation cycle shows how one element may nurture another element, while the control cycle shows how one element can provide restraint. Five Element theory

gives a skilled practitioner a wide range of possibilities for treating illness.



ELEMENT	YIN ORGAN	YANG ORGAN
Fire	Heart	Small intestine
Metal	Lung	Large intestine
Earth	Spleen/Pancreas	Stomach
Water	Kidney	Urinary bladder
Wood	Liver	Gall bladder

Causes of Disease: *Qi*, Blood, and Fluid Congestion, and Organ Imbalance

The body is made up of three vital substances: *qi*, blood, and body fluids. Chinese medicine views fluids as the liquid that nourishes and lubricates tissue. There are “thin fluids” like water, sweat, and tears, and “thick fluids” like skin oils, bile, reproductive fluids, and cerebral spinal fluid. Fluids and blood compose the Yin-material base of the body’s physical structure including bone, nerve, skin, flesh, and organs.

Improper circulation of *qi*, blood, and fluids can dramatically impair your health. *Congestion* causes dysfunction where the *qi*, blood, and fluids are not moving smoothly through the organs, tissues, and cells. This congestion affects the overall circulation (oxygen, nutrients, and waste) and healthy transmission of nerve impulses. Poor circulation can cause organ imbalances and loss of normal function, which may then lead to disease and dysfunction.

Then what causes congestion? Congestion and disease may be brought about by any physical, chemical, or mental-emotional stress that a person cannot adapt to. The longer these conditions persist, the more damage is done. What begins as a minor problem may often lead to irreversible damage if not treated correctly.

The purpose of the Chinese medicine practitioner is to restore the circulation of *qi*, blood, and fluids throughout the body, thus restoring function. If detected early, *qi* and blood stagnation and/or organ imbalances may respond well to Chinese medicine, with an excellent chance for recovery.

Longer-standing conditions usually take more time to heal. This is not true for all cases, but most practitioners would agree that this is the norm. Chinese doctors have a general saying that conditions that come about overnight usually resolve overnight, and conditions that come about over many years usually resolve over many years.

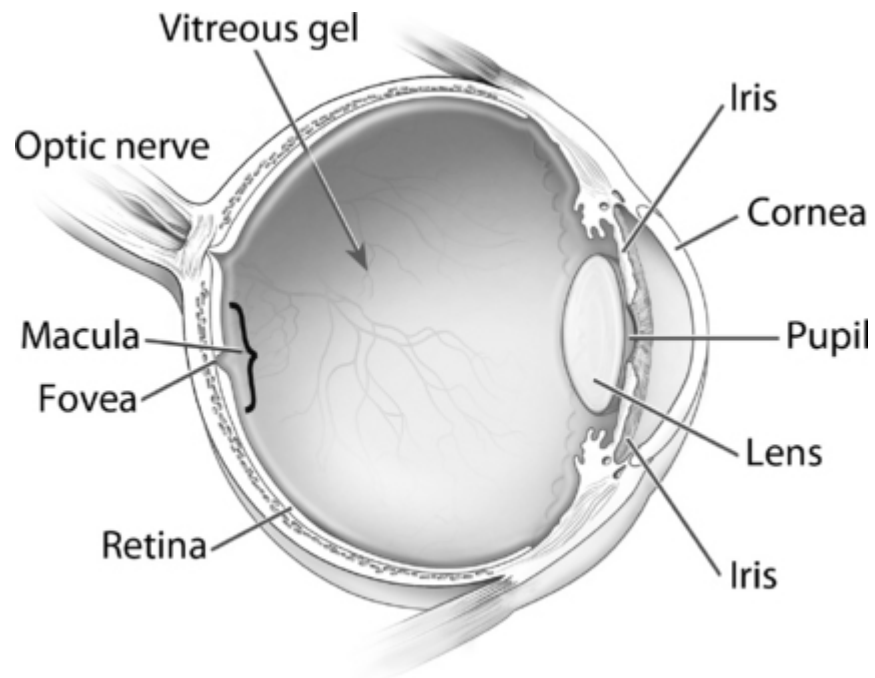
CHAPTER 2

Chinese Medicine and the Eyes

The Eyes and the Vessels

There are twelve main meridian-vessels that distribute through the head, face, and organs of the body. The body's essential nutrients and energetic functioning are distributed to the eyes to carry out the task of good vision. The channels also connect the organs of the body and allow for good communication. The vessels transport *essential qi* from each of the organs to be used by the eyes. The communication between the organs and the eyes (through the vessels) is vital to how well a person's eyes will function.

Five Element Correspondence of the Eye			
ELEMENT	ORGANS	COLOR	EYE STRUCTURE
Fire	Heart/Small Intestine	Red	Inner canthus
Earth	Spleen/Pancreas	Yellow	Eyelids and aqueous
Metal	Lung/Large Intestine	White	Sclera and cornea
Water	Kidney/Bladder	Black	Pupil, macula, and retina
Wood	Liver/Gall Bladder	Blue-green	Iris and eye muscles



The Eyes and the Internal Organs of the Body

Being an important part of the human body, the eyes have a close relationship with the *qi*, blood, fluids, vessels, and organs (called *zang-fu* in Chinese). If dysfunction arises with any of the above components, it will reflect immediately in the eyes, which can lead to degenerative vision loss. In addition, any injury or trauma to the eyes can affect the condition and health of the related internal organs (especially the liver), where a systemic reaction may follow. Therefore, when evaluating a pattern of vision loss and attempting to determine a course of therapy, we need to understand the holistic nature of the disease pattern including *all* signs, symptoms, and observations.

The ability of the eyes to see things and distinguish colors is one of nature's true miracles. The *qi* flows upwards from the visceral organs to allow the eyes to see. The function of sight is completely attributed to healthy function of the internal organs, according to Chinese medical theory. Dysfunction of the related organs will restrict the *essential qi* from reaching the eyes, leading to declining vision.

Liver and Gall Bladder

The Eyes: A Direct Extension of the Liver

The eyes have been referred to by many cultures as “the windows of the soul.” According to Chinese medical theory, the eyes are the gate of the liver and are controlled by the liver system. The eyes are the bridge between the liver and the outside world. They are an outward expression of the health state of the liver.

Healthy functioning of the liver allows the eyes to distinguish colors. A common clinical condition where this situation is most evident is the Western medical diagnosis of retinitis pigmentosa and color-blindness. In this circumstance color perception is not clearly distinguishable through the eyes, indicating poor liver function. When a person is experiencing *any* chronic and/or degenerative problem with vision, the liver is *always* involved on some level because in Chinese medicine, “the liver opens into the eyes.”

The Liver Stores Blood

The ability to see is dependent on the liver’s capability to store blood. The liver regulates the volume of blood in the whole body according to the level of physical activity. Blood is stored when the body is in a state of rest, relaxation, or sleep. When the body is active, blood is moved to the muscles. This function, designed to ensure adequate oxygen and nourishment to the muscles, also has a great effect on the available energy one has to perform physical activity.

When the liver is full of blood, the qi-energy flows freely, and the essential nutrients are transferred to the eyes (from the liver). This continuous supply of essential nutrients is only possible when the liver’s healthy metabolic activity is optimal. The essential nutrients are delivered to the eyes, and as long as the eyes are nourished, they will continue to function well.

The volume of blood can diminish as a result of dehydration, reduced food intake, poor assimilation, poor metabolism, and poor digestion. Low blood levels will reduce the transmission of refined essential nutrient to the eyes. This “starvation” of the eyes will lead to vision loss. If the blood volume gets too low, and the liver becomes “dry,” the eyes may be dry, blurry, and achy with even minimal use, fatiguing easily. This is a common route of progressive degenerative vision loss. Three conditions frequently associated with liver blood deficiency are tired eyes, dry eyes, and floaters.

The Liver Regulates Qi Circulation

A second way the eyes fail is due to Liver Qi congestion. Congestion builds up when the liver fails in its function to circulate *qi* throughout the body, including the eyes. This congestion of Liver Qi can occur in the liver vessels, leading to an excessive upward movement of liver *yang-qi* (like heat and smoke rising). The upward movement of *yang-qi* (heat) is followed by the upward movement of blood and fluids. This upsurge will often affect the upper parts of the body (head, face, and eyes).

This congestion is like a traffic buildup on a busy highway, where all the cars are on the road at once and no one is moving. The heavy *yang-qi* traffic makes for poor transportation conditions and can result in poor circulation through the eyes. If there is poor circulation, the eyes will not receive enough oxygen or nourishment, thus making the stagnant buildup of Liver Qi another cause of declining vision. A common condition associated with Liver Qi congestion is eyestrain headaches.

The Gall Bladder Manufactures the Aqueous and Vitreous Humors

A third cause of degenerative vision loss (DVL) is Liver/Gall Bladder Heat. The liver and gall bladder are closely related organs in Chinese medical theory (as they are now known to be in

Western science-based physiological knowledge). A healthy liver has abundant qi-energy that overflows to the gall bladder, allowing the latter to function and generate bile. This bile accumulates and ascends to the eyes, forming the vitreous and aqueous humors, which nourish the pupil and provide good vision. The gall bladder can heat up (also from *qi* stagnation, diet, emotions, etc.), causing it to “burn” the vitreous and aqueous humors. The result is that the humors’ clarity becomes turbid, impairing nourishment to the pupil. Under such circumstances the vision may become very blurry.

The Gall Bladder Delivers the Bright *Yang-Qi* to the Eyes

The classics of Chinese medicine (*Huang Di Nei Jing*) say that the liver opens into the eye, but since the liver is a *yin* organ, it cannot directly deliver the *yang* energy to the eyes. Only its yang-paired organ, the gall bladder, can do so, and thus the gall bladder is responsible for brightening the eyes. When the eyes see clearly due to circulation of *clear yang-qi*, the gall bladder is considered to be in a healthy state. When the gall bladder becomes tired or congested, it fails to provide the eyes with *clear yang-qi*. The result is dimming of the eyes and loss of night vision. It is for this reason that so many acupuncture points on the Gall Bladder meridian are used to treat vision problems.

Heart and Small Intestine

The Heart Brings Blood to the Eyes

All blood flows toward and away from the heart. The heart also “governs the blood” and “rules the blood vessels” of the body. The primary function of the heart is to circulate the blood throughout the body. Healthy blood flow to the eyes ensures the transport of nutrients necessary to sustain healthy vision. Without proper circulation of blood, the eyes simply will not be able to function well.

If the heart is overworked and circulation is diminished, blood will congest and the flow to the eyes will be reduced. The heart can also heat up as a result of Liver *Yang* Rising, leading to inflammation. Modern research has recently brought forth the observation that many cases of Age-Related Macular Degeneration (ARMD) and other eye conditions are connected to chronic inflammation. In Chinese medicine, inflammation almost always affects the liver and heart.

When the heart is functioning optimally, a person is full of vigor or “heartiness.” This spirit and liveliness, called *shen*, will show in the eyes. When the heart is not functioning well, the blood will not flow to the eyes. Dull and lusterless eyes, along with difficulty in making eye contact, are often observed in this case. Likewise, a heart heavy with emotions will show itself in dull and lifeless eyes.

The Small Intestine Sends Pure Substances to the Eyes for Nourishment

The small intestine separates pure and impure substances. The refined fluid derived from food and drink is transported to the spleen. The spleen sends these pure substances to the eyes for nourishment. The moisture aids in ease of movement and clarity of vision. If the *qi* or function of the small intestine is not smooth and effective, pure nutrients may not be delivered to the eyes, and the vision will be poor.

Through the Small Intestine, the Shen-Spirit Is Seen in the Eyes

The small intestine channel communicates the spirit of the heart to the eyes, by virtue of its *yang* nature. The overall state of a person’s *shen* can be seen by looking into a person’s eyes. The small intestine projects the radiance from the inner chambers of the heart, outward through the eyes.

Kidney and Urinary Bladder

The Kidneys: Controlling and Nourishing the Eyes

The kidneys control the body's overall water metabolism. They are responsible for the receiving and storing of vital essence from all the body's organs. Vision is dependent on cumulative nourishment that is stored in the kidneys. In this way the kidneys function as the body's battery pack. The *essential qi* is stored in the kidneys, and an abundance of it allows the eyes to function well. If there is a scanty reserve of this *essential qi*, the eyesight will eventually decline.

The kidneys' function in managing water metabolism in the body (retention, distribution, elimination) is imperative to healthy vision. In normal metabolism, the water and fluids generate tears and aqueous humor to nourish and moisten the eyes. Poor water metabolism can create fluid retention in the eyes (glaucoma) or reduced fluids (dry eyes).

From a Five Element standpoint, the "water" from the kidneys nourishes the "wood" of the eyes. This is analogous to how trees (liver) are dependent on water (kidney) to be healthy and strong. Of course there are many other processes involved, but without water, the tree would surely die. This is what happens to the eyes when the kidney energy (or water supply) is too low. The eyes dry up and vision loss begins to occur. The eyes can function only when the kidneys' *essential qi* is abundant and adequately distributed to the eyes.

The kidneys store the purest vital essence from which marrow is produced. This marrow encompasses the brain and all its activities, including brain activity and neurological visual activity. This includes the optic nerve.

We've already compared this "vital essence" to an inherited trust fund. Don't wastefully deplete your essence—you are on a tight budget! You need to spend less in order to survive. Since the eyes are not necessary for a person's survival, the distribution of vital essence by the body may cut off "funding" to the eyes.

Hearing is another "peripheral" sense that will often "lose funding." Low funds can be traced to two factors: a low initial

trust fund (genetic predisposition) and/or wanton lifestyle (stress, drugs, poor diet, sleep deprivation, illness, trauma, not exercising, overwork, etc.). Spend wisely!

The Urinary Bladder Stores and Releases Impure Fluids

The function of the urinary bladder is to store and release urine. Under normal circumstances, the small intestine transports the pure *yang-qi* up to the eyes. A poorly functioning urinary bladder can result in the poor distribution of *yang-qi* to the eyes. If the bladder function becomes congested, water retention can generate heat, creating a condition of “damp-heat.” If the damp-heat affects the eyes, vision loss may occur.

The Urinary Bladder Channel Transports *Clear Yang-Qi* to the Eyes

Like the Gall Bladder meridian, the Urinary Bladder meridian delivers *clear yang-qi* to the eyes. The *essential yang-qi* is stored in the kidneys (a *yin* organ) and is carried to the eyes by the Urinary Bladder meridian.

Spleen/Pancreas and Stomach

The Spleen/Pancreas Transforms and Transports Pure Fluids to the Eyes and Keeps the Blood in the Vessels

The spleen/pancreas is responsible for initial transformation and transportation of nutrients, as well as receiving and transporting the pure fluids from the small intestine. It sends the pure nutrients upwards to the eyes. These pure nutrients nourish the aqueous and vitreous humors. If the *clear yang-qi* is transported to the eyes, clear vision is maintained. If these clear fluids are not transported to the eyes, vision loss may develop.

Another function of the spleen/pancreas is to govern the blood, which nourishes the eyes. If there is a failure in keeping the blood

in the vessels due to weak functioning, hemorrhaging disease may develop (e.g., wet-type ARMD).

The Stomach Sends Digested Foods and Turbid Fluids Downward

The stomach sends ingested foods downward. While the spleen sends the *clear yang* fluids upward, the stomach sends the turbid food and drink downward for further digestion, absorption, and assimilation. If the turbid fluids ascend to the eyes, due to poor stomach function, vision may deteriorate.

The Stomach Vessel Transports *Clear Yang-Qi* to the Eyes

The Stomach, Gall Bladder, and Urinary Bladder meridians bring *yang-qi* to the eyes. The stomach channel transports the *nutritive qi* from the spleen/pancreas to the eyes, via the Stomach meridian. The Stomach meridian, like the meridians of the Gall Bladder and Urinary Bladder, has many points that are effective for treating eye conditions.

The Lung and Large Intestine

The Lungs Descend and Disperse *Qi*, Blood, and Clear Fluids to the Eyes

The lungs have the responsibility of disbursing *qi*, blood, and fluids to the eyes. They descend and clean the air we breathe, filtering impurities and ensuring oxygen intake for the eyes. When function is optimal, *qi*, blood, and fluids circulate freely to warm and nourish the eyes, protecting the eyes from viruses, bacterial infection, and vision disorders.

If the function of the lungs becomes weak and the disbursing and descending are not smooth, the eyes will lack nourishment and protection (as is seen in many cases of dry-type ARMD). The end result will be susceptibility to onset of vision loss. In Chinese

medicine, many cases of chronic degenerative vision loss have components of lung deficiency, liver congestion, and blood stagnation.

The Large Intestine Stores and Eliminates Waste

If heat accumulates in the large intestine and causes inflammation, the lungs may be unable to perform their functions of storing and eliminating waste, and dispersing clear fluids to the eyes. If the inflammation goes unresolved, it can generate great amounts of heat in the body. Chronic inflammation can lead to vision loss.

The Large Intestine Vessel Transports *Clear Yang-Qi* to the Eyes

The Large Intestine meridian carries *clear yang-qi* from its yin-paired organ (the lungs) to the eyes. It carries the *vital air qi* (oxygenated *qi*) to the eyes. The eyes need to breathe clean *vital air qi*, and the Large Intestine vessel (acupuncture meridian) helps the lungs carry out this function.

Causes of Vision Loss According to Chinese Medicine

Environmental Causes of Degenerative Vision Loss

The eyes open to direct contact with the outside world, and they are simultaneously connected to the internal organs and vessels. Chinese medicine suggests six environmental or “external *qi* factors” that can lead to vision loss, listed in the chart on [this page](#). A person’s resistance to environmental pathogenic factors is based on how strong (or weak) his/her constitution is. This ability to resist and/or recover from external influences reflects the state of a person’s *vital qi*.

Simply stated, if a person has good resistance, the body can ward off potential hazards associated with these external stress factors. The person with strong *vital qi* will also recover easily from

trauma. An individual with weak resistance will be more susceptible to these factors and will have difficulty recovering. The occurrence of and ability to recover from chronic eye conditions reflect the struggle between the *vital qi* (immune response) and the six environmental and seven emotional pathogenic factors.

The Six Environmental Pathogenic Factors		
PATHOGENIC FACTOR	ORGAN AFFECTED	COMMON EFFECT
Fire/Heat	Heart	Swelling, inflammation, redness (common in acute eye disease)
Cold	Kidney	Slow onset, sharp pain (most cases of chronic degenerative vision loss)
Wind	Liver	Sudden and rapid onset (common in acute eye disease)
Dampness	Spleen/Pancreas	Mucus, edema, secretions, slow onset
Dryness	Lung	Dryness, itching, redness
Summer Heat	All organs	Inflammation with mucus

Any of these factors can invade the body through the skin, mouth, nose, or the meridians. They may invade the upper part of the body and affect the vision or directly traumatize the eyes. One or more pathogens can damage the eyes, causing vision loss. These influences are closely related to the seasons and commonly arise during seasonal changes.

Of these six external factors, wind and fire usually attack the eyes in acute cases. These are considered “*yang* conditions of the eye.” Wind is the leading pathogenic factor, which can easily bring other environmental “evils” into the eyes. Wind is characterized by rapid change and sudden onset. Fire is characterized by inflammation, ulceration, and redness. Other pathogenic factors can easily be turned into fire toxin.

Dryness and summer heat are other *yang* pathologies. Dryness occurs when the blood and fluids are diminished and fail to nourish the eyes. This is often the effect of wind, cold, and/or fire. Summer heat is caused by extreme environmental heat and fluid exhaustion. It is often accompanied by dampness (mucus and yellow discharge).

“Dampness” and “coldness” are generally considered *yin* conditions. Lack of healthy *yang-qi* or metabolic heat allows for susceptibility to these kinds of patterns. Most vision loss conditions are the result of cold, which results in poor circulation to the eyes. The invasion of cold bottles up or consumes the *yang-qi*, depriving the eyes of warmth and nourishment. Relative coldness may also settle into the muscles, vessels, and skin around the eyes.

Note: Moxibustion (herbal heat therapy) remains one of the best means of dispersing cold-stagnation in the eyes. Local moxa application near the eyes should only be performed by an experienced practitioner.

Other Factors That Can Cause Damage to the Eyes

There are many other stress factors in our daily environment that can contribute to vision problems. Some include:

- Fluorescent lights
- Reading in poor (dim) lighting
- Environmental allergens
- Chlorine in swimming pools
- Air conditioning and forced hot air or baseboard heating

Emotional Causes of Degenerative Vision Loss

There are basically two kinds of emotions: positive and negative. Negative emotions result in low energy, and positive emotions generate high energy. A smile can actually generate health, while a frown can weaken you.

Changing emotions are the effect of normal mental activities. Excessive and unresolved emotions can have very strong psychosomatic effects on the body, including the eyes. Prolonged negative emotions can drain the body's resistance and *vital qi*. Violent emotional upset also disturbs the flow of *qi* among the internal organs of the body, leading to dysfunction of the eyes. Abnormal circulation of *qi* can interfere with circulation of blood and other fluids, further lowering function of the eyes. Each emotion affects the *qi*, blood, and fluids of the body in a different way.

Anger

The two most common emotions that I have observed to be associated with vision loss are fear and anger. Anger upsets the liver and causes *qi* (pathogenic heat) to rise, and the eyes become congested with excess. This heat can cook the blood vessels and the physical structures of the eyes, causing severe tissue damage and reduced function. Prolonged anger and rage can be lethal to healthy vision. Essentially one may become "blinded by rage."

Fear

Fear causes the *qi* to sink. When the energy of the body sinks, *qi*, blood, and fluids are literally drained from the top of the body. The opposite action of anger, fear results in too little nourishment reaching the eyes. Fear also drains the kidney *yin*-energy (which controls the eyes). When the *yin*-energy of the liver and kidney become substantially depleted, conditions like macular degeneration develop.

Worry

The third most common emotional condition that I see is worry. Americans seem to worry more than any other culture I have encountered. Worry causes the *qi* to knot and jam up. As stated time and time again, circulation is the key to healthy vision. Worry less, and take more action. Worrying about the past and future creates stress. Actions that focus on helping others with their problems will usually minimize a person's own problems. Transforming worry into optimism is good practice. Release your troubles!

Chaos and Overstimulation

Chaos, overstimulation, and overexcitement can disrupt the circulation of blood, the heart *qi*, and finally the heart *yang*. When the heart grows weak, it slowly deprives the eyes of vital nourishment.

Fright

Fright scatters *qi* and disrupts the normal flow pattern of *qi* and blood. This disruption will impair the circulation and nourishment to the eyes.

Grief and Depression

Grief and depression consume *qi*. Energy consumption will reduce function and impair a person's capacity to regenerate. Grief and depression can also cause a congestion of the lung *qi* which can cause cataracts.

General emotional imbalances lead to stagnation of *qi*, causing heat to rise up to the head (and eyes). The *essential qi*, blood, and fluids are not distributed to the eyes. Having emotions is a part of being human, but when specific emotions go unresolved, physical health problems are sure to arise. It's not to say that people shouldn't have emotions, rather that it's necessary to experience

them, resolve and accept the circumstance that led to these emotions, and move on in life.

One effective method for assessing what your issue(s) may be is to simply make a list of what (and who) is bothering you. You can then separate the list into two columns:

1. The things that bother you that you can change and that are within your control.
2. The things that bother you that you can't change and that are out of your control.

Make a plan to address those things you have the power to change, and work toward healing these broken parts of your life. Consciously choosing to let negative things go when they are beyond your control can bring about liberation far beyond your wildest expectations.

Deep-seated emotional problems and serious psychological conditions can be devastating to a person's life. It's worth seeking help from a trained professional if you feel that you need the help.

I cannot stress enough the importance of resolving these issues. In my clinical experience *at least 80% of all degenerative eye patients have some major unresolved issues*. Please be courageous and face these issues head-on. The price you pay for not dealing with your problems could be your eyesight.

The chart below summarizes the seven emotional causes of disease according to Chinese medical theory.

ORGAN	ADVERSE EMOTION	HEALING VIRTUE
Heart	Chaos/Overexcitement/ Overstimulation	Ritual/Propriety
Liver	Anger/Resentment	Compassion/Tranquility
Spleen	Worry/Obsession	Faith/Comfort
Lung	Grief/Melancholy/	Rectify/Resolve

	Depression	
Kidney	Fear/Anxiety	Courage/Wisdom
Heart and Kidney	Terror/Fright	Resolution/Calm

Non-Environmental, Non-Emotional Causes of Degenerative Vision Loss

Physical trauma is an obvious cause of vision problems. What may not be so obvious is that physical traumas often include medical procedures performed on the eyes. Surgical eye procedures can severely damage your eyes. Although caring physicians will do all they can to help a patient, the results can turn out much less than beneficial.

Today, when you visit a physician, he/she is likely to recommend one of two things: drugs or surgery. Surgical procedures do sometimes work wonders for certain eye conditions. Far too often things can and do go wrong, leaving the patient in a much worse position. In some cases the damage is irreversible, and I see this increasingly in my clinical practice. Procedures may offer a short-term correction, and may occasionally help. But keep in mind that the eyes are extremely sensitive to drugs and surgery and a lot can go wrong, so it's worth thinking long and hard before agreeing to have your eyes tampered with.

Healing and restoration of the eyes become much more challenging in these cases of prior medical intervention due to the excessive trauma and scar tissue. In my years of working with eye conditions, the only patients who have *not* responded very well to treatment are those with serious traumatic injury, or those who have had excessive or damaging medical procedures to their eyes. Not to say that these people cannot be helped with Chinese medicine, just that those who have had a lot of structural damage generally do not respond as well as those who have not.

In my opinion, the methods of Chinese medicine discussed in this book should (in most cases) be implemented long before choosing drugs or surgery. These modalities are not invasive and have virtually no side effects. *If nothing else works, drugs and surgery could be considered as the absolute last resort! Less is always more, and the less you “do” to your eyes, the better your chances are of healing them.*

Treatment of Eye Disease According to Pattern Discrimination

Chinese medicine forms diagnosis and treatment plans based on pattern discrimination. Western medicine bases its treatment on symptoms and disease diagnosis. People can have the same disease diagnosed by conventional Western physicians, and all have different patterns according to Chinese medicine. For example, if you have three people diagnosed with dry macular degeneration, they may all have different Chinese patterns. One may have Central Qi Sinking, one may have *yin* deficiency, and one may have a pattern of Liver *Yang* Rising. All three people would have very different treatment plans. Even though they all have the same manifest condition, the underlying cause is different.

In addition to assessing the condition of the eyes, it is important to understand the condition of a person's overall health. Disease and dysfunction simply cannot be isolated or reduced to a specific organ or area of the body. Once a complete health history is taken, and Chinese medical evaluation has taken place (pulse diagnosis, tongue diagnosis, etc.), the practitioner forms a pattern of disharmony based on all the information he/she has gathered. A treatment plan is designed according to the pattern of the patient.

Since Chinese medicine bases treatment on patterns rather than symptoms of disease, it is able to form effective treatment strategies for degenerative vision loss conditions. Western medicine is at a loss because it lacks the diagnostic technology of pattern discrimination to identify the root cause of the illness.

The following section lists some common Chinese medicine patterns and treatment principles found in cases of degenerative vision loss.

Liver Patterns

Liver *Yin* Deficiency

Major Symptoms: myopia, astigmatism, ARMD, retinitis pigmentosa, presbyopia, dry eyes, floaters, glaucoma, Stargardt's, cataracts, red and dry eyes, bloodshot eyes, poor night vision, dry skin, dry stool

Treatment Principles: nourish Liver *Yin* and Blood

Liver *Yin* Deficiency with Heat

Major Symptoms: glaucoma, myopia, ARMD, astigmatism, retinitis pigmentosa, Stargardt's, photophobia, red and dry eyes, bloodshot eyes, poor night vision, malar flush and afternoon hot flashes, scanty urine, night sweats, blurry vision, headaches, dry stool, restlessness, poor sleep

Treatment Principles: nourish Liver *Yin* and Blood

Liver *Qi* Congestion

Major Symptoms: eyestrain headaches, glaucoma (early stage, open-angle), myopia, irritability, sighing, flank pain/distension, depression/mood swings, belching, abdominal distension

Treatment Principles: regulate Liver *Qi*

Liver Wind/Liver *Yang* Rising

Major Symptoms: glaucoma, wet ARMD, dry ARMD, eyestrain headaches, temple headaches, tinnitus, hearing impairment, blurry vision, tremors, tics, hypertension, restlessness

Treatment Principles: descend and anchor Liver Yang, disperse Wind, and nourish Liver and Kidney Yin

Liver Blood Deficiency

Major Symptoms: floaters, red and dry eyes, cataracts, presbyopia, photophobia, poor night vision, blurry vision, dizziness, soft or brittle nails, dry skin, muscle twitches

Treatment Principles: nourish Liver Blood, nourish Kidney and Liver Yin

Liver Qi and Blood Stagnation with Lung Qi and Deficiency

Major Symptoms: ARMD, retinitis pigmentosa, glaucoma, headaches, myopia, irritability, sighing, flank pain/distension, depression/mood swings, belching, abdominal distension, shortness of breath, peri-orbital edema, prone to catch colds, quiet voice or “soft-spoken”

Treatment Principles: regulate the Liver, move Qi and Blood, nourish the Lungs, and strengthen Lung Qi

Gall Bladder Patterns

Disharmony between the Gall Bladder and Stomach with Phlegm-Heat

Major Symptoms: glaucoma, diabetic retinopathy, lack of initiative, timidity, startles easily, frequent sighing, edema

in the extremities, tight chest, palpitations, anxiety
Treatment Principles: warm the Gall Bladder and transform dampness, clear heat

Kidney Patterns

Kidney *Yin* Deficiency

Major Symptoms: dry ARMD, myopia, astigmatism, cataracts, dry eyes, floaters, photophobia, dry mouth with thirst (especially at night), scanty urine, dizziness, tinnitus

Treatment Principles: nourish Kidney and Liver *Yin*

Kidney *Yin* Deficiency with Heat

Major Symptoms: open-angle glaucoma, dry ARMD, myopia, astigmatism, cataracts, photophobia, dry eyes, itchy eyes, night sweats, dry mouth with thirst (especially at night), scanty urine, dizziness, tinnitus

Treatment Principles: nourish Kidney and Liver *Yin*, clear heat, moisten dryness

Kidney *Yin*, Liver Blood, and Heart *Yin* Deficiency

Major Symptoms: myopia, astigmatism, insomnia, restlessness, palpitations, poor memory, night sweats, dry mouth with thirst (especially at night), scanty urine, dizziness, tinnitus

Treatment Principles: nourish Kidney and Heart *Yin*, nourish Liver Blood, calm the *shen*-spirit

Kidney *Yang* Weakness

Major Symptoms: retinitis pigmentosa, ARMD, diabetic retinopathy, glaucoma, poor night vision, cold and sore knees and low-back, frequent and clear urination, decreased sexual function, cold extremities

Treatment Principles: strengthen the Kidney Qi and warm Yang

Spleen and Stomach Patterns

Spleen and Stomach Weakness with Damp Accumulation

Major Symptoms: wet ARMD, diabetic retinopathy, night blindness, fatigue (especially after eating), reduced appetite, pale complexion, loose stools, heavy limbs, dizziness, abdominal distention/fullness, edema

Treatment Principles: strengthen the Spleen and Stomach, transform damp accumulation, regulate Qi

Central (Spleen) Qi Weakness

Major Symptoms: retinitis pigmentosa, choroidal dystrophy, night blindness, diabetic retinopathy, ARMD, Usher syndrome, fatigue (especially after eating), reduced appetite, pale complexion, loose stools, heavy limbs, dizziness, abdominal distention/fullness

Treatment Principles: raise the central Qi, strengthen the Spleen Qi

Spleen Qi Weakness and Heart Blood Deficiency

Major Symptoms: wet ARMD, diabetic retinopathy, bleeding under the skin (purpura), uterine bleeding, bruising easily, anxiety, poor sleep, fatigue

Treatment Principles: strengthen the Spleen Qi, nourish the Heart Yin and Blood, and calm the mind

Heart and Liver Blood Stagnation Patterns

Blood Stagnation

Major Symptoms: glaucoma, dry ARMD, sharp localized pain, angina, palpitations, insomnia, nightmares

Treatment Principles: move Qi and Blood in the chest and head areas

CHAPTER 3

Acupuncture and Moxibustion

The Modern History of Acupuncture

The first record of acupuncture was compiled in mainland China between 300 BC and 100 BC. This compilation was so detailed and comprehensive that it was evident that acupuncture had been used long before these particular records. Relatively recent archeological findings suggest that acupuncture may have been around for at least the last five thousand years.

Some of the earliest written records of acupuncture in the Western world date back to an article in a French medical journal in 1671. Occupation by France, England, and other European countries in China and Southeast Asia had generated a strong interest in acupuncture throughout Europe by the nineteenth century. That interest migrated to the East Coast of the United States, with scattered practitioners reported in most major eastern cities by the late nineteenth century.

Large numbers of immigrants came to the West from China, Korea, Japan, Vietnam, and elsewhere in Asia during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, including large numbers of acupuncturists. When you mention acupuncture in the United States, people usually think of China, but there are strong traditions of acupuncture in Japan, Vietnam, Korea, England, Europe, and elsewhere. These different acupuncture practices have some similarities and some differences in both theory and clinical application.

In 1957 the “Law of ’57” declared that all physicians in China must learn Traditional Chinese Medicine acupuncture and herbal

medicine. At the time there were thousands of Western-trained physicians in China, and because the practice of Western medicine relies upon Western pharmaceuticals, then-ruler Mao Tse Tung realized that China's health care system could not afford Western medicines for a billion people. The emphasis was returned to the system of medicine that had served China for at least the previous two thousand years—the newly refined system of TCM. This system was created to eliminate religious or mystical connotations, and to put Chinese medicine in the national and global mainstream.

Modern-day practice of acupuncture in the US has largely been “imported” from mainland China and is known in North America under this broader term: Traditional Chinese Medicine. When Mao unified China under his rule, he established five TCM universities. A concerted effort was made to create a sense of scholarship around the practice of acupuncture. The traditions of classical acupuncture in China had been maintained through centuries of political turmoil. Lists of families of classical practitioners and their knowledge of Chinese medicine were now compiled by the government. Texts were written and TCM courses of study created. Later in the US, National Certification (NCCAOM) exams for acupuncturists were created. Also, each US state has its own certification system. All rely upon the English versions of these translated TCM texts.

Certain aspects of pre-TCM acupuncture survived, especially in the traditions of acupuncture found today in Japan and Korea, and in some styles of acupuncture taught and practiced in Europe. In these oldest traditions of Classical Chinese Medicine, the most skilled practitioner was the physician who could detect disease in its earliest stages, before the person became ill. This patient assessment was conducted through careful evaluation of subtle physical signs and the health of his/her mind and spirit.

In ancient China, the classical physician was only paid as long as everyone in the family maintained good health. If the head of a family became ill, it was the physician's duty not only to treat the ill person but to support the family until the illness had passed

(quite a bit more responsibility than that of modern physicians and practitioners!).

Acupuncture Gains Popularity in the US

Recent interest in acupuncture surged in the United States after 1972, following a trip to China by President Nixon and his Secretary of State Kissinger to establish political ties with Mao Tse Tung and the new mainland China. James Reston was an accompanying journalist who wrote extensively about the remarkable experiences he had in mainland China. When he had a flare-up of appendicitis there, Chinese doctors performed an emergency appendectomy using acupuncture for anesthesia. This event raised interest not only with Western physicians, but also with the people who read about it.

Even more recently, Western physicians have shown increasing interest in those aspects of acupuncture that involve anesthesia, nausea relief, and pain control. There have been many articles in the Western medical literature about these subjects over the past twenty-five years or so. Acupuncture is becoming more widely accepted and is being utilized in hospitals and rehabilitation centers.

Acupuncture is part of the complete and comprehensive system of Chinese medicine, which also includes Chinese herbal medicine, Qigong, and Tui Na massage. Acupuncture has emerged from at least five thousand years of empirical study and observation of the dynamics of *qi* or “Vital Air.”

Acupuncture works by adjusting and regulating the *qi*, which flows through your body’s fourteen main distribution vessels or “meridians.” Twelve of these vessels are internally connected with specific organs such as your lungs, heart, kidneys, and stomach. There are also eight “extra vessels” throughout the body.

Millennia of trial and error accompanied by meticulous observation allowed the Chinese to accurately map out the locations of these vessels. Each vessel has energy nodes or “points” where the energy becomes more concentrated and can be more

easily accessed and stimulated. Among hundreds along the vessels, each acupuncture point has a specific regulatory function within the body.

When the *qi* and blood become blocked and cease to flow smoothly through your vessels, pain, illness, and dysfunction manifest. Acupuncture needles are so thin that you can fit at least eight of them into the head of a hypodermic needle. These hair-thin acupuncture needles are inserted into acupuncture points, adjusting the flow of energy through the vessels of your body. By promoting *qi* to flow through the congested meridians involved, the body can restore its proper function and maintain a healthy, balanced state.



From a Western medical standpoint, there are more than 2,000 different conditions that acupuncture can treat. The effects of acupuncture have been clinically shown to increase oxygen and blood flow, in order to speed up healing. Also, the hormonal system can be directly stimulated, which can aid in the repair of your body's cells. The effectiveness of pain control is brought about by a release of your body's natural pain killers and tranquilizers: endorphin, serotonin, and melatonin.

How Acupuncture Works

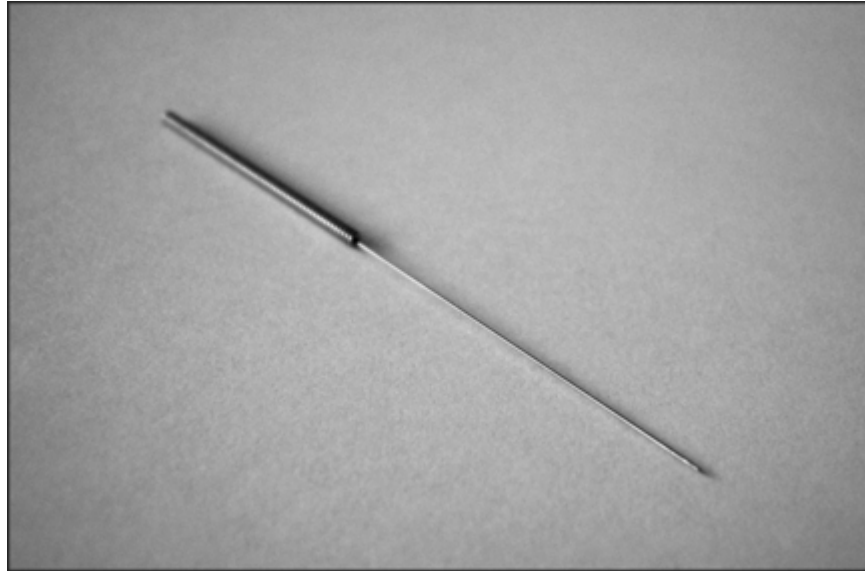
Acupuncture works by stimulating circulation to parts of the body where the *qi* and blood are congested or where there is weakness.

This action can restore healthy function, relieve pain, and strengthen immune function. The body can be seen as an orchestra, in which one instrument out of time or playing out of tune affects the sound of the whole. When all are playing together harmoniously, the production is a success. Similarly, our body's organs, glands, and major systems need to be working together in harmonious fashion to maintain healthy function.

Choosing Acu-Points

Repeated experience in using certain acupuncture points on specific areas of the body when similar cases come for treatment provides the practitioner with many tried and proven acupuncture treatment protocols. The modern-day creation of TCM was geared toward establishing these protocols, in which selected acupuncture points are used to treat specific conditions.

Point combinations for health conditions can be found in most TCM texts. This method is often ridiculed as “cook-book acupuncture,” but in my experience these general guidelines do hold great value if observed by a well-trained acupuncturist with a lot of clinical experience. As long as the clinician has the knowledge, experience, and skill, the patient will almost always get a very good result. These point combinations have worked for centuries and confirm acupuncture's efficacy.



A Safe and Natural Method

Acupuncture is safe and without any serious side effects—one of the reasons for its widespread acceptance. The stainless steel needles themselves are pre-sterilized, and they are disposed of after each treatment.

Acupuncture has been used by millions of Americans and is recognized by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The FDA regulates acupuncture needles as medical devices, and rates them as “safe and effective.”

The National Institutes of Health finished a two-and-one-half-year study of acupuncture in November 1977. Their Consensus Statement reads: *“While it is often thought that there is substantial research evidence to support conventional medical practices, this is frequently not the case. This does not mean that these treatments are ineffective. The data in support of acupuncture are as strong as those for many accepted Western medical therapies. One of the advantages of acupuncture is that the incidence of adverse effects is substantially lower than that of many drugs, surgeries, or other accepted medical procedures used for the same conditions.”*

Acupuncture Methods

Traditional Acupuncture

Traditional acupuncture is the insertion of fine needles at specific acupuncture points in order to regulate circulation of *qi* and blood. These needles vary in length, width of shaft, and shape of head. Today practitioners use needles that are disposable. They are used once and discarded in accordance with medical biohazard regulations and guidelines. There are many methods by which acupuncturists insert needles.

The following techniques are some that may be used by an acupuncturist immediately following insertion: Lift and Thrust, Twirling and Rotation, Scraping (vibrations sent through the needle), and Trembling (another vibration technique). Techniques are specifically chosen based on the therapeutic goal.

Electro-Acupuncture

In electro-acupuncture low-level electricity is attached to the needles (through wires) to get stronger stimulation. This method uses very small electrical impulses through the acupuncture needles. This technique is generally used for analgesia (pain relief or prevention). The amount of power is only a few micro amperes, but the frequency of the current can vary from 5 to 2,000 Hz.

Seven-Star Plum Blossom Acupuncture

Plum blossom needle technique is an old method. Seven needles are tightly bound together and then tapped on acupuncture points and along meridian pathways. Electrodes can also be attached to the plum blossom in order to increase its therapeutic action.

Electro-Dermal Stimulation

Electro-Dermal Stimulation (EDS) involves stimulating specific acupuncture points using an electrical device on the surface of the skin. Micro Current Stimulation is an example of this. Often, EDS is very effective for auricular acu-points.

Laser Acupuncture

Laser acupuncture uses a low-level laser to stimulate acupuncture points without penetrating the skin. In practice I find laser acupuncture most effective for children. Adults don't seem to respond as well, perhaps because children are more sensitive to this low-level stimulation. It is a very safe and effective method.

Acupressure

Acupressure is a manual technique in which pressure is applied to specific acupuncture points. Pressure can be applied with the fingers, hands, or devices. Acupressure is often combined with "trigger-point" therapy to alleviate pain and muscle spasms. Acupressure and massage are most often the treatment of choice for pediatric cases.

Acu-Magnets

Magnet therapy involves placing magnets on specific acupuncture points in an attempt to regulate the flow of *qi* and blood. The polarity of the magnets affects the circulation and can bring about relief for many conditions. I have found that acu-magnets work about 50% of the time, and patients won't know if it works for them unless they try it.

Essential Acupuncture

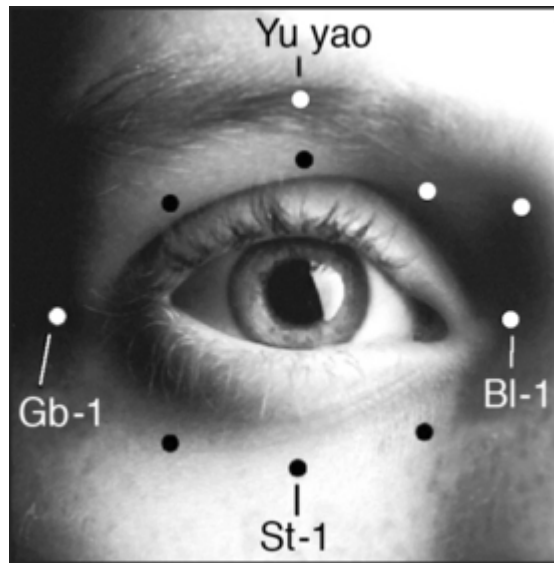
In essential acupuncture essential oils are placed on specific acupuncture points. The oils are absorbed into these points and/or activate the acupuncture points. Essential acupuncture is one of the easiest home therapies you can do. There is a chart with beneficial oils, acu-points, and conditions presented in [Chapter 8](#).

Acupuncture Systems for Eye Conditions

TCM Acupuncture

TCM or “body” acupuncture is based on experiential points and point prescriptions for specific patterns and medical conditions. Acupuncture points (along the meridians) are selected and needled based on their traditional actions. Local acupuncture points are often selected around the eyes as part of the treatment plan.

Although this system has been shown to be extremely effective in many conditions, in my experience it is not especially effective for treating conditions of degenerative vision loss.



Auricular Acupuncture

Auricular acupuncture is one of the most important components of traditional Chinese acupuncture. In Chinese medical theory there are more than 120 points on each ear related to specific parts of the body. Modern practitioners can simulate ear acu-points using needles, laser, and electrical stimulants.

Auricular acupuncture theory suggests that the ear represents an inverted fetus, with stimulation points affecting the corresponding parts of the body. All major energy vessels of the body are thought to cross through the ear.

While the earliest uses of ear acupuncture points date back to ancient China, modern applications of auricular acupuncture are based on the work of Dr. Paul Nogier of France. In the 1950s, Dr.

Nogier noticed a curious scar on the upper ear of some of his patients. He found that a local practitioner had treated these patients for sciatica pain. This woman had cauterized a specific area of the external ear in order to relieve her patients' low back pain.

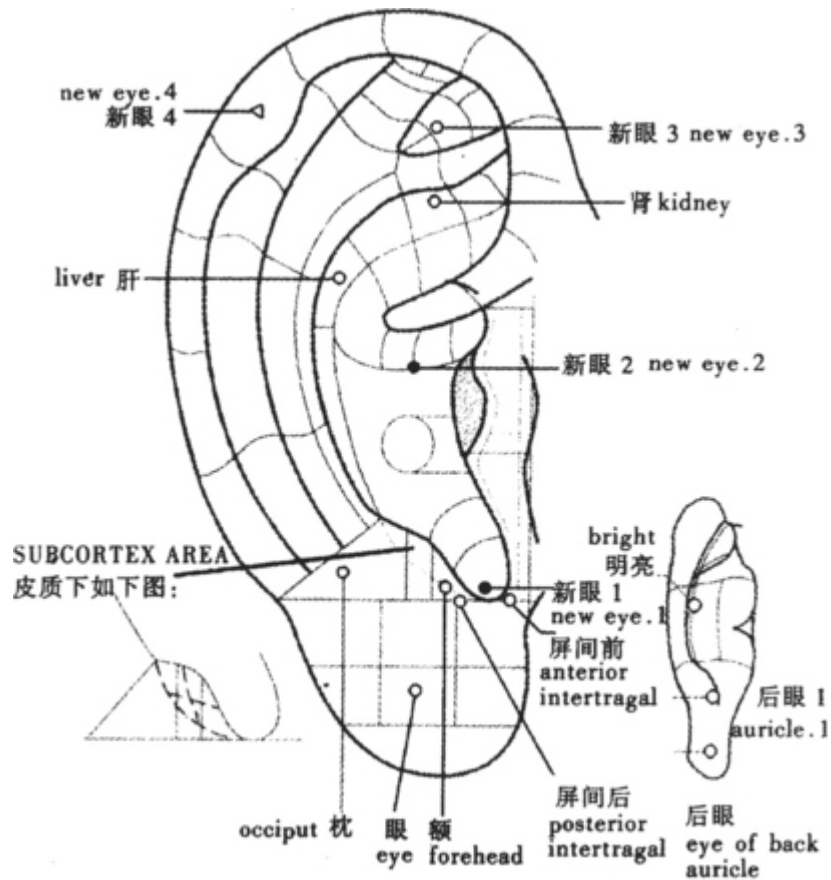
Dr. Nogier conducted a similar procedure on his own sciatica patients and found that their back pain was also reduced. He experimented with stimulating this "sciatica point" using acupuncture needles. He found that they too were extremely effective in alleviating sciatica pain.

Dr. Nogier theorized that if an area of the upper external ear is effective in treating low back pain, maybe other parts of the ear could treat other parts of the body. Nogier's theory contended that the auricle could be compared to an inverted fetus, with the head represented on the lower ear lobe, the feet at the top of the external ear, and the rest of the body in between.

Recently developed protocols related to auricular acupuncture are being introduced throughout the US and Europe and are being shown to have great results with many eye conditions. Based on the auricular acupuncture model, specific points on the auricle of the ear have been identified to benefit vision.

There are eight suggested points documented to help vision loss. An acupuncture "point locator" device is often used to determine which of these "active" points are to be treated (usually 2-5 points in each ear). The locator detects areas of reduced electrical resistance on the surface of the skin. Once these points have been identified, they may be stimulated with Micro Current Stimulation (MCS), needles, acupuncture press tacks, or pellets. Pellets and press-tacks are usually left in for a number of days to promote ongoing stimulation.

Stimulating these specific points has been shown to have remarkable clinical results for vision loss patients. I find this one of the more promising systems of acupuncture for degenerative vision loss.



Japanese Meridian Acupuncture

The Japanese meridian system of acupuncture was developed in the twentieth century, about the same time TCM was codified in China. Its theoretical foundation is derived from the Chinese medical classics.

Many practitioners of meridian therapy in Japan were blind and had developed extremely delicate needling techniques based on touch and pulse diagnosis to balance the circulation of *ki* (Japanese for *qi*) in the twelve meridians. The emphasis in Japanese meridian acupuncture is on having the practitioner feel and correctly interpret the response of the *ki* in the patient, using pulse diagnosis for immediate feedback for every aspect of practice.

Although I do not have much training in Japanese acupuncture and do not use it much in practice, I understand that it can be

somewhat effective in treating some eye conditions.

Scalp Acupuncture

Scalp acupuncture is a relatively modern specialized acupuncture technique. Treatment zones have been mapped onto the scalp that are associated with body functions and broad body regions. The zones include a few standard acupuncture points, but the treatment principle for point selection is usually not based on the traditional indication for the point or associated meridian.

During my training in China I observed many acupuncturists who performed scalp acupuncture for conditions like stroke, paralysis, retardation, deafness, tinnitus, and vision loss. The results were nothing short of miraculous on many occasions. Since scalp acupuncture is extremely beneficial for most neurological conditions, it warrants more investigation for its efficacy in treating degenerative eye conditions.

A good scalp acupuncturist may be difficult to find in the US, but might be worth seeking out. This acupuncture method would be my second choice to Micro Acupuncture for degenerative vision loss. I'm looking forward to investigating this system more in years to come.

Micro Acupuncture

Micro Acupuncture is a new procedure involving forty-eight newly discovered acupuncture points located only in the hands and feet, and not associated with any other acupuncture system. These points were discovered and researched in Denmark in 1984. Thousands of people have been treated with this procedure throughout Europe and in the US. It has been observed that more than 80% of the patients treated had a marked improvement in their vision.

Micro Acupuncture was originally developed as an experimental system to treat arthritis pain. When patients began to report improvements in their vision, it became evident that Micro

Acupuncture was effective for degenerative vision loss. I was fortunate enough to have had the opportunity to learn the system of Micro Acupuncture directly from Per Otte.

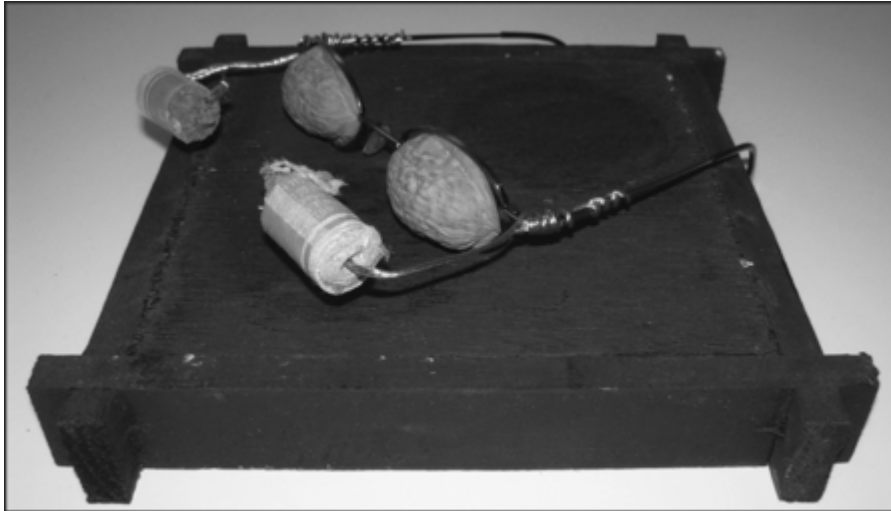
After years of treating patients, I found this method to be second to none as the primary treatment modality. In my opinion, Micro Acupuncture is the best therapy available to people with degenerative vision loss. Improvement can usually be measured within five to ten treatments. Patients have their vision tested before treatment commences and then after, in order to ensure that they are responding. Once a positive response has been confirmed, the full course of treatment is carried out. It is recommended that patients return regularly for maintenance, depending on their condition.

Chinese Moxibustion

Chinese moxibustion (moxa) is the process of burning the herb *artemisia argyia* on, over, or near acupuncture points in order to increase circulation and function. Moxa can be applied locally or distally to various acupuncture points. Moxibustion herbal heat therapy remains one of the best means of dispersing cold-stagnation of *qi* and blood in the eyes. There are a few methods of applying moxa:

1. Moxa applied directly to the skin
2. Moxa stick (indirect)
3. Needle-moxa
4. Moxa-shells for the eyes

In one method walnut shells are soaked and dried in a ginger and clove tea, and then rested on the eyelids as half-shells. Moxa is ignited over the shells to warm them. This brings about rapid, penetrating warmth to the eyes, dispersing the cold. This method is still widely practiced in TCM hospitals throughout China and is highly effective for helping various degenerative vision conditions.



Shmuel Halevi, a practitioner of Chinese medicine in Israel, has promoted a more recent method of combination acupuncture called “snail-shell moxa.” He uses snail shells instead of walnut shells and reports great results using this method for eye hemorrhaging and thrombosis. I have used this method in practice and found it extremely effective for retinal bleeding and hemorrhage associated with wet-style ARMD and diabetic retinopathy. In all cases, it is important to make sure that the condition (bleeding) is stabilized. Once this is confirmed by an ophthalmologist, commencing local moxa therapy can be a great alternative to injections or laser procedures to stop the bleeding.

I found that the snail shells are a bit difficult to heat and apply direct moxa to, so I have substituted flatter clam shells, which seem to work just as well. In my opinion all these methods will work. It’s up to the practitioner to decide which one he/she is most comfortable applying.



The basic idea of how moxa therapy works for retinal bleeding is similar to the mechanism of a pipe freezing and bursting in your house during the winter. The old pipes get cold and brittle, then crack. Laser surgery is like trying to “solder” the old brittle pipes, and injections are like “caulking” the leaks. In most cases, this is just patchwork and the pipes can easily burst again. The moxa therapy warms the vessels and increases the flexibility and patency of the weak blood vessels. Taking herbs and foods to warm the body internally will help to expedite this process.

Moxa can be done at home by just about anyone, using certain precautions. The specific methods of using moxa for retinal bleeding should only be performed by a trained practitioner who has had some experience in treating degenerative eye conditions. Using moxa for at-home therapy in the way of helping your vision will be discussed later in [Chapter 8](#).

CHAPTER 4

Chinese Herbal Medicine

CHINESE HERBAL MEDICINE IS one of the main branches of Classical Chinese Medicine. It is often used in conjunction with acupuncture or can be used as a sole therapy. Chinese herbs are remarkable in their ability to promote the body's effort to heal and strengthen itself. Unlike Western medications, which simply control symptoms by masking them, Chinese herbs treat the underlying conditions and truly address the root cause. It may take a bit longer to feel the benefits after taking the herbs than after taking certain Western pharmaceuticals. However, they rarely cause unwanted side effects such as those often associated with prescription medicine.

Knowledge of the medicinal use of Chinese herbs has accumulated over thousands of years. It is said that early herbalists observed which plants that animals in the wild would consume for various maladies. For example, some animals eat specific herbs after sustaining a physical trauma, and some eat specific herbs after feeding.

Modern herbalists usually draw on ancient formulas that have been successful for thousands of years at helping people get well. Our modern high-stress diet and lifestyles have reduced many people's sensitivity to classical Chinese herbal formulas; therefore, increasing the potency of some formulas has proven to be more clinically effective in some difficult cases. Adding and subtracting herbs and increasing or decreasing the quantity of specific herbs can adjust the therapeutic actions of the herbal formula.

Chinese herbs are most often combined in recipes or "formulas," in which the synergy enhances medicinal effectiveness. Herbal formulas can range from two-herb formulas to thirty-herb

formulas, depending on the patient's condition and the therapeutic action desired. More is not necessarily better. Each formula is created with detailed knowledge of each ingredient's therapeutic action and possible side effects.

Some Chinese herbs are contra-indicated for specific medical conditions and may negatively interact with other medications. A well-trained herbalist knows these "red-flag" conditions and contraindications. He/she will adjust your herbal prescription as needed for your specific condition.

Traditionally, Chinese herbs were decocted or "brewed" in hot water and simmered. These "teas" were consumed daily until health was restored. Topical application of herbs was also a common practice. Modern technology has made it much easier to take Chinese herbs in other forms including pills, capsules, granules/powders, topical ointments, and concentrated tinctures.

Despite the convenience of pills or tinctures, raw herb decoctions remain the most potent means of consuming Chinese herbal medicine. In addition, there is more freedom to craft formulas for each person with the highest probability of absorption and utilization. I can't overemphasize the superiority of using raw Chinese herbs to other forms. They are the most highly absorbable and highly concentrated. As we age, our digestion and absorption capacity diminishes, and decocted teas absorb much better than any other form of herbs. A Chinese herbalist can construct the best formula for you, but it's a good idea to make sure the practitioner has some experience and training in using raw herbs to treat eye problems.

Fortunately there are quite a few herb companies that will prepare decoction prescriptions for you. They can be stored for up to a month in liquid form and just need to be heated and consumed twice each day. In my practice I recommend raw herbs for many patients with degenerative vision loss.

Granules and tinctures are probably my second choice for effectiveness. There is also flexibility to modify formulas, and they tend to last longer. Although these forms are usually not as potent,

they seem to work quite well. Both can be dissolved in hot water and consumed as tea for maximum absorption.

Capsules and pills are okay to use, but the practitioner must recommend the right formula, in the right dosage. This could take some time to figure out. If the right formula is given from a good herb company, vision should gradually improve. Herbs in this form should be taken for no less than three months.

In my experience, the least potent of the Chinese herbal formulas are the Chinese patent formulas commonly found in the herb shops in Chinatowns. They just don't seem strong enough to exert a therapeutic benefit for serious eye conditions. However, they may work well for some people. If you wish to see if the patent herbal formulas work for you, there is a condition-formula cross reference provided in this chapter. It may be worth trying them, as they are significantly more economical.

Herb "processing" and herb "quality" are always an issue, and again, a good herbalist will know which companies use the best-quality herbs and best extraction methods.

Note: Never take regular tea or coffee with your Chinese herbs. This includes all generic teas, black tea, green tea, white tea, Earl Grey, English Breakfast, etc. These teas have substances that bind to the herbs and inhibit absorption.

Chinese Herbal Medicine for Degenerative Vision Loss

A very basic eye-healing Chinese herbal formula is chrysanthemum flower (ju hua) and lycii berries (gou qi zi or Chinese wolfberry), which nourishes the eyes and cools down "Liver Heat." The recipe consists of 12 to 15 grams of each herb placed in hot water together and consumed daily as a tea. Chrysanthemum clears inflammation and heat from the eyes. Lycii is a primary vision tonic in the Chinese pharmacopoeia. A small, red, sweet berry shaped like an eye, lycii contains vitamin C and riboflavin and is very high in beta-carotene. Lycii or gou qi zi is very nourishing to the eyes.

Two other frequently recommended tonic herbs for vision loss are Siberian ginseng and schizandra fruit (wu wei zi). Used in China for at least four thousand years as a longevity herb, ginseng is also known for improving visual acuity and night vision, in its role as a *qi* tonic. Some research indicates that schizandra fruit is high in antioxidants and liver-protective compounds.

The following discusses herbal use in connection with specific vision problems:

Age-Related Macular Degeneration (ARMD)

The most effective TCM treatment principles for many eye conditions involve nourishing the kidney and spleen in order to replenish *vital qi* and blood.

The clinical objective is to treat the root cause by nourishing the spleen and strengthening the kidneys. The branch treatment or temporary solution is to activate the blood circulation in order to resolve stagnation.

Visual capacity is improved by promoting the circulation in choroids and retina, preventing cell death, and reversing the inability to absorb and circulate vital nutrients for healthy vision.

ARMD (wet and dry) is often an exhaustion of the body's *yin*. The *yin*-aspect of the visual field is the central vision, and the peripheral vision is more *yang* in nature. When the central vision goes, it indicates a “burn-out” of kidney and liver *yin*, so using Chinese herbs that nourish *yin* seems to work best.

In cases of wet ARMD, the bleeding must be stopped first, and then the eyes invigorated. Using Chinese Notoginseng or “Sanqi” would accomplish both. Once the bleeding has been arrested, *yin*-nourishing formulas should be used in raw decoctions. These formulas will be taken long term (6–12 months), as it takes a longer amount of time to build the *yin* than it does to generate *yang-qi*.

Note: Even though Stargardt's is a completely different condition, it usually follows the same pattern of liver and kidney *yin*-

deficiency in Chinese medicine, and it therefore can be treated in the same manner as dry ARMD.

Main Patent Formulas

Although these patent formulas may not be the most potent form of Chinese herbal medicine, they may help some improve their vision. If after three to six months of using the patent formulas you do not see any improvement, you may wish to consult a Chinese herbalist for a stronger herbal prescription.

WET ARMD

1. Yunnan Paiyao or Sanqi Powder (dissolve 2 g 2x/day in water)
2. Ming Mu Di Huang Tang (Bright Eye Tea)
3. Shu Gan Tang + Erchen Tang (Soothe the Liver Tea + Two Aged Tea)

DRY ARMD

1. Ming Mu Di Huang Tang (Bright Eye Tea)
2. Shu Gan Tang (Soothe the Liver Tea)

Retinitis Pigmentosa

In TCM, retinitis pigmentosa (RP) is caused by congenital deficiencies in the liver, kidney, spleen, and stomach, as well as dryness of blood circulation. The treatment principle for RP (and associated conditions) lies in regulating the five internal organs, nourishing *vital qi* and blood, and invigorating the entire meridian system.

Although each case is different, I find that there is often decline of kidney *yang*. Using herbs that ignite the kidney *yang* activity in the body seems to bring about the best results and improvements. RP is frequently a case of cold-stagnation. RP is one of the more challenging conditions to treat because it seems to take unusually

long to see results (6–12 months). The herbal formulas below are also effective for Usher syndrome and choroidal dystrophy.

MAIN PATENT FORMULAS

1. You Gui Tang (Restore the Right Decoction)
2. Buzhong Yi Qi Tang (Central Qi Tea)

Diabetic Retinopathy

In TCM, this condition mostly occurs at the late period of diabetes owing to the deficiency of both Qi-energy and yin-substance. A long-term deficiency tends to cause poor circulation and blood stasis. Therapeutic action is aimed at nourishing the spleen and kidney, and stimulating blood circulation in order to resolve stagnation. The medicine has the following functions:

Since the peripheral visual field is weakened in diabetic retinopathy (DR), the clinical objective would be to strengthen the *yang*. I have found DR to respond more rapidly than most eye conditions (usually in just a few weeks), and improvements can be obtained extremely rapidly using acupuncture and Chinese herbs, with results observed in as little as a few treatments.

MAIN PATENT FORMULAS

1. Green Tea
2. You Gui Tang (Restore the Right Decoction)

Retinal Vein and Artery Occlusion

When retinal occlusions have formed, the strategy in TCM is to activate the blood circulation and resolve stagnation. It is confirmed that occlusions may lead to retinal bleeding. The goal is to first stop any bleeding as soon as possible, and then improve the structural integrity of the retina and macula. The generation of new blood vessels and further complications can thus be avoided.

As long as people can tolerate these herbs, they tend to work very well. Chinese herbs that help promote circulation of *qi* and blood can be difficult to digest. Herbs for this condition can be hard on the stomach and cause digestive upset and loose stool. This can be avoided by graduating the dosage, and taking it as a decoction after meals.

MAIN PATENT FORMULAS

1. Sanqi Pain/Yunnan Paiyao
2. Modified Xuefu Zhuyu Tang (Move Stasis in Mansion of Blood)

Open-Angle Glaucoma

Open-angle glaucoma is primarily due to blood congestion and fire toxins, with an underlying deficiency of the liver and kidney *yin*. The treatment modalities are primarily focused on moving *qi* and blood to relieve heat and fire toxins. The clinical strategy is to keep the intraocular pressure low and thereby preserve the vision.

I have found that if this condition is treated in the early stages, patients with open-angle glaucoma respond very well to herbs and acupuncture. If the condition is progressed, it may be more difficult to get a positive response, especially if there is long-term usage of glaucoma medication. It seems as though most people's vision improves; however, it's a fifty-fifty chance whether the pressure will lower. Excessive medication and/or high emotional stress seem to keep the pressure from lowering in open-angle glaucoma. No herb, needle, drug, or knife can overpower the effects of a negative human mind over the body! In most cases I do see very good results with modifications of some Chinese herbal formulas.

MAIN PATENT FORMULAS:

1. Wen Dan tang (Warm the Gall Bladder Decoction)
2. Qi Ju Di Huang Wan (Rehmania 6 plus Chrysanthemum and Lycii)

These are a few basic formulas used for some common degenerative eye conditions. There are plenty of Chinese herb companies that will make up these formulas. Lists of recommended formulas and suggested dosages are found in [Appendix 2](#) and companies in [Appendix 3](#). You may have the formulas made, but remember that each person is different and should ideally have his or her own formula designed by a trained practitioner who has experience in treating eye conditions with Chinese herbs.

Individually Prescribed Chinese Herbal Formulas vs. Patent Formulas

It takes four years of schooling to learn how to write a Chinese herbal formula. The education I received in Chinese herbology was as good as any reputable Oriental Medicine school can provide in the US. Since I had a strong desire to learn more about formula writing for special conditions (like degenerative vision loss), I did post-graduate study at a university hospital in mainland China. Many other practitioners have done the same. Seeing how the Chinese herbalists create and prepare formulas in China is something that all herbalists should experience. It greatly enhances both knowledge and skill.

Despite recent press, Chinese herbs are safe if used correctly. Chinese herbal formulas are written by qualified practitioners trained in Chinese herbal medicine. The practitioner writes the formula based on the diagnosed disease pattern. Only a well-trained practitioner is capable of pattern discrimination and writing the correct formulas.

Many people wish to try to heal their eyes on their own. The Chinese patent medicines found in herb shops in the Chinatowns and Asian food markets can be a place to start. They are mild enough to experiment with. If you get a bad reaction, stop taking them immediately. If you get good results using them, that's great!

Following is a table of some Chinese patent formulas that can be beneficial for certain eye conditions.

--	--	--

FORMULA	ACTION	EYE CONDITION
Ming Mu Di Huang Wan	Nourish Kidney and Liver Blood and Yin	ARMD and Stargardt's
Qi Ju Di Huang Wan	Nourish Kidney and Liver Blood and Yin	ARMD and Stargardt's, glaucoma
You Gui Wan	Strengthen Kidney Yang	Diabetic retinopathy, RP, Usher, choroidal dystrophy, optic nerve atrophy
Tien Ma Gou Teng Yin	Nourish Yin, clear inflammation (Liver Wind)	Open-angle glaucoma, retinal bleeding, optic neuritis
Bu Zhong Yi Qi Wan	Strengthen Qi	RP
Shu Gan Tang	Regulate Liver Qi	ARMD
Xue Fu Zhu Yu Wan	Move Blood in the upper part of the body	Retinal vein and artery occlusions

Xiao Yao San	Regulate Liver Qi and strengthen Qi	Eyestrain headaches
Er Chen Tang	Drain mucus and dampness; open clear Yang passage to the eyes	Dry ARMD and wet ARMD, diabetic retinopathy
Yunnan Piayao	Stop bleeding, improve circulation of Qi and Blood	Wet ARMD, traumatic injury
Ying Qi Cong Ming Tang	Raise the central Qi, and improve the vision and hearing	ARMD (wet and dry), Usher syndrome
Shi Hu Ye Guang Wan	Nourish Yin, clear inflammation (Liver Wind)	Cataracts, glaucoma, optic neuritis
Gui Pi Wan	Strengthen the Qi; nourish the Blood and Heart; keep the blood in the vessels	Wet macular degeneration
Zhu Jing Wan	Nourish Kidney and Liver Yin; brighten the eyes	Dry ARMD
Wen Dan Tang	Warm the Gall Bladder; move Yang-Qi; and regulate fluids	Glaucoma, diabetic retinopathy

Ba Zhen	Strengthen Qi and nourish	Presbyopia
Tang	Blood	(farsightedness), ARMD

Side Effects of Chinese Herbal Medicine

Chinese herbs can have some side effects, although this is rare. Most side effects are digestive and simply the result of the body's detoxification mechanism. If symptoms don't resolve in a day or two, the formula may not be the right one for you. Generally, you can tell if you are not receiving the right treatment or formula if any of the following conditions persist or worsen:

- Sleep disturbances
- Radical appetite shift
- Indigestion
- Poor elimination
- Significantly reduced energy level
- Mood changes (bad moods)

I would like to point out once more that although taking Chinese patent formulas may be useful to some extent, it is always best to have a professional Chinese herbalist evaluate your condition and prescribe the most appropriate herbal formula for you. Most cases of degenerative vision loss reflect deeper imbalances. I often find that using strong herbal formulas initially is best, to be followed up with less potent formulas as maintenance.

CHAPTER 5

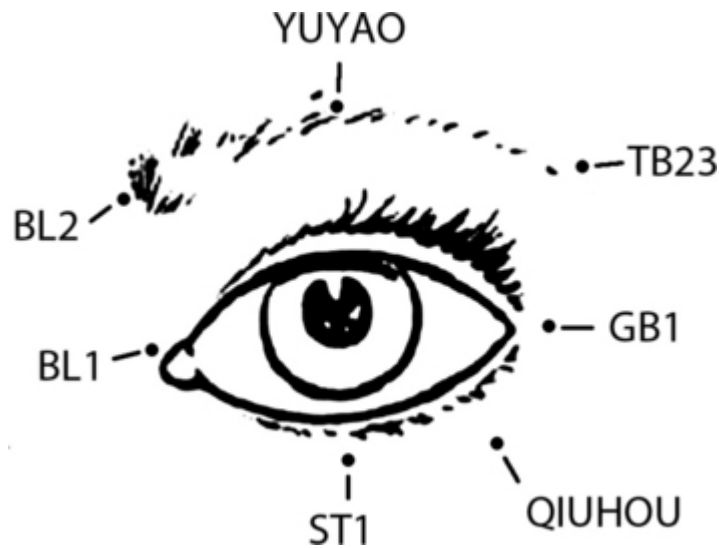
Chinese Acupressure, Eye Exercises, and Qigong

Acupressure

Acupressure is an ancient healing art that uses the fingers to press key acupressure nodes on the surface of the skin to help stimulate the body's natural self-curative abilities. When these points are stimulated, they release muscular tension and promote the circulation of *qi* and blood to aid healing.

Acupuncture and acupressure use the same points, but acupuncture employs needles, while acupressure uses the gentle but firm pressure of hands (and even feet). Acupressure continues to be the most effective method for self-treatment of tension-related ailments by using the power and sensitivity of the human hand.

Acupressure is safe to do on yourself and others, and the only equipment needed is your own two hands. You can practice acupressure therapy any time, anywhere. Below is a diagram of acupressure points around the eyes. These points have specific functions and can be used to increase circulation and blood flow to the eyes. Points can be stimulated via finger pressure, massage, Micro Current Stimulation, and essential oil application.



Chinese Exercises for Healthy Eyes

The Chinese Eye Massage

Massage the bony rims around the eyes with the thumbs, while the index finger is anchored at the forehead. Do both sides at the same time. This exercise is highly beneficial for stimulating *qi* and blood flow to the eyes.

Near-Far Focus

Near-far focus improves flexibility of the entire eye structure. Hold your thumb six inches from your nose. Focus on your thumb. Take one deep breath and exhale slowly. Then focus on an object about 10 feet away. Take another deep breath and slowly exhale. Repeat back and forth 15 times.

Scanning

Scanning increases flexibility of your eye muscles. Sitting or standing at one end of a room, let your eyes scan around the edges of things in the room—clock, television, doors, lights, computers, etc. The object of this exercise is to keep your eyes moving in a

loose and fluid way. Do this exercise for two minutes and continue to breathe naturally.

Neck Rolls

Neck rolls relax your neck, shoulders, head, and face muscles. Relax your neck and shoulders. Take a deep breath and close your eyes. While exhaling, slowly drop your chin to your chest. As you inhale, slowly roll your head around to the left a few times, exhaling once you reach half-rotation. Then roll your head to the right a few times, keeping your shoulders still and relaxed. Make your movements slow and deliberate.

Chinese Qigong and Healthy Living

A Brief History of Qigong

Qigong is one of the earliest systems of self-healing ever recorded. History explains how an Indian Buddhist named Bodhidharma or “Da Mo” brought meditation techniques to China in the fifth century AD.

These Qigong exercises were intended to boost the health of the weak and ill priests of the Shaolin Monasteries. The priests found that the exercises and meditations greatly helped to increase overall health and physical strength. They integrated these exercises into their martial arts practices and found that they increased the effectiveness of their techniques.

There are many forms of Qigong practice in the world today. There is Buddhist meditation Qigong for cultivating spirituality (or eliminating “Karma”), with the goal of a better “next life.” There is Qigong for general health-maintenance or “Dao Yin” exercises. Martial arts Qigong has been developed over the centuries for cultivating precision, power, and strength. Medical Qigong comes out of Taoist philosophy and says that the body must be maintained and kept healthy so that one may live a long and happy life.

What Is Qigong?

The word “Qigong” (pronounced chee-kung) is a combination of two Chinese words: *qi*, meaning vital energy or life force; and *gong*, meaning cultivation or achievement. Together, the characters for Qigong imply the cultivation of vital energy. The name actually refers to the self-training method or the process by which *qi* (vital energy) and *yi* (intention and mind) are cultivated through adjustment of body posture, breathing, and mentality to achieve an optimal state of both mind and body.

Qigong has been in existence for millennia and has evolved into thousands of different forms in China. In general, these forms can be divided into five major disciplines or traditions: Confucian, Buddhist, Taoist, medical, and martial arts. Each has its own specific training and practice, as well as different methods and forms to achieve specific purposes.

Most Qigong practice involves a combination of various elements, such as relaxation, breath work, guided imagery, slow dynamic movement, tranquil state, mindfulness meditation, and mind-body integration. Qigong practice can help induce relaxation and balance among the body, mind, and spirit. Relaxation and balance are regarded as the basic components of good health.

Although most Qigong practice carries some health benefits, not all Qigong was created for the purpose of health or healing. Medical Qigong refers to those Qigong methods used by medical practitioners to diagnose, control, and prevent illness. Only medical Qigong takes treating illness or curing disease as its primary objective, and Taoist Qigong takes body health as one of its priorities.

According to TCM, good health is the result of a free-flowing, well-balanced *qi* (energy) system, while sickness, pain, or physical disorders are the result of *qi* and blood congestion, or *yin-yang* imbalance. All TCM therapies—such as herbal medicine, acupuncture, massage, and Qigong—are based on this perspective. Most Qigong practitioners credit Qigong meditation with improving their daily life in many ways, including:

- A relaxed and harmonious state of mind and body.
- A noticeable reduction in prior ailments and a reduction in feelings of tension.
- An increased resistance to illness (improved immune function).
- A heightened sensitivity to the body's internal organs, along with a perceived ability to regulate one's own health and vitality.

Yin-Yang Theory and Qigong

The theory of *yin* and *yang* is the core of traditional Chinese culture. There are two different ways to understand *yin* and *yang*. The most familiar explanation is that *yin* and *yang* are two complementary or opposing forces. In the human body, the major organs are paired according to *yin* and *yang*. *Yang* has to do with function and movement, and *yin* provides structure.

What we can see is *yang* and what we cannot see is *yin*. The material world is *yang*; the intangible world is *yin*. The *yin* world is a relatively new field in modern science that calls for greater exploration. Quantum physics provides one of the best models for understanding this notion of the non-material world.

Concerning the human body, the physical body is *yang*; the "spirit" or "soul" is *yin*. The soul is beyond the three-dimensional world. In this context, a person's soul can be regarded as mind, spirit, thought, and consciousness. As we discussed earlier, the soul is connected to the heart. Soul has three distinguishing characteristics:

- It is the extension of the five human senses, which cannot be quantified or perceived by modern science and technology (at least not yet).
- It works at a speed faster than light. Thought or conscious activity needs no time to process. As soon as you think of something, the manifestation is instantaneous.

- The soul is not bound by the three-dimensional world and can transcend all barriers of time and space. Therefore, the soul is not something we are familiar with in the three-dimensional world, so this becomes difficult to believe or conceptualize. According to Qigong *yin-yang* theory, it is the *yin* sphere or “*yin* world.” Quantum physics poses this world as the domain of “pure potentiality.”

Elements of *yin* (physical body) and *yang* (soul/spirit) do exist and need to exist in balance in order to maintain health (and good vision). We need to respect and nourish our creative needs. Everyone has ability for some form of creativity that may be expressed as art, music, dance, martial arts, writing, gardening, exercise, etc. No matter what creative outlet you choose, the health benefits of balancing a healthy body with a healthy soul are immeasurable.

Internal Qigong vs. External Qigong

There are two primary kinds of Qigong, internal Qigong and external Qigong. Internal Qigong refers to Qigong practice by oneself to achieve a health purpose. External Qigong is a therapeutic process by which a Qigong practitioner directs or emits Qi-energy to others to help break the blockage of *qi* and move the sick-*qi* out of the body, in order to relieve pain or balance the body so that it can recover from disease. External Qigong has limited application for the eye conditions discussed in this book, particularly in the West where truly knowledgeable practitioners are rare. A skilled Qigong Master may be able to administer external Qigong therapy to some benefit; however, continued practice on one’s own is required for improving vision. I am primarily interested in introducing my patients to a personal practice of internal Qigong (ideally begun or maintained in a class setting with a good teacher).

According to Chinese medical theory, practice of Qigong is essential for maintaining good health. A healthy life is one that is

free of disease or abnormality. Conventional medicine measures good health by means of positive/negative biomedical findings. The spontaneity or gradual onset of symptom occurrence indicates poor health and cannot be dismissed as “a natural aging process.” Vision loss is not a natural aging process or everyone would lose his or her sight with age.

Most Qigong practice involves imagery meditation, deep relaxation, guided movement, and mind-body integration through regulating the body, breath, and mind. Internal Qigong also consists of “Cultivation.” Cultivation is the way you conduct yourself in your daily living. Cultivation is the key to mental and emotional equipoise.

The progressive practice of quality Qigong can unlock the mysteries of the universe, or at least your personal universe. We all have questions that we are seeking the answers to. After you have become proficient in your Qigong practice, things just seem to make more sense. The bewildering frustrations that can plague us somehow begin to resolve.

Sometimes we realize that a few of our questions simply cannot be answered, and there is a warm feeling that arises with this understanding. Other areas of our lives become clearer, and big problems seem somewhat smaller. We gain clarity about who we are and what our purpose is in this life. This can be an extremely liberating experience.

In terms of Chinese medicine, there is a process that we undergo with practice and cultivation. There is a conversion of jing-essence (male reproductive energy) and blood-essence (female reproductive energy) into Qi-energy, which nourishes the *shen*-spirit. The mind expands its capacity for universal understanding of nature. Once we gain a greater understanding of the laws of nature we can learn to live in accordance with them, thus promoting a long and healthy life.

The two kinds of internal Qigong practice are active and static exercises. When practicing active or “movement Qigong,” the practitioner uses gestures and movements designed to aid concentration on the exercise. These are usually introductory forms

that initiate the circulation of *qi* and blood through specific areas of the body.

Static Qigong involves more advanced forms of practice. These “mindful meditations” use guided imagery and visualizations. Focusing on these basic mental skills strengthens our power of intention.

Quantum physics suggests that the universe is primarily empty space, and that the things we perceive as real are simply a matter of one’s individual perception. It also hypothesizes that matter can be affected by intention (prayer, wish, concentration, visualization, and so forth).

In the book *The Hidden Messages in Water*, author Masaru Emoto shows how water is deeply connected to people’s individual and collective consciousness. He proved that water has the ability to absorb, hold, and even retransmit human feelings and emotions. He found that water from natural springs and water exposed to loving words showed complex and colorful snowflake patterns, while polluted water and water exposed to negative thoughts formed incomplete, asymmetrical patterns with dull colors.

Since people are composed of 70% water, could our thoughts have an impact on our health? Could positive thoughts and environments contribute to our healing process? Can negative thoughts and fixed thoughts about our health affect our vision? Is it possible that fearing and believing that your vision is permanently failing has an effect on the progression of your condition? If intention has this effect on water, imagine what it can do to your health.

Qigong Cultivation

Most of my Qigong education comes from years of study with various Qigong Masters who taught me that Qigong Cultivation is the practice of cultivating one’s mind and character. The Qigong practitioner strives to be detached from desires and to remain indifferent to fame or personal gain. This is the ancient secret to preventing mental illness! The importance of the mind has been

grossly neglected by modern medicine. Modern medicine is an empirical science, and a “healthy mind” remains difficult to verify in laboratories or to define according to quantitative research.

To prevent mental illness, one must have the correct outlook on life and then work on the following:

- Appreciate and be content with what you have. Jealousy arises when we compare ourselves to others unrealistically. If desire is controlled, then there is no disappointment and therefore no anguish. Be grateful for what you have!
- Be good to people. Treat everything with love and respect as often as you can. Love life, love others, and love nature. Having high affinity leads to a joyful life.
- Do not be overly concerned with personal gains at work, and make contributions to society. This will help to avoid arrogance with perceived success, and frustration with perceived failures. True success is the result of acting in accordance with the true laws of nature. “You reap what you sow” is a basic law. Contributions are proportional to rewards, such that “the more you give, the more you get.”
- Live appropriately and eat when hungry, drink when thirsty, sleep when tired. Refrain from overeating (70% full), drinking too much alcohol, and sleeping excessively. Practice moderation!
- Practice quality Qigong on a daily basis. Quality of practice is much more important than time spent practicing.

Cultivation of one’s mind and character to be detached from destructive addictions, excessive desires, and compulsions should be contemplated on a daily basis. Living better means adopting new ways of thinking, behaving, and living. This means gradually eliminating old, bad habits. By incorporating a more positive mindset into your life, you will see dramatic improvements in the quality (and quantity) of your life. This often can include positive changes in your physical health and your vision.

Perhaps, the most challenging part of cultivation is changing our behavior and mental-emotional attitudes. We can't change the way we live without changing how we experience the world. We all have addictions, or things we can't live without. We also have things in life that we strongly avoid. These two opposites require (and consume) some of your most devoted attention. In order to make positive and real changes, you'll need to confront these issues.

Qigong for the Eyes

Yangong Eye Exercises

Yangong eye Qigong exercises focus on moving the eyes in order to stimulate circulation of *qi* and blood to the eyes. These Qigong eye exercises come recommended from various TCM hospitals throughout mainland China to support good eye health.

1. *Preparation*: Sit or lie down and relax your mind and body. Take a few deep breaths and clear your mind from distracting thoughts.
2. *Infinity Rotation*: Move the eyes in a pattern of the infinity symbol “∞.” Make sure to do this in both directions, ten times each way. Breathe naturally during the exercise. Imagine there is a great flow of *qi* and blood in your eyes.
3. *Acu-Pressure to Activate the Qi and Blood*: Using your thumbs, press on the Jingming (UB-1) point at the inner-upper parts of the orbits (bone). Focus all your attention to these points as you press. Press backward on the orbits as you inhale, and gently squeeze the eyeballs while slowly exhaling. You should feel a fairly strong “ache” or distension in your eyes. Keep your attention on the circulation of *qi* and blood rushing through your eyes.



4. *“Wash the Eyes”*: Close your eyes lightly. Briskly rub all four fingers on each hand together until warm. Then rub your eyes from the inner canthus, outward, thirty times. Breathe naturally and focus your attention on your hands this time rather than your eyes.



5. *Closing Exercise*: Close the eyes and rest for a few moments after doing these self-healing exercises. Think

about having clear and healthy eyes.

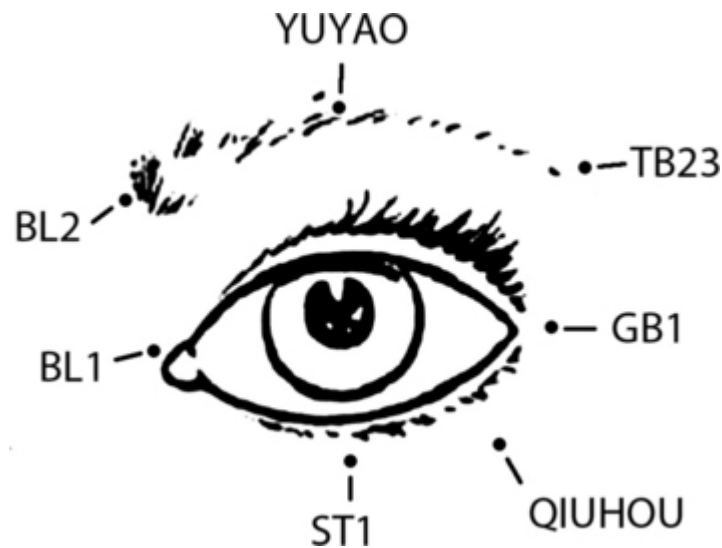
Qigong to Strengthen the Liver

Soothe the Liver and Improve Vision

Shugan Mingmu Gong exercises are designed to dredge the liver in order to nourish the liver and improve visual acuity. The therapeutic strategy is aimed at invigorating the eyes from fatigue, relaxing the muscles of the neck and upper back, and relieving spasm of the muscles surrounding the eyes. These exercises should be done once in the morning and once in the evening.

1. *Preparation:* Sit or stand relaxed with the back straight, placing the feet shoulder-width apart, and breathing naturally.
2. *Near-Far Vision Regulation:* Look straight ahead to an object in front of you. Gradually look at objects further and further away until you can see no further. Stare at the furthest point you can see for a moment and then gradually draw the vision back to the nearest point. Do this five times. Then look as far into the distance as you can, rotating the eyes clockwise and counterclockwise five times in each direction.
3. *Turn the Neck and Move the Eyeballs:* Looking into the distance, rotate the neck clockwise and counterclockwise, five times each way, with your eyes following the rotation of the neck. Inhale when the neck turns back, and exhale when the neck moves forward.
4. *Thrust Out the Chest and Relax the Back:* Raise the arms to the chest with the elbows bent and the palms facing in toward the chest. Draw the elbows back, thrust out the chest, and inhale. Then exhale and move the elbows forward. Do this ten times to relax the upper and middle back.

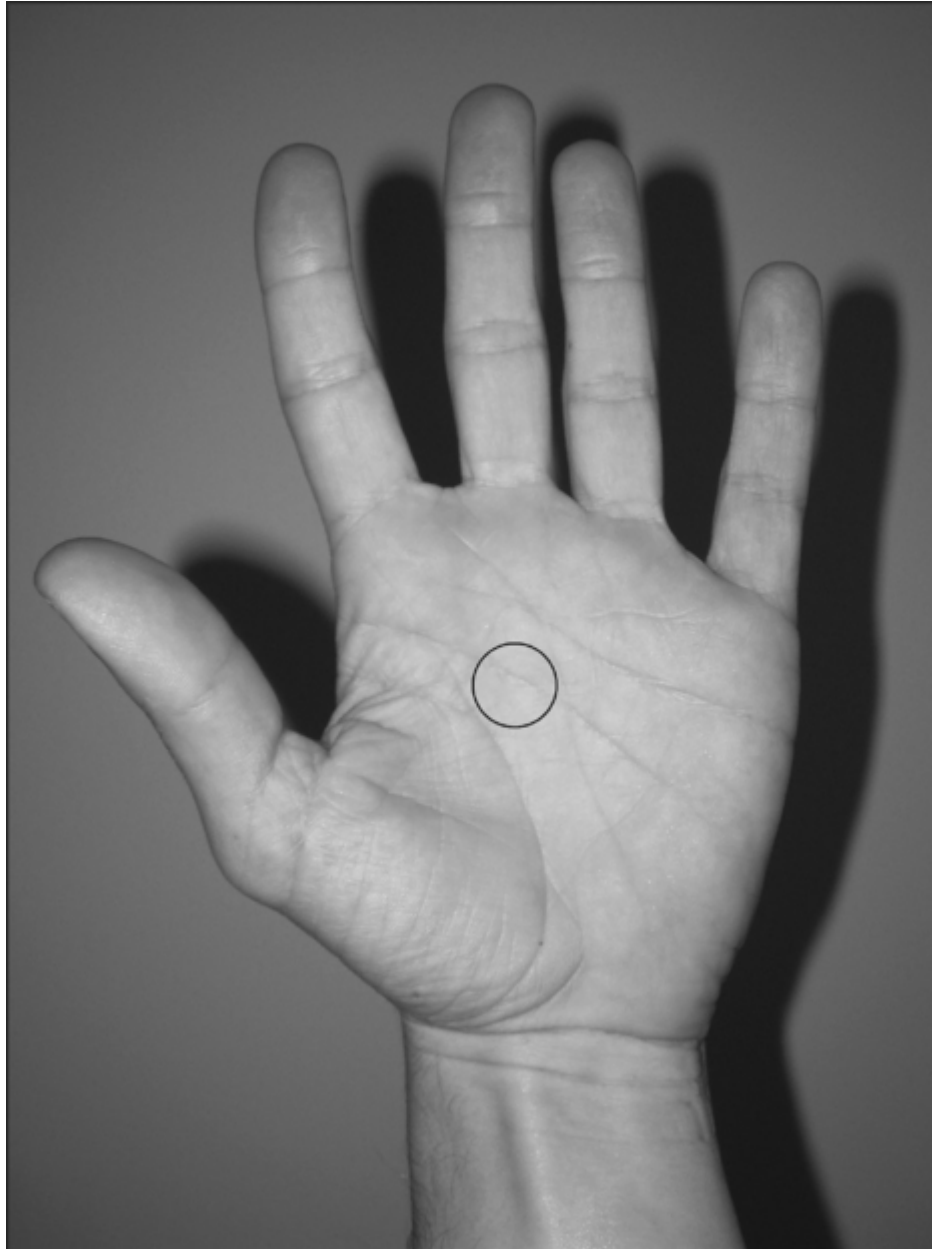
5. *Stimulate Eye Acu-points:* Using your thumbs, press these points with your attention on your eyes. Press up and back into the orbit on inhalation, and release pressure with a slow exhale, saying the word *soong* (the Chinese word for “relax”). You should feel a mild ache or distention with applied pressure, but not pain. Stimulate the other acu-points of the eye in this same manner: inhale—press, exhale—relax.



6. *Massage the Eyes:* Put four fingers of the left hand on the left eye and four fingers of the right hand on the right eye, and rotate gently. Rotate clockwise ten times and counterclockwise ten times.
7. *Regulate the Qi of the Whole Body:* Close your eyes and bend the elbows, raising them in front of the abdomen, palms facing up. Concentrate on the eyes when you inhale and raise the hands to eye level (about four inches from the eyes). While continuing to focus on the palms, begin to slowly exhale as the hands move downward toward the abdomen. Do this ten times, and relax for a moment when you're done.

Transmit Healing Qi through Laogong Qigong

1. Begin this exercise with both hands in front of the navel, palms facing one another, focusing your attention on the Laogong acu-point. This point is located in the center of each palm and is one of the most common areas used for emitting healing energy.



Pericardium eight on hand *jueyin*: Laogong point

2. Once you have placed your attention on Laogong, open and close your hands in accordance with your breathing. When you inhale, feel the energy accumulate between your hands as they draw farther apart. When exhaling, the palms draw closer to one another (but do not touch each other). Do this for 10–15 minutes in order to stimulate *qi* to the hands.
3. Next, rub the hands until they become warm and cover the eyes with the hands. The Laogong acu-point should be facing the eyeballs. The eyes should remain open without the hands actually touching the eyes. Imagine the healing *yang-qi* energy transmitting from Laogong into the eyes.
4. Repeat rubbing the hands and placing the palms over the eyes ten times.

You may do this exercise two times each day, once in the morning and then again in the evening. This is a very easy exercise for the eyes and will strengthen your hands-on healing abilities. Concentration is very important here, and I find that putting on some relaxing music while doing these exercises enhances the experience.

Beijing Eye Qigong

This is a highly effective and complete Qigong exercise routine that I learned from TCM hospitals in Beijing. The exercises are broken down into four parts: meridian exercise, eye exercise, point exercise, and pressure exercise. This exercise can be performed while either sitting or standing (feet shoulder width apart). If you choose to stand, your hands should be placed together at the lower *dantien* (below the navel). If you choose to sit, the hands are placed in front of the chest.

1. *Meridian Exercise—“Ascending Clear Yang-Qi to the Eyes”*: This exercise directs the *qi* flow up through the Liver meridian to the eyes. Close the eyes, relax, and use your

mind to direct the *qi* from the acu-point Dandun/Lv-1 (lateral big toe), upward along the shin and inner thigh, through the abdomen to acu-point Qimen/Lv-14 (below the nipple between the sixth and seventh ribs). Continue to raise the *qi* upward along the throat to the eyes. Open your eyes wide, fixing your gaze on an object about 6–10 feet away. Imagine that the *clear yang-qi* is evaporating or disintegrating the turbid haze from your eyes.



Liver pathway of foot *jueyin*

2. *Eye Exercises—Activate the Qi and Blood:* This exercise is used to direct the *qi* and blood directly to the eyes through specific eye movements. Close the eyes and relax the body. Converge the eyes inward, then upward, to the left, and then to the right. After that, roll the eyes in a circle from left to right, and then from right to left.
3. *Point Exercise—Distance to Convergence:* This exercise is performed by focusing on a fixed object and directing the *qi* accordingly. Close the eyes and relax. Open the eyes and fix them on an object far into the distance for about 60 seconds; draw the attention and gaze closer and closer until you are looking at your nose (the eyes will converge). Then close the eyes as they fully converge. Alternate six times, closing one eye and opening the other (left then right), while the eyes are converged. Make sure not to blink (or as little as possible) and gradually increase the gazing time before your eyes converge. Sensations of intense burning, itching, and watering are normal as the circulation to the eyes increases.
4. *Pressing Exercise—Acupressure Along the Du Mai:* In this exercise, the *qi* is directed to the fingertips and then acupressure guides the *qi* and activates blood circulation. Close the eyes and relax. Direct the flow of *qi* to both index fingers by focusing on them and feeling the warmth, tingling, and distension. First press both the Baihui and Yintang acu-points at the top of the head, imagining the *qi* flowing down the Du Mai (Governing Vessel) to the Yintang point between the eyebrows. Then press the acu-points around the eyes (Yintang, Zanzhu, Yuyao, Sizhukong, Tongziliao, Qihou, Chengqi, Jinaming, and Jingming) from the upper inner canthus, all the way around the orbits of the eyes. Stimulate acu-points on both eyes at the same time. Once you've completed circling the eyes, continue to direct the *qi* to flow down the Du Mai,

through acu-points Ying xiang and Renzhong, down through the chest and into the *dantien*.



After concluding this eye-exercise routine, take a moment and close your eyes and relax. Focus your attention on your lower *dantien* to allow the *qi* to return there. Rest both hands on the *dantien*: men with right hand over left, and women left hand over right.

You can do this set of exercises from 9 to 27 times. Start slowly and you should experience minor blurriness and watering eyes, which should not exceed the first two weeks of this practice. If this continues, reduce the repetitions, as you are probably overdoing it. Seeing colors and feeling aches/distension is normal.

These exercises are primarily done to prevent and eliminate mild to moderate eye problems including myopia, presbyopia, astigmatism, and eyestrain headaches. Because these exercises raise the *yang*, you should *not* perform them if you have high blood pressure or glaucoma.

Transmitting Universal Healing Light through the Eyes

It is no mystery that light enters the eye, but what might surprise you are the findings of a recent study showing that light also is emitted outward from the eyes. Light energy actually reflects from the eyes. For eyes to function normally there must be a balance of light going in and out of the eyes. This exercise is designed to stimulate this process.

1. *Preparation:* Take a few deep breaths and relax your body. Start at the top of your head and work your way down to your toes, relaxing each part of your body. Slow your breathing and allow your body to completely relax. Do not begin the exercises until you are relaxed and free from distractions.
2. *Absorb and Transmit Universal Qi:* While slowly inhaling, visualize white, universal healing Qi-energy coming into the Baihui (GV-20) point at the top of your head. When exhaling, imagine this energy projecting outward through your eyes. Do this thirty times, twice per day.

Qigong for Health and Longevity

As discussed earlier, doing specific Qigong eye exercises is a great beginning, but your goals should now include optimizing your health overall. Since we know that your eye problem is a systemic condition, we now need to think more holistically. This means getting yourself healthy with a daily routine of Qigong practice. So I strongly urge you to incorporate Qigong into your lifestyle!

CHAPTER 6

Ancient Wisdom for Healthy Eyes and Longevity

Moderation

The Chinese say, “Everything in moderation, including moderation.” To neglect moderation is very harmful to your health. A taxing lifestyle can absolutely lead to degenerative vision loss, and impair the ability to heal your eyes. A balanced, healthy lifestyle will support healthy vision. Following are some common lifestyle factors that can damage the body if they are excessive.

EXCESSIVE ACTION

POTENTIALLY HARMFUL EFFECT

Walking too long

Damages the tendons and ligaments

Sitting too much

Weakens the muscles

Standing too long

Stresses the bones

Lying down too much

Weakens the *vital qi*

Gazing too long (TV, computer)

Weakens the blood

Suffering

Weakens the constitution

Abstaining from sexual intercourse

Disturbs normal *qi* flow

Overwork/Overstrain

Physical and mental overstrain can have a very negative impact on your eyes. Overstraining the eyes is common today, with hours spent reading, watching television, and staring at the computer.

Sexual overindulgence and excessive masturbation/ejaculation will also deplete body fluids in men. Overstrain will dry up yin-essence, blood, and essential fluids in the body (and eyes). This lack of yin-fluids can cause heat to flare up and damage the eyes. To answer an age-old question—yes, you can go blind! An additional side-note worth mentioning is that blindness is one of the possible side effects of Viagra!

Diet and Eating Habits

Nutrition and food intake provide the body with materials to maintain healthy eye function. Improper diet and irregular eating habits can cause distress to the digestive system. Both overeating and under-eating can cause nutritional and metabolic problems.

Chew your food, and do not eat fast. The body will not break down the nutrients needed to nourish your eyes if you do not thoroughly chew. A general rule is to eat until 70% full. A person should not overconsume liquids while eating. (This dilutes digestive hydrochloric acid and digestive enzymes.) In addition, it is very unhealthy to lie down or go to bed after consuming a large meal. If your body is busy digesting large quantities of food while you sleep, it will take away from healing your eyes.

Another suggestion is to minimize the consumption of any food or drink below room temperature. This means no iced beverages either. The body has to use precious energy to heat or “cook” food and drink that is consumed. Anything below room temperature causes digestive upset and leads to poor digestion. The spleen and stomach function to provide nutrients to make up a person’s basic material constitution. This material is transported to the eyes to maintain structural and functional integrity.

Eating too many fatty, deep-fried, processed, or spicy foods can stress the digestive system and reduce healthy function. Excessive consumption of alcohol will do the same (and places stress on the liver). The end result of digestive malfunction is poor nutrition for the eyes.

Rest and Relaxation

R and R is critical to healing. This is when the eyes will heal and regenerate. Physical, mental, and emotional rest are of equal importance. Economy of speech conserves the *vital qi*—talking less and listening more is good practice.

Good sleep is another critical facet to health restoration. Most people simply do not get enough restorative sleep. *Medication and sleep aids do not provide restful sleep!* When you do sleep, lying on your side with your knees drawn up to your chest will conserve your energy.

It is very important for people with degenerative vision loss to get enough sleep. According to TCM, the liver is most active in storing and cleansing the blood at night—particularly between the hours of 11 p.m. and 3 a.m. If you're asleep during this time, the liver can more effectively nourish itself, and thus nourish your eyes.

Mental and emotional tranquility is important to cultivate. Balanced emotions lead to great health. We cannot heal if we are stressed, and can only heal when our body and mind are in a relaxed state.

Stretching and Exercise

Exercise promotes a strong and healthy body, reduces stress, and keeps your eyes in good health. Exercise stimulates metabolic activity and circulation, and increases oxygenation to the eyes. Regular exercise is the hallmark of a healthy lifestyle. Resistance training and cardiovascular exercise should be included in your

workouts. Some people choose to join gyms and health clubs, while others choose dancing, bicycling, hiking, gardening, skiing, surfing, martial arts, swimming, or walking. There are many forms of exercise to choose from. Just do it!

I generally recommend that people do some form of exercise for thirty minutes at least five to six days a week. You can mix up your routine, doing resistance training, hobbies, and cardiovascular training. As far as doing an effective cardiovascular workout, I suggest the following:

180 – your age = your maintained heart rate for 30 minutes
Example: 180 – 65 years old = heart rate of 115 BPM, for 30 minutes

Cultivating Mental Power

The word for “mind” also means “heart” in many Asian languages, including Chinese. Mind power is the ability to disconnect from oneself and focus on another idea, object, or person. If the mind is strong, the body will respond to its commands. Your ability to focus on healing your eyes will take great mind power, dedication, and perseverance.

Mind power means that you are no longer concerned with personal ambition. You develop a sense of mental power whereby you strengthen your mind/heart. Some forms of Qigong cultivate this kind of mind power. This will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

Reduce the Risk Factors for Degenerative Vision Loss

When I studied TCM ophthalmology in mainland China, the doctors discussed certain precautionary measures that could greatly reduce occurrence of DVL. This list of advice included:

1. Keeping blood pressure below 140/90.

2. Keeping blood sugar between 3.9 and 6.1.
3. Keeping cholesterol low, especially low-density lipoprotein cholesterols.
4. Wearing sunglasses to avoid injury to the eyes.
5. Refraining from smoking (anything) and avoiding hard alcohol.
6. Eating minimal high-fat food such as animal protein, hydrogenated fats, vegetable oil, and creamy salad dressings.

Tiger Balm for Eyestrain Headaches

Massaging Tiger Balm into forehead and temples often soothes headaches from eyestrain. The balm contains menthol, camphor, clove, and cinnamon oils, and I notice a cooling effect immediately after application.

CHAPTER 7

Cases and Clinical Applications

Diagnosis and Testing

In order to determine if any method of treatment is working, we must have a system for measuring results. Western science has taught us that the only way to confirm change is through a standardized system of measurement.

Changes in vision may be slow and subtle, and therefore require ongoing monitoring by both you and your eye care specialist. There are many ways to measure the condition of the eyes. Ophthalmologists have several series of complicated evaluations and examinations that assess the health and functioning of the eyes.

In my clinic most patients have already been diagnosed by a Western physician who thoroughly examined and tested them. I perform simpler tests that can be done rather quickly and efficiently. I prefer to leave the major testing and evaluations to ophthalmologists. In many cases you can use your eye doctor to monitor your improvement. For example, if you are diagnosed with chronic open-angle glaucoma and are working on lowering your intraocular pressure, you can have the ophthalmologist monitor your pressure. In other cases you can check your own progress using eye charts and Amsler grids (see [this page](#)). Following are some of the more simple tests that I find useful.

Visual Acuity Testing: The Eye Chart

Visual acuity testing shows how clearly you can see, at a given distance. The results of the test are expressed as a fraction, in which normal visual acuity is 20/20. This means that people with normal vision can see the entire chart clearly from 20 feet away. If your vision is 20/100, this means that what you can see clearly at 20 feet is seen clearly at 100 feet by people with normal vision.

Visual acuity can be tested for near and far vision. Near vision is tested from 40 centimeters away (reading distance). Far vision will determine how well you can see into the distance. Sometimes with treatment based on Eastern medical principles, both near and far vision will improve; sometimes only near vision will improve; and sometimes only far vision improves. I often see difference in improvements in one or both eyes, so it is important to test each eye, as well as near and far visual acuity of both eyes.

Visual acuity testing should be done prior to commencing treatment. I use standard ETDRS (Early Treatment of Diabetic Retinopathy Study) and Snellen eye charts in my clinic, but any standard eye chart can be used for testing at home.

The objective is to have a clear baseline of what you are able to read. This may be worth doing a few times in order to establish a correct baseline of your current visual acuity. Once you have this you can test again after you have started your treatment to measure improvement in your visual acuity.

Different methods may yield different changes over time. For example, acupuncture will usually yield the fastest results of any therapy for visual acuity for most chronic eye conditions. Re-testing visual acuity after a few days would be appropriate. Using other methods like nutrition, Chinese herbs, eye exercises, and Micro Current stimulation, may take longer, and therefore it would be appropriate to check the visual acuity on a bi-weekly or monthly basis. In most cases, there should be some improvement in approximately twelve weeks or so. For more acute conditions, visual acuity can be checked sooner.

Vision Field Testing

Vision field testing is done to evaluate the amount of space within which something can be seen when the eyes remain fixed. Most conventional eye doctors use a Humphrey for vision field testing. It does provide accurate results and is the industry standard, especially since this is what most ophthalmic and optometry schools use. In my clinic I use the Perimetry Octopus 1-2-3 for vision field testing because it gives an easier presentation for the patient to understand. It also provides me with more specific information than the Humphrey is capable of offering.

I find that people's vision field usually improves first, followed by acuity, color, and brightness. Vision field testing simply allows us to know in a relatively short period of time if treatment is working. If a person's visual field shows some degree of improvement, then he or she is responding to therapy. If there are no observable changes, then the present therapy most likely won't help (e.g., acupuncture, supplements, eye exercises, etc.).

Color Vision Testing

The purpose of color vision testing is to detect an inability to distinguish colors. I use pseudoisochromatic color cards by Dr. T. L. Waggoner called "Color Vision Testing Made Easy." To pass, a person must correctly identify the shapes in eight out of nine cards.

Initially I did not use color vision testing until many patients reported that their ability to differentiate colors had improved with treatment. In order to confirm these reports I began to test the color vision and found that people were indeed seeing colors better.

Amsler Grid

The Amsler grid is a grid of lines used to test for Age-Related Macular Degeneration (ARMD). Each eye is tested individually, with any perceived distortion of the grid considered to be a positive test. Using an Amsler grid is the simplest way for people with ARMD and Stargardt's to monitor their progress.

Subjective Findings

Subjective findings are noticeable differences perceived by the patient that cannot be measured by an observer. These are qualitative changes rather than quantitative. When people describe qualitatively how their vision is improving, it is worth noting these reports. If you are testing yourself at home, it is worthwhile to keep progress notes or a “vision log.” Qualitative improvements that occur in most patients seem to be grossly overlooked by conventional medicine. Everyone’s experience is unique—your subjective findings do count!

Objective Findings

Objective findings can be measured and observed by others around you. When your eye doctor tests your eye pressure for glaucoma, the results are quantifiable objective findings. This means that a consensus or agreement can be reached as to the progress being made. Modern science is based on the idea of objective, quantifiable data. In order for something to be “scientifically proven,” objective findings must be quantifiable and reproducible.

Objective findings are the “hard evidence” that confirms existence. In treating the eyes, it’s good to have objective reports that can confirm vision improvement.

Chinese Medical Diagnosis

Chinese medicine uses the “four pillars” of diagnosis to determine the underlying pattern of a given eye condition. These pillars are:

1. Looking/Observation
2. Listening and Smelling
3. Asking/Inquiry
4. Palpation/Feeling

When observing a patient, a Traditional Chinese Medicine practitioner looks at body type, demeanor, tongue, complexion,

spirit/energy, skin, hair, nails, etc. Then we listen for the volume and tone of the voice, breathing rhythm, and digestive sounds. A third way to get information from a patient is to ask questions. Finally, palpation of the skin, limbs, abdomen, muscles, acupoints, and pulse is performed as the fourth means of acquiring information.

Once this information is gathered, the practitioner will look for patterns of disharmony that underlie the chief complaint. For example, a person may have dry skin, dry stool, dry throat, thin pulse, red tongue with a dry coat, and be diagnosed with ARMD. This would most likely be a pattern of insufficient liver blood and kidney *yin*.

Another person diagnosed with ARMD could have loose stool, chronic fatigue, edema, dizziness, heavy limbs, and lots of gas and bloating. This person's pulse is "slippery" and weak in the first position s/he and has a swollen, pale tongue. This person has a pattern of Central Qi Sinking with Damp Accumulation. The two patients would be treated completely differently based on the pattern diagnosis.

Clinical Cases

The following case reports are taken from my own clinical data and clinical notes. I found these to be among the most interesting and well-diversified cases. The information presented is based upon my own clinical findings and observation, and subjective reports from each patient.

Age-Related Macular Degeneration (ARMD): Wet and Dry Type

ARMD is a major cause of irreversible blindness in the US, where millions of Americans are suffering the effects of this condition. Conventional medicine has no truly effective treatment for ARMD, although there are medications and laser procedures that may have "band-aid"-like applications.

ARMD is the gradual deterioration of the cells in the macula, the area that processes central vision and acute vision. ARMD results in slow central vision loss (or fogginess), where straight lines may become crooked, shapes seem blurry, and faces distort. The peripheral vision is not affected.

There are two types of ARMD, wet and dry. Ninety percent of people with ARMD have the dry type, characterized by small yellow spots called “drusen” which form under the macula. The drusen slowly damage the cells of the macula and vision loss progresses.

It seems as though approximately 10% of people with dry ARMD progress to a more serious condition called “wet ARMD.” Here, abnormal blood vessels begin to grow toward the macula in an attempt to nourish it. These new vessels are often frail and may leak or hemorrhage. The blood and fluids that leak from these vessels can be very damaging to the macula, causing rapid and severe vision loss. Conventional medicine most often uses laser eye surgery to “patch” the leaky vessels. As previously stated, this is like soldering an old pipe. You can only patch it up so much. Chinese medicine seeks to repair the integrity of the whole structure, and can be highly effective in doing so.

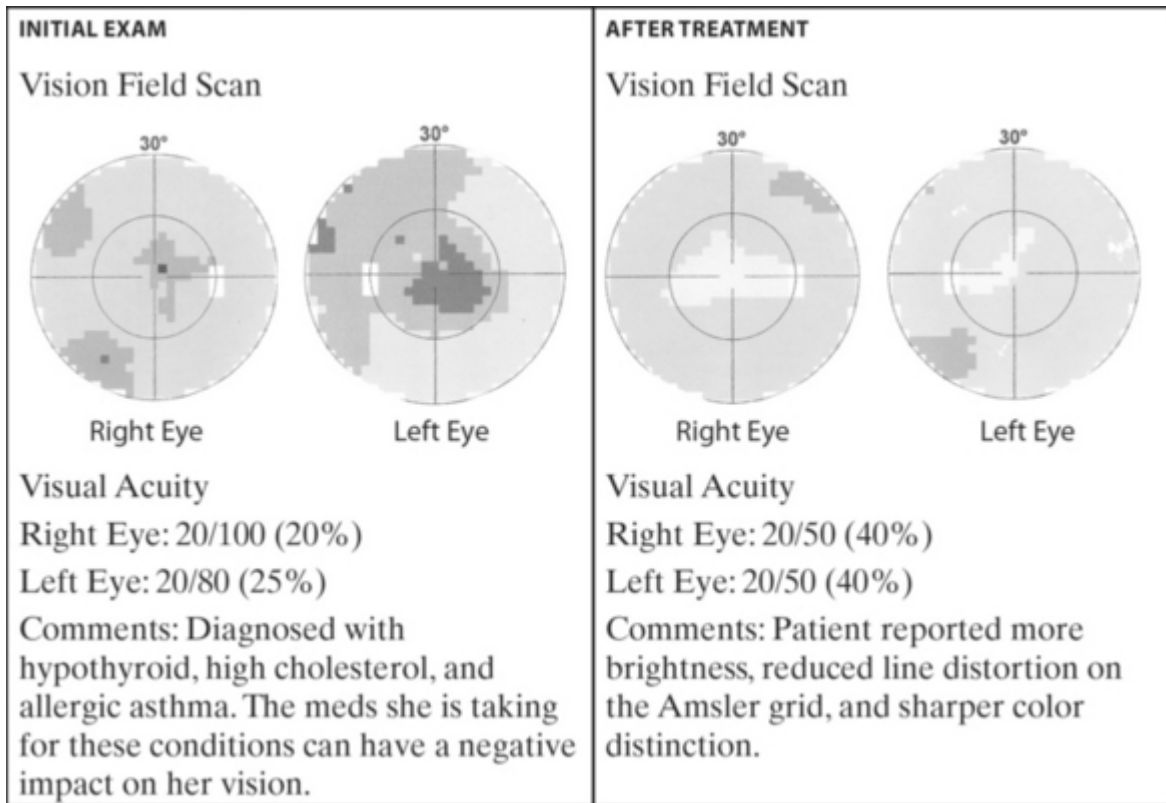
In Chinese medicine, ARMD can have many patterns, but most often I see kidney and lung weakness with liver congestion. In my experience, Chinese medicine, naturopathy, and nutrition are far ahead of conventional medicine in offering any hope for ARMD. The majority of my practice is spent treating patients with macular degeneration, and I have found that approximately 80% of patients respond favorably to these methods.

Case

JA: 63-year-old female

Western Diagnosis: Dry-type ARMD

Chinese Medical Diagnosis: Kidney and Liver Yin and Blood Insufficiency



Discussion

JA presented with relatively moderate-stage dry-type ARMD in her left eye. She had great results with acupuncture, eye nutrients, essential oils, and Chinese herbs (ming mu di huang tang). She continues on these herbs and supplements, and uses Micro Current Stimulation.

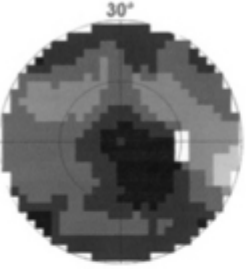
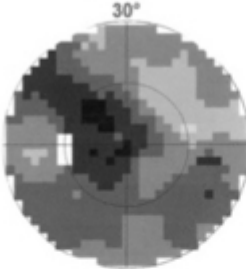
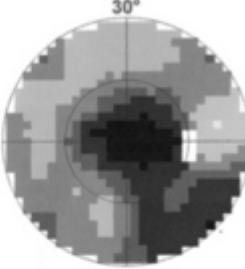
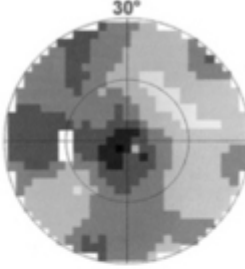
JA continues to have clear vision with minimal distortion, even years after she started therapy. Her case is a clear indication of how tremendously effective Chinese medicine can be for dry-type ARMD.

Case

HH: 72-year-old female

Western Diagnosis: Wet-type ARMD

Chinese Medical Diagnosis: Spleen and Kidney Yang Weakness with Extreme Damp Accumulation and Yin Excess

INITIAL EXAM		AFTER TREATMENT	
Vision Field Scan		Vision Field Scan	
			
Right Eye	Left Eye	Right Eye	Left Eye
Visual Acuity		Visual Acuity	
Right Eye: 20/800		Right Eye: 20/400	
Left Eye: 20/400		Left Eye: 20/250	
Comments: Frequent retinal bleeding and rapidly declining vision.		Comments: Patient reports a "major benefit" from treatment in the sense that she is able to see TV much better, as well as cars when crossing the street. The wet-type ARMD and retinal bleeding have not been a problem since she started Chinese medicine.	

Discussion

HH has wet-type ARMD in her right eye, and dry-type ARMD in her left eye. She had a history of chronic leaking and hemorrhaging due to the overgrowth of blood vessels in her right eye. There had been a few laser surgical procedures and cortisone injections in the past that stopped the retinal bleeding. Shell moxibustion method was used over the right eye in an attempt to help the frequent bleeding episodes, supplemented by acupuncture, and Chinese herbs (qiju di huang wan).

After one year of no reported retinal bleeding, HH began using Micro Current Stimulation. Her vision is stable and she reports much less blurred vision (formerly a result of the retinal bleeding).

Stargardt Macular Dystrophy

Stargardt Macular Dystrophy is the most common juvenile-onset form of inherited macular dystrophy and should not be confused with ARMD (although in Chinese medicine we treat these two conditions similarly). Stargardt Macular Dystrophy is characterized by loss of central vision in younger people and usually manifests between the ages of six and twenty years. Some people may not become aware of this condition until their thirties or forties. Stargardt's is considered to be a genetic condition, although the responsible genes have not yet been fully identified.

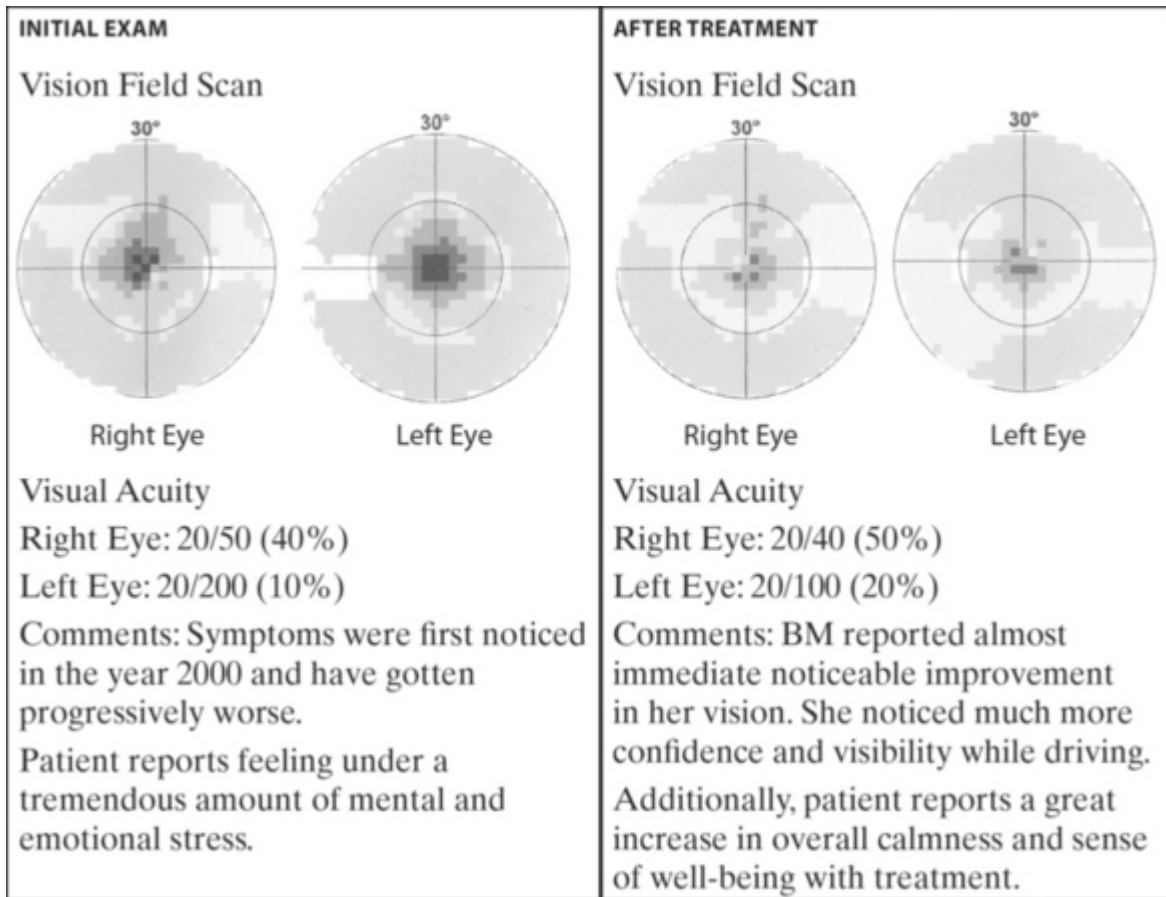
Again, Chinese medicine seems to be highly effective for people with Stargardt's. Most cases seem to respond almost immediately to acupuncture, and young adults seem to do very well with treatment.

Case

BM: 34-year-old female

Western Diagnosis: Stargardt Macular Dystrophy, Associated Phoria

Chinese Medical Diagnosis: Kidney and Liver Yin Insufficiency with Liver Qi Congestion and Local Qi and Blood Congestion



Discussion

BM started treatment just a few years after her initial onset and diagnosis of Stargardt's. The symptoms manifested during a two-year period of prolonged stress. The stress congested the liver and drained the kidney energy (battery pack), causing the symptoms to manifest as a "sudden onset." In essence she "burned out" her macula and central vision.

These symptoms may have shown up later in her life as she aged. BM has done a lot of psychological work to rebalance her emotions and continues regular acupuncture, Micro Current Stimulation, and eye supplements. Like many other patients that I have seen with Stargardt's, she has been able to keep her vision from worsening.

Diabetic Retinopathy

Diabetic retinopathy is a complication of diabetes that damages the retina. In many cases this can lead to irreversible blindness, in which gradual vision loss occurs over a period of many years.

Diabetic retinopathy can be caused by Type-1 diabetes (juvenile-onset diabetes), which develops when the body produces too little insulin. It can also come from Type-II diabetes (adult-onset diabetes), which develops over many years and is caused by too little insulin production, or poor utilization of insulin. People with diabetic retinopathy are susceptible to retinal bleeding and hemorrhaging. Chinese moxa methods are highly effective in stopping bleeding so that laser surgery may not be needed. It is important to confirm through a professional eye examination that the bleeding condition is stable.

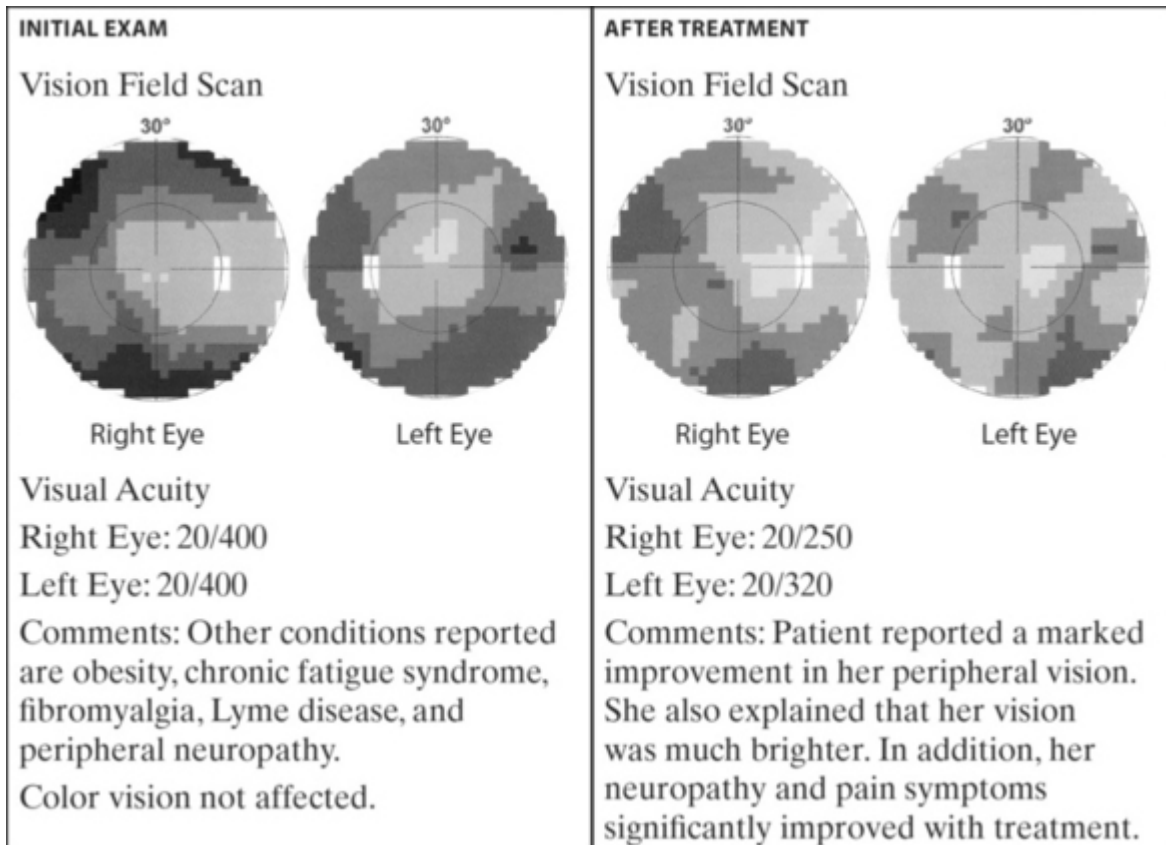
According to Chinese medicine, diabetic retinopathy is most often caused by damp-stagnation with spleen and kidney weakness (metabolic weakness). I have found patients with diabetic retinopathy to respond more rapidly than those with other eye conditions. Most people notice improvements after just a few treatments (unlike retinitis pigmentosa and glaucoma, which can take much longer to see results). Chinese medicine is highly effective for regulating blood sugar, and most of the time it can dramatically reduce the need for synthetic insulin, occasionally eliminating the need altogether.

Case

HC: 57-year-old female

Western Diagnosis: Diabetic Retinopathy

Chinese Medical Diagnosis: Kidney and Spleen Yang Weakness with Severe Damp Accumulation; Systemic Qi and Blood Congestion



Discussion

HC has Type-II diabetes, and the diabetic retinopathy is just one of many complications of her condition. HC received acupuncture, eye supplements, Micro Current Stimulation, and Chinese herbs (modified you gui tang and green tea). Controlling the diabetes with a strict diet and exercise will determine not only the condition of her eyes, but also her entire health.

I recommended that HC work diligently at losing weight and maintaining a healthier lifestyle. She has a very good chance of preserving her vision (and health) if she works hard and gradually takes more control of her body's condition.

Upon following up with HC, it seems that her eye condition is stable, although there have been only some efforts made to handle the underlying diabetic condition.

In my experience, diabetic retinopathy responds extremely well to Chinese medicine. Often patients with DR have sudden retinal

bleeding or hemorrhage. Using moxibustion techniques can help to stop the bleeding, repair the leaky blood vessels in the eye, and restore the vision.

Retinitis Pigmentosa

Thousands of people in the US have retinitis pigmentosa (RP), a disorder in which the rods and cones of the retina (the light receptors of the eye) slowly degenerate. RP is among the leading causes of blindness, which progresses over a period of ten to forty years.

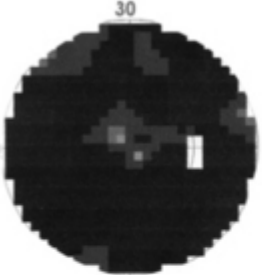
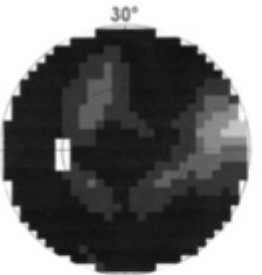
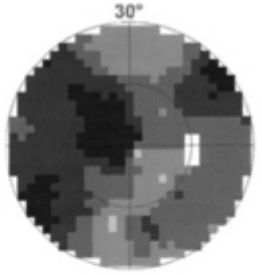
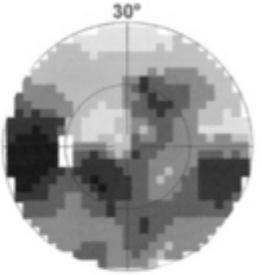
RP is one of the more difficult conditions to treat, and in my clinical experience it can take a significantly longer time to treat effectively than other chronic degenerative eye conditions. In Chinese medicine RP represents a loss of *qi* and yang-energy. *Qi* and *yang* weakness indicates slow metabolic activity, which manifests as a “slow responder.” This is not to say that treatment holds no promise, just that it may take longer before positive results are achieved.

Case

SB: 23-year-old male

Western Diagnosis: Retinitis Pigmentosa

Chinese Medical Diagnosis: Kidney Yin and Yang Insufficiency with Liver Qi Congestion

INITIAL EXAM		AFTER TREATMENT	
Vision Field Scan		Vision Field Scan	
			
Right Eye	Left Eye	Right Eye	Left Eye
Visual Acuity		Visual Acuity	
Right Eye: NONE		Right Eye: 20/800	
Left Eye: NONE		Left Eye: 20/630	
Comments: Other conditions reported are obesity, chronic fatigue syndrome, fibromyalgia, Lyme disease, and peripheral neuropathy.		Comments: After treatment there was some increase in light perception and color perception. Although the patient's acuity is very low, he feels that his vision is much brighter.	
Color vision not affected.			

Discussion

SB's condition started when he was in his teens and degenerated fairly quickly. He received acupuncture, Micro Current Stimulation, Chinese herbs, and eye nutrients. Using Chinese herbs to boost his kidney energy should help him long-term. This patient will require a lot of treatment for his condition, and we will continue until he has reached a plateau or he is satisfied with his results.

RP is one of the more difficult conditions (like glaucoma) to treat, and the best response is achieved if the disorder is caught and treated early on. As you can see from SB's tests, however, despite a late start at treatment RP is not always an irreversible condition. I have been treating SB for a few months now, and we are seeing gradual improvement. I'm not sure how much improvement SB will continue to obtain, but I am confident that we will optimize his seeing potential.

Usher Syndrome

Usher syndrome is a hereditary condition characterized by congenital deafness and retinitis pigmentosa, resulting in gradual loss of vision. Usher syndrome is reasonably difficult to treat and may require time before results are achieved.

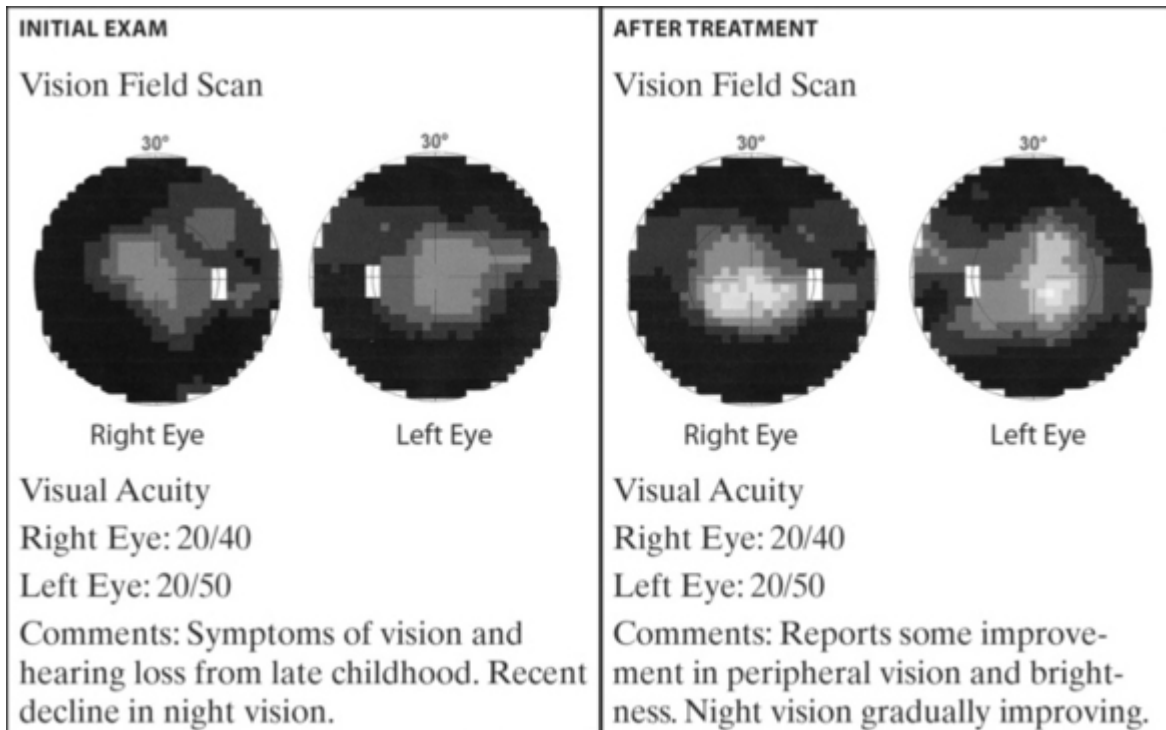
In Chinese medicine all genetic disorders indicate kidney weakness, and thus treatment would involve strengthening the kidneys. The cases that I have worked with have shown only minor improvements, but TCM treatment seems to have arrested the progression of the vision loss. (We will have to monitor over the next few years to be certain.) It is often the case with many congenital conditions that TCM slows or arrests the progression, which is why it is much better to begin treatment as early as possible.

Case

MD: 20-year-old male

Western Diagnosis: Usher Syndrome

Chinese Medical Diagnosis: Kidney Jing Insufficiency with Central Qi Weakness



Discussion

MD was born with Usher syndrome and developed symptoms of hearing loss and vision loss in childhood. He was told that he would be completely blind by age eighteen. Due to the severity of this case, MD returns two times each year for acupuncture treatment. He has been prescribed Chinese herbs, recommended eye supplements, and uses Micro Current Stimulation daily. He eats fairly well and gets a good balance of exercise, rest, and leisure time.

He is very active in college sports and shows no signs of declining vision so far. My best hope for MD is that we are able to preserve his vision so that he can lead a normal life. In my opinion MD's positive attitude plays a large role in his condition not worsening. His "disability" seems to have little effect on the quality of his life. He is an optimistic and caring person with a bright future ahead of him.

Open-Angle Glaucoma

Millions of Americans have chronic open-angle glaucoma, and many conditions go undiagnosed. Glaucoma is another gradual-onset condition that can go undetected until there is vision loss. There is no associated pain, and visual acuity is not usually affected. Gradually one loses peripheral vision.

Vision loss in glaucoma is often due to damage of the optic nerve. An increase of intraocular pressure (IOP) of the aqueous humor (watery fluid that circulates in the eye between the cornea and the lens) is often the cause of this nerve damage. In a healthy eye the fluid drains into the bloodstream at a constant rate. In this condition, the fluid does not drain and the pressure that builds up damages the optic nerve, causing vision loss.

Western medicine uses surgical methods and medication in order to control the pressure buildup. This may reduce the likelihood of optic nerve damage and vision loss. The problem is that these methods can have very serious side effects and may cause more severe vision loss. It's a double-edged sword, and while some people do well from medication and surgery, others have ended up completely blind as a result of medical errors.

In my opinion, as long as the IOP is not dangerously high, it is much wiser to try the less invasive procedures discussed in this book. If they do not work, there is always conventional medicine to fall back on. To me the risk associated with the Western medical approach seems too great not to try these natural methods first.

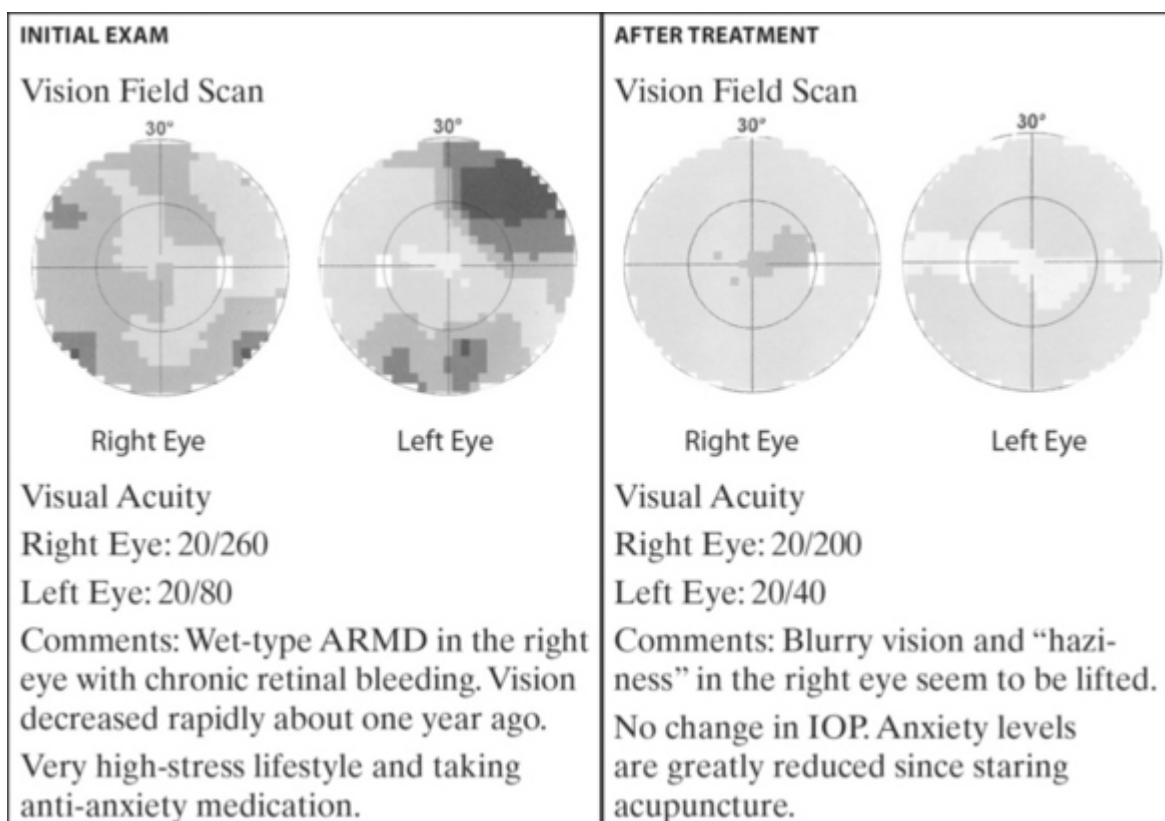
Chinese medicine works to regulate this circulation of fluids without damaging the eye. It can be quite successful, especially if the patient is treated in the early stages of open-angle glaucoma.

Case

DY: 42-year-old female

Western Diagnosis: Open-Angle Glaucoma (early stage) and Wet-type ARMD

Chinese Medical Diagnosis: Liver Yang Rising with Gall Bladder Damp-Heat; Underlying Kidney Yin Insufficiency



Discussion

It was fortunate that DY was able to start treatment in the early stages of her condition. She had not yet been prescribed medication, nor has she had any surgical procedures (and therefore has not incurred physical damage from that). She had a series of acupuncture with me and continues on Chinese herbs, eye supplements, and eye exercises to keep the pressure down. Her condition has been stable for many years now and has not progressed. There has been only one minor incident of retinal bleeding from the wet-type ARMD that arrested quickly with shell moxibustion.

Many people I see with glaucoma are in later stages of the condition, in which the peripheral vision is dramatically reduced. These people can make some gains, but usually not to the extent that people in early stages may experience.

In general, it seems that once people start with eye drops to lower IOP, there is little hope for naturally controlling the pressure since the body becomes dependant on the medication. The vision, however, can improve even though the pressure continues to be controlled with medication.

Optic Nerve Atrophy

Optic nerve atrophy is a destruction of the optic nerve fibers. In a healthy eye, the optic nerve transmits visual impulses from the eyes to the brain. In this condition of atrophy, the nerve fibers weaken and lose function. The degree of atrophy and vision loss varies from person to person, and may affect one or both eyes.

The cause of this may be hereditary or secondary to a pre-existing neurological disorder such as multiple sclerosis. Unfortunately, I have also seen this condition result from ophthalmic medical errors.

Chinese medicine is a great way to “jump-start” the optic nerve and restore eye function. I have seen people do exceptionally well with this condition when treated according to TCM principles. Micro Acupuncture works beautifully, usually strengthening the nerve fibers and nerve conduction, thus dramatically improving the vision to normal or near normal. Such dramatic results are less likely when the atrophy is caused by medical errors, due to the trauma inflicted on the eye(s). Surgical procedures, medications, and ophthalmic injections can be helpful in some cases, while they can cause more damage in others.

In Chinese medicine this condition is most often a deficiency of *qi*, blood, and *yang*. Although optic nerve

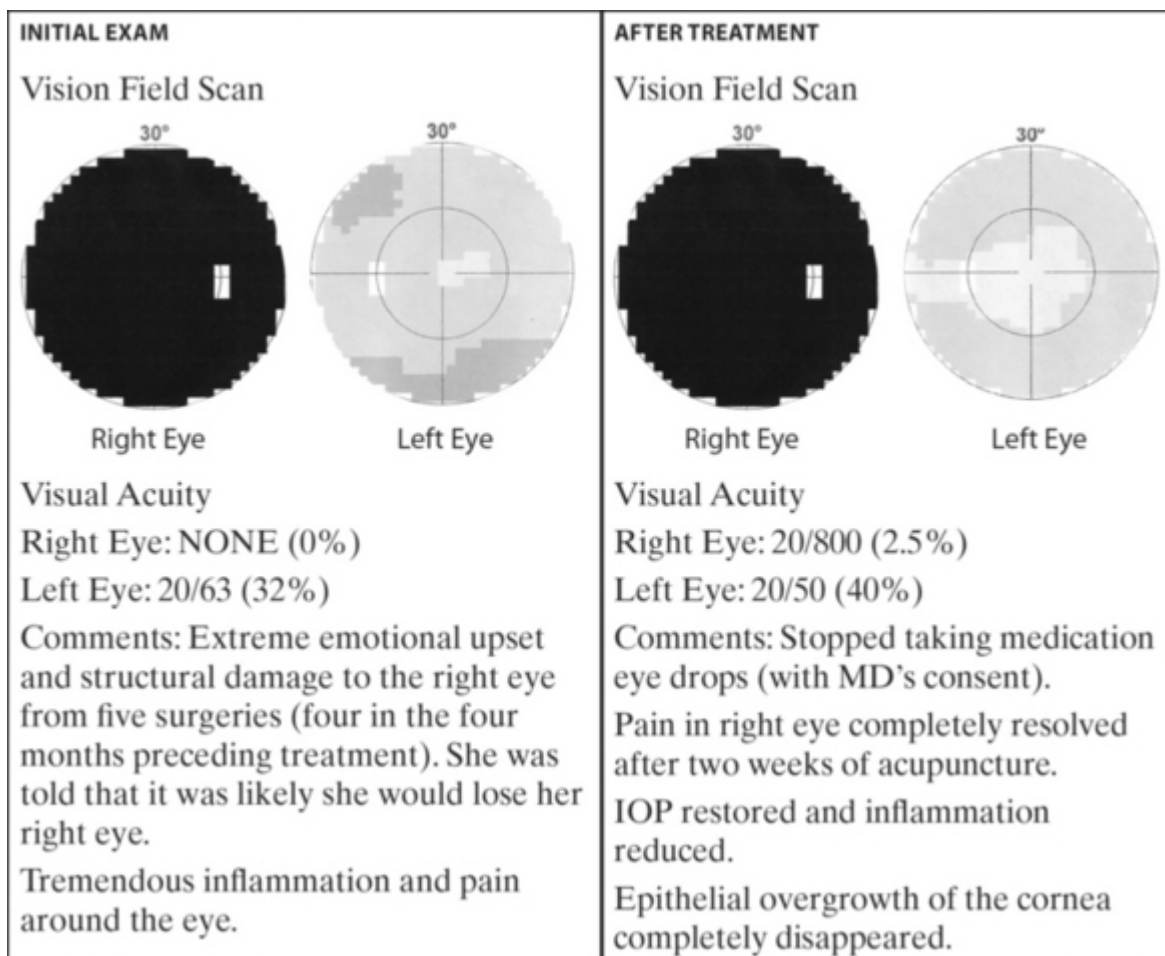
atrophy will usually respond within a reasonable time frame (10–30 treatments), rebuilding can take months or years. Using Chinese herbs, acupuncture, and Qigong can do wonders for this kind of condition.

Case

SR: 52-year-old female

Western Diagnosis: Optic Nerve Atrophy and Detached Retina

Chinese Medical Diagnosis: Kidney Yin and Liver Blood Insufficiency with Liver Qi and Blood Congestion; Local Qi and Blood Congestion



Discussion

SR came to me after a series of medical maltreatment and gross negligence. She was on an extremely high dose of pharmaceutical eye drops that severely damaged her right eye. SR was scared and angry that her slight vision loss had been made worse by inappropriate use of drugs and surgery. Her right eye had neovascularization and appeared grayish-brown with blood spots about the sclera. Her eyeball was drooping and deeply sunken into the eye socket. There was much inflammation around her eye from the burning irritation of the eye drops she used. An IOP test indicated that her eye pressure was very low.

After an initial series of acupuncture, Micro Current therapy, eye nutrients, and Chinese herbs, SR's right eye has dramatically improved. A normal white color has returned to her sclera, the eye lifted, and the IOP has increased to normal. SR's vision continued to improve for six months after treatment and her condition is now stable.

The vision scans shown above were taken two weeks apart, and although there was no initial improvement in her vision field, she did improve. We were unable to obtain a follow-up vision scan from SR; however, she did report in conversation that she had some light perception in her right eye, although minimal. The important consideration in this case is that we were able to save her eye from extreme neovascularization and excision.

Myopia (Nearsightedness)

Myopia affects more than 80 million people in the US. It is a condition in which objects can be seen more clearly up close than objects at a distance. Conventional medicine believes that myopia occurs as a result of an excessive curvature of the cornea, and a longer-than-normal eyeball.

Myopia develops gradually over time, and most of those afflicted show signs in childhood. Most often myopia develops around age eight and progresses for the next ten years or so. Most conditions stabilize in the late teens and early twenties. Jobs or hobbies that require excessive "near

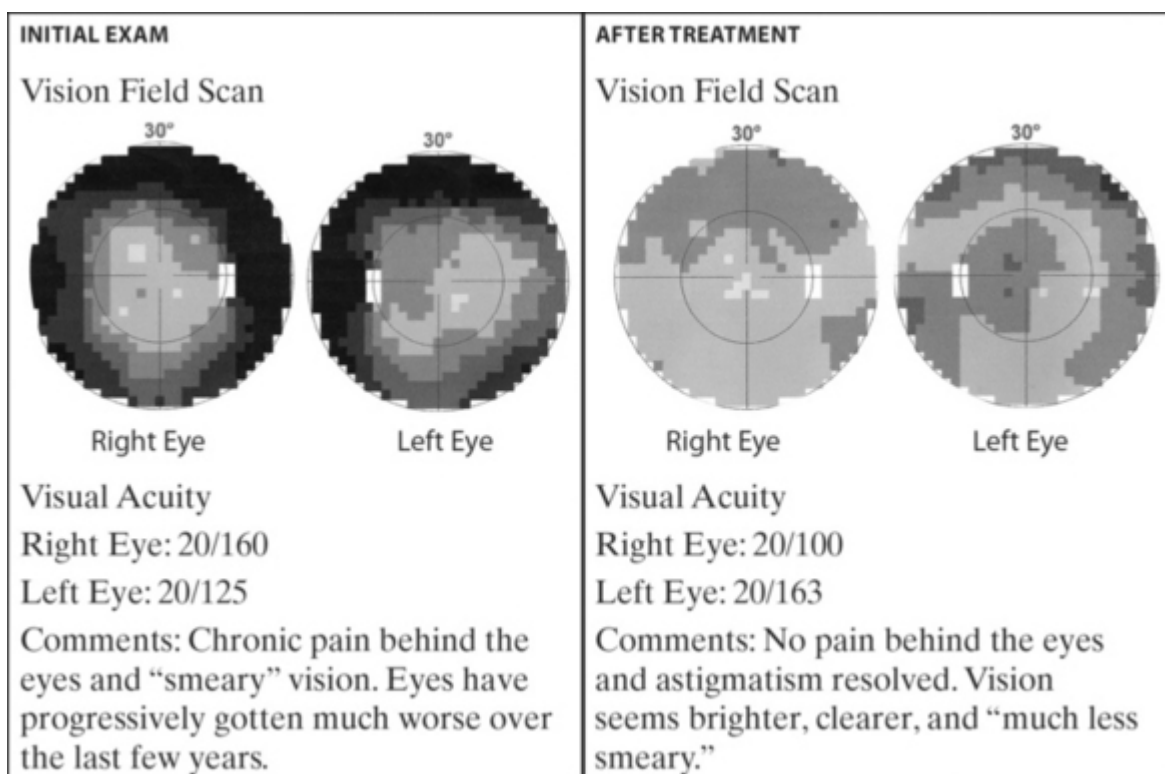
work” can be a major factor of progression, as it puts significant strain on the eyes. Jobs like bookkeeping, computer programming and data entry, editing, and academic pursuits are among the occupations that may overwork near vision.

Case

MM: 64-year-old female

Western Diagnosis: Myopia and Astigmatism, Blurry Vision

Chinese Medical Diagnosis: Kidney and Spleen Yang Weakness with Damp Accumulation. Gall Bladder Weakness with Qi and Blood Congestion.



Discussion

MM has a number of conditions that underlie her vision loss. There is a slow metabolic condition resulting in obesity. This “slow

metabolism” or *qi* and *yang* weakness in Chinese medicine are together the most probable cause of her myopia. In most cases myopia seems to be accompanied by a deeper *yin* and blood insufficiency. In MM’s case it shows to be just the opposite.

Using Chinese medicine, MM responded well to treatment and continues diligently to seek good vision and overall health. Acupuncture, Chinese herbs, eye nutrients, massage, and eye exercises play key roles in her health maintenance, along with a healthy diet and regular exercise.

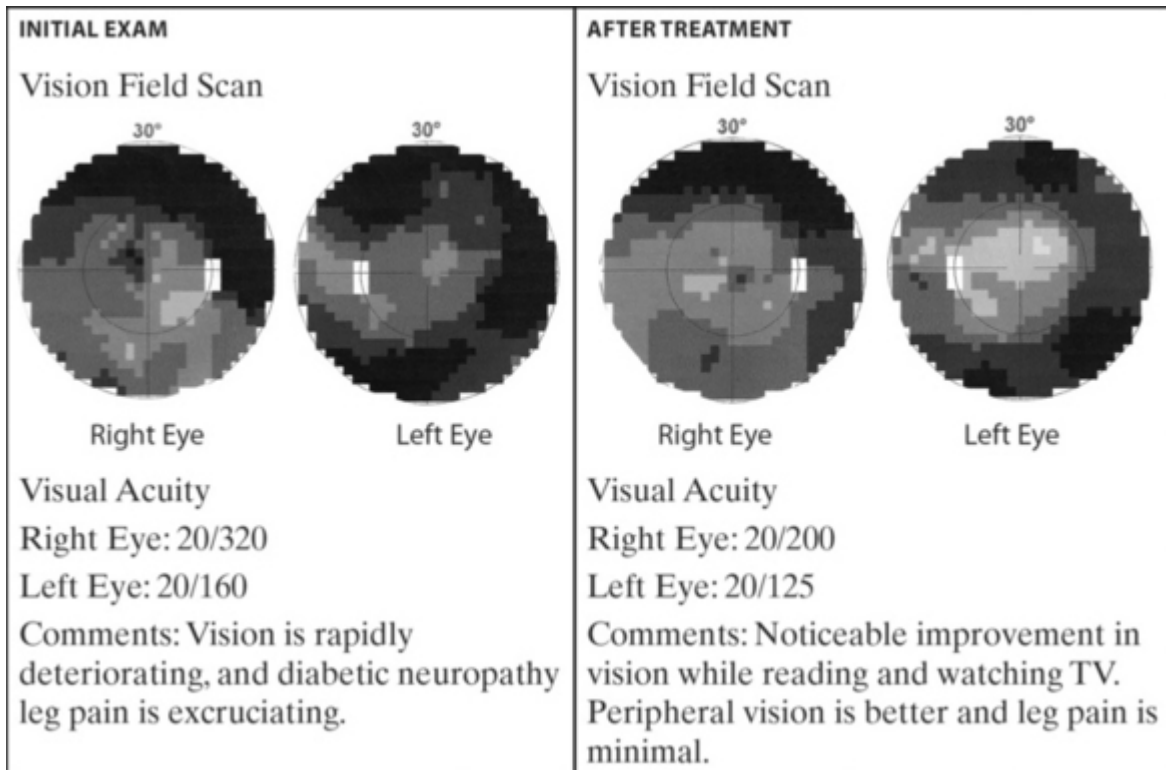
Combined Eye Conditions

Case

ED: 82-year-old female

Western Diagnosis: Dry-type ARMD, Glaucoma, Diabetic Retinopathy

Chinese Medical Diagnosis: Lung and Liver Yin Insufficiency with Kidney Yang Weakness



Discussion

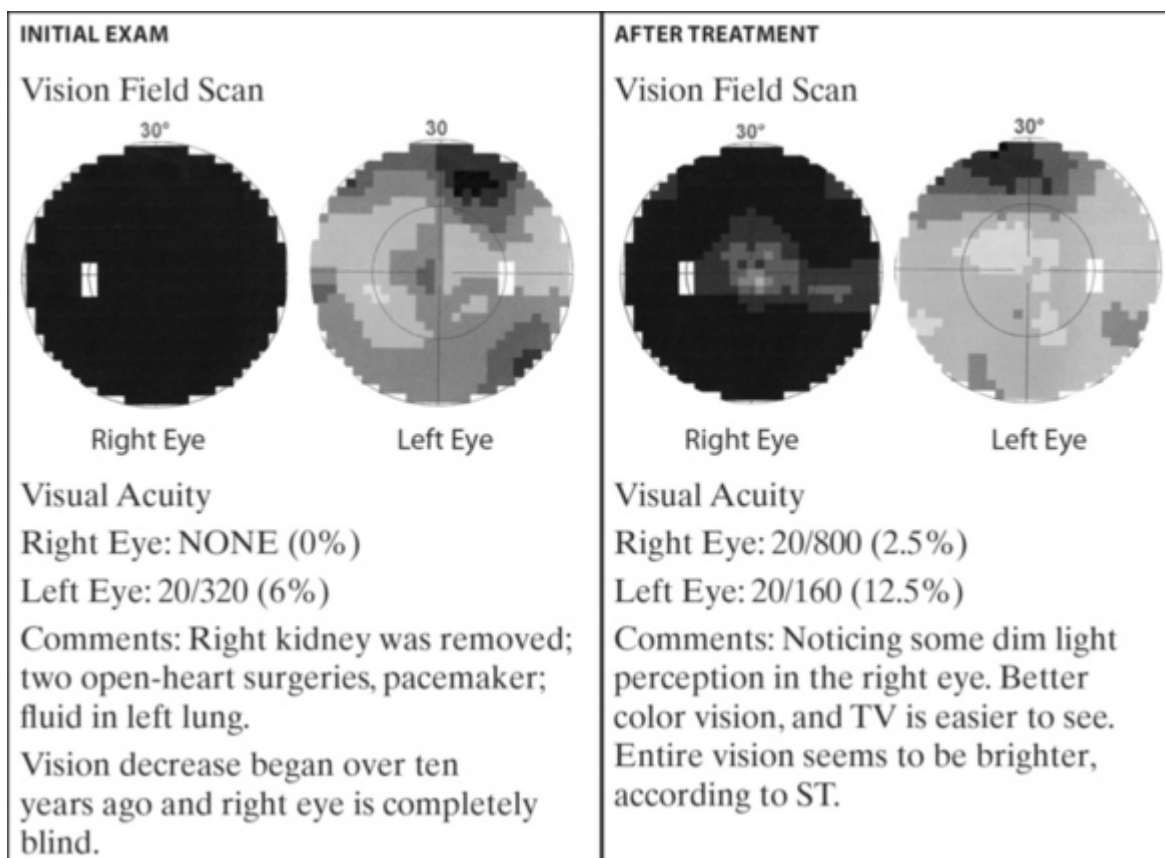
ED was no doubt a difficult case, as she presented with glaucoma, diabetic retinopathy, and dry-type ARMD. She still smokes a pack per day of cigarettes and is on about ten different medications. Needless to say, I was concerned that she would not respond to treatment. We used only acupuncture and eye nutrients initially, and ED responded quite well, to my surprise. For continuing home care she uses essential oils and Micro Current. Regular follow-up treatment for her is 1–2 times each year. After a year or so, her vision is holding very nicely.

Case

ST: 68-year-old female

Western Diagnosis: Dry-type ARMD, Cataracts, Corneal Transplant, and Glaucoma

Chinese Medical Diagnosis: Severe Kidney Yin and Yang Weakness with Liver Yin and Blood Insufficiency



Discussion

ST is another individual who has a quite a few adverse health conditions, which in many cases can make someone less responsive to TCM treatment for the eyes. She underwent a series of twenty acupuncture treatments, Chinese herbs, and eye nutrients. ST's conditions are stable and she reports no worsening. I am pleasantly surprised that her eyes have not regressed, given her poor overall state of health.

Regular follow-up treatment for most eye patients is one to two times each year. In many cases the improvements hold and may even continue to improve. In most cases maintenance treatment is required every year or so. Ongoing supplements and Chinese herbs are recommended. Additional therapies may be indicated including

eye exercises, acupressure, essential oil applications, and Micro Current Stimulation.

CHAPTER 8

Home Therapies

Micro Current Stimulation

Micro Current Stimulation (MCS) is an enhanced adaptation of an FDA-approved therapy used by anesthesiologists, orthopedic surgeons, plastic surgeons, and rehabilitative specialists. Initially, MCS was used to promote the healing of wounds and transplanted tissues and to treat pain.

The exact mechanism of MCS has not yet been fully established scientifically. The treatment of degenerative vision loss entails the daily administration of very precise amounts of tightly controlled electrical current through electrodes applied to the skin at specific acupuncture points around the eye. The electrical current stimulates the circulation of *qi* and blood to the retina and macula.

The surface of the body is not uniform in terms of its electrical properties, and there are specific acupuncture points on the body that have very low resistance. These acu-points with low electrical resistance are stimulated with MCS. Using MCS for some vision loss conditions has demonstrated that there can be some benefit by stimulating these acupuncture points. MCS therapy seems to be a safe, noninvasive, and painless method.

In general, the theory behind MCS is that it stimulates and revitalizes degenerated retinal cells. It's like doing resuscitative "CPR on the eyes" and bringing them back to life. MCS acts this way to gently "jump-start" eye function in order to restore healthy vision. MCS also boosts the cells' ability to rid themselves of damaging metabolic waste products that accumulate in the tissues.

While a very effective form of treatment, MCS therapy is not always beneficial in every condition. I have seen little to no improvement in patients with glaucoma and advanced RP. It seems to work best on patients with dry-type ARMD.

Safety and Efficacy of MCS

No side effects or adverse reactions have been reported in patients undergoing MCS therapy. No increase in the conversion from dry-type ARMD to wet-type ARMD has been reported.

Research Studies on MCS

Grace Halloran's MCS Study

The first study on MCS was a two-year study (1983–1985) performed by Grace Halloran, PhD, on 114 patients with degenerative vision loss. The results of the study showed that of the eighteen patients diagnosed with macular degeneration, sixteen of them showed improvement with MCS, for an 89% success rate. Of the seventy-eight diagnosed with retinitis pigmentosa, sixty-two showed improvement, for a success rate of 79%. Eighteen patients had various other DVL retinopathies; sixteen of them showed improvement, or 89%.

Of the twenty DVL patients who showed no improvement, fourteen of the participants' conditions stayed the same (where gradual decline and loss of vision would have been expected). Two continued to lose vision, although only slightly.

FDA Position on MCS

The FDA considers MCS therapy on the eyes to be an “off-label” or “experimental” use of a medical device approved for other uses. Off-label usage of FDA-approved devices is commonly practiced by health care professionals if it provides the most benefit to their patients.

Contraindications for MCS

Micro Current Stimulation (MCS) is contraindicated for those with pacemakers and for pregnant women. If you have a neurological disorder such as epilepsy, please discuss it with your doctor prior to using MCS.

Chinese Aromatherapy: Essential Oils for Vision Loss

Essential oils are volatile liquids derived from flowers, trees, shrubs, roots, bushes, seeds, and resins. They are highly concentrated and far more potent than dried herbs. Distillation and extraction are the most common methods of creating essential oils.

When producing a “therapeutic-grade” essential oil, the objective is to preserve as many of the delicate aromatic compounds as possible. The compounds can easily be destroyed in the distillation and extraction process.

The plants themselves need to be pure as well (no chemicals and pesticides). Unfortunately, there are synthetic essential oils that are marketed as “pure” and unadulterated. The only way to test purity is through chromatography, mass spectroscopy, and NMRI carbon testing. Some companies test their products for purity, and others do not. It’s a good idea to seek out those companies that have the best-quality essential oils. A few companies have a great product line, and most of the essential oils you’ll find in health food stores smell nice, but they will not get a therapeutic result. Essential oil sources are listed in [Appendix 3](#).

How Essential Oils Work

Essential oils appear to penetrate cell membranes and diffuse throughout the blood and surrounding tissues very rapidly. When applied topically, the essential oil can travel throughout the body in a matter of minutes. The ability of some oils like clove and frankincense to decrease the viscosity (thickness) of the blood can

enhance circulation, which may help with regeneration of the eye tissue.

Adequate circulation is vital to overall health and function. Essential oils do not seem to disturb the body's natural state. In contrast, synthetic drugs and chemicals do have harmful side effects, disrupting overall health. Good-quality, therapeutic-grade oils seem to be fairly easy for the body to recognize, assimilate, and utilize for healing.

Essential oils work via the olfactory system (sense of smell). When smelling an essential oil a person is actually inhaling tiny particles of that oil. These particles travel through the nasal passages to the olfactory lobe. They then travel to the limbic system of the brain, where the actual interpretation and "sense of smell" is processed. Essential oils can trigger different emotional responses and memories as well as the autonomic nervous system (stress and relaxation responses).

The limbic system is the oldest and most primal part of the brain, primarily concerned with the survival mechanism. Both familiar and unfamiliar smells can be processed through the limbic system as something that may be nurturing or something that is potentially dangerous.

Using oils that facilitate a "relaxation response" from the body can aid in healing. The oils listed in this chapter not only initiate this general healing response but have transdermal applications that may benefit the eyes.

When essential oils are absorbed transdermally (through the skin), they activate a local healing response in the surrounding tissue (as well as systemically). Some oils have anti-inflammatory, antibiotic, anti-viral, anti-fungal, antiseptic, and other medicinal properties. The molecules of essential oils are so small that they are absorbed right through the skin and into the bloodstream and intercellular fluids.

Safe Use of Essential Oils

Never place oils in the eyes or directly on the eyelids. It is a good practice to keep the eyes closed when applying oils around the eyes, in order to avoid irritation. You may apply the oils on specific acupuncture points or on reflexology points of the affected system (e.g., eyes, Kidney, Liver, Pancreas).

Useful Oils for Degenerative Vision Loss

Frankincense

Frankincense is a resin that activates blood circulation, and it is excellent for the regeneration of tissue. It strongly moves blood, especially in the Liver meridian (which as we know has a direct connection to the eyes in Chinese medicine). According to experts, frankincense supports the nervous system, immune system, and emotions. Frankincense is also very helpful in clearing the lungs, eases shortness of breath, soothes the stomach, and eases belching.

Conditions: Macular degeneration (dry-type), Stargardt's, and traumatic injury with blood stagnation

Application: Two times each day, above the eyebrows, on the nape of the neck (back), and on the cheeks (two inches directly below the pupils)

Clove

Clove has one of the warmest thermal properties of any essential oil. In addition, research shows clove oil to have the strongest antioxidant properties of all oils. It stimulates the "Kidney Fire" (metabolic activity). Experts show that clove supports the circulatory system, respiration, digestive system, and immune function. Clove can be highly irritating to the skin and should be diluted.

Caution: Strong anti-coagulant properties can be enhanced when combined with Warfarin, aspirin, etc.

Conditions: Glaucoma, retinitis pigmentosa, diabetic retinopathy, night blindness

Application: Two times each day, above the eyebrows, on heels, back of legs, and low back area

Peppermint and Eucalyptus

Peppermint and eucalyptus regulate, calm, and cool the liver (and the eyes), and stimulate circulation to the eyes. They also stimulate respiration. Improved breathing yields increased oxygen intake and will contribute to eye regeneration.

Conditions: Eyestrain or peri-orbital headaches, glaucoma, myopia, astigmatism, and/or dry, burning, or itchy eyes

Application: Two times each day above eyebrows, on temples, occipital area, and soles of feet

Lavender

Lavender directly affects the liver organ. Lavender moves the *qi* (stimulates function), especially in the liver. Studies show that Lavender supports the nervous system, cardiovascular system, and emotional balance. Pure, therapeutic-grade lavender is also very effective for skin irritations, burns, bites, hives, etc. (Note: Generic lavender oil should *not* be used topically for burns.)

Conditions: ARMD (dry type), glaucoma, myopia, astigmatism, headache, photophobia

Application: Two times each day, above the eyebrows and cheeks, on the temple areas, and over the liver

Helichrysum

Helichrysum strongly moves the blood in the upper body. It is a rejuvenating oil, which promotes cell growth, helping to rebuild tissues and energize the organs. This oil reputedly has a beneficial action on cystitis and herpes simplex.

Conditions: Macular degeneration (wet type), retinal bleeding, detached retina, traumatic injury

Application: Two times each day, above the eyebrows and cheeks, and back of the neck

Sandalwood

Sandalwood is also fairly warming to the body, thus promoting circulation. It stimulates the kidney function and regulates fluids in the upper parts of the body. It regulates the nervous system, emotional balance, muscles, and bones. Its lingering aroma often persists in clothing after washing. Avoid in states of depression, as it may lower the mood even further. Sandalwood is said to be particularly good for dry eczema as well as dehydrated, itchy skin.

Conditions: Blurry vision, macular degeneration, Stargardt's, diabetic retinopathy, glaucoma

Application: Above eyebrows and cheeks, back of neck, low back area, two times daily combined with juniper oil

Juniper

Juniper improves circulation in the center of the body, and stimulates the kidney and liver function. Juniper supports digestion and emotional balance. It should not be used if you have any type of kidney or inflammatory problems. Juniper is also said to be helpful in cases of gout and rheumatism, as it helps to eliminate uric acid.

Conditions: Blurry vision, diabetic retinopathy

Application: Above the eyebrows and cheeks, back of neck, and low back area, two times daily, combined with sandalwood oil

Cypress

Cypress invigorates the *qi* and blood, and regulates the liver. It improves circulation and strengthens blood capillaries. Cypress is particularly useful for most conditions of degenerative vision loss and keeps the liver and eyes healthy.

Conditions: Retinal bleeding, cataracts, optic neuritis, diabetic retinopathy

Application: Above the eyebrows and cheeks, back of neck, and low back area, two times daily, combined with helichrysum for bleeding



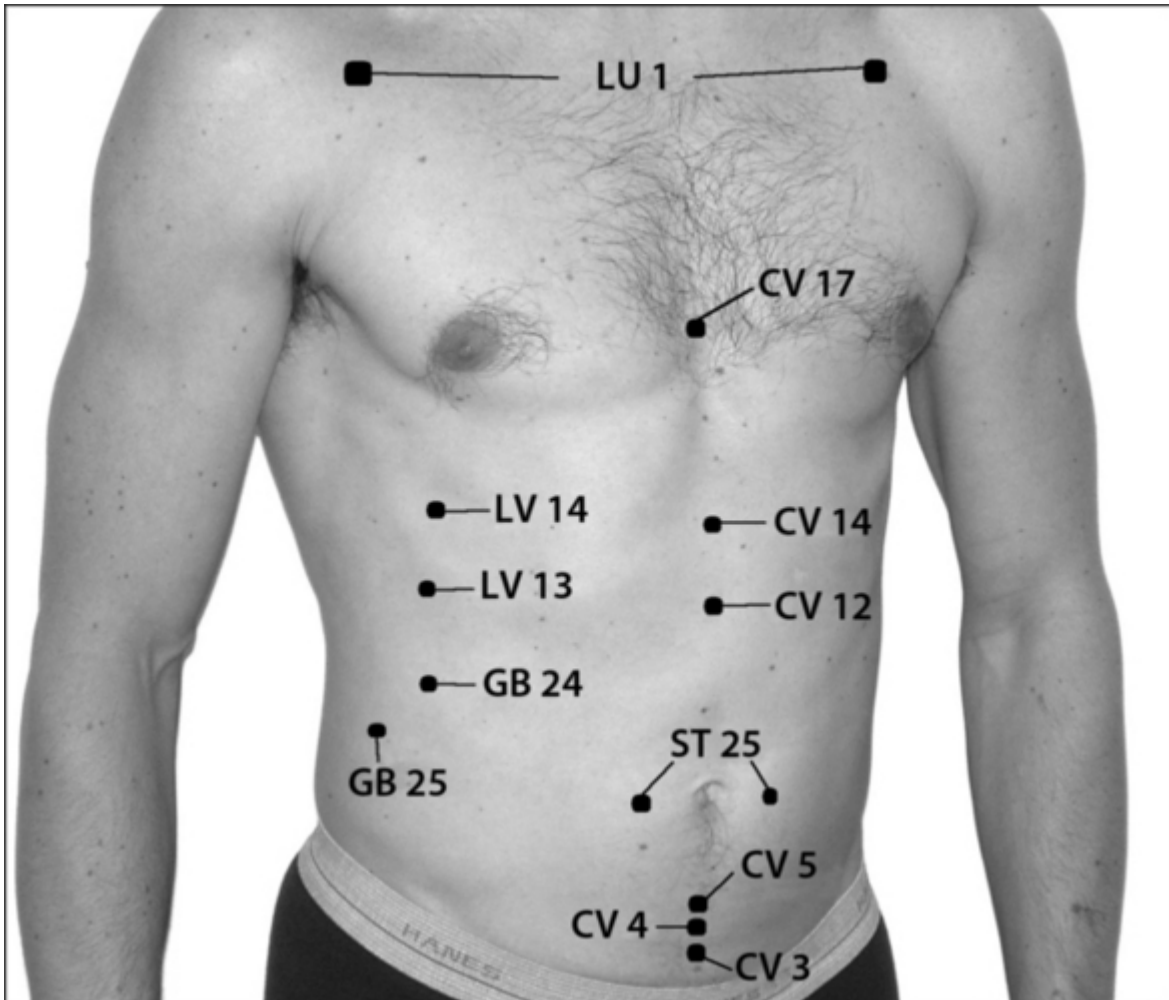
Here are some traditional acupuncture points that you can apply essential oil to for certain conditions:

EYE CONDITION	ESSENTIAL OIL(S)	ESSENTIAL ACU-POINTS
Macular degeneration	Sandalwood Frankincense Lavender	Kidney, Liver, Spleen alarm points UB-2, Yuyao, St-2, GB-20
Stargardt's	Sandalwood Frankincense Lavender	Kidney, Liver, Spleen alarm points UB-2, Yuyao, St-2, GB-20

Retinitis pigmentosa	Clove Helichrysum	Kidney, Liver, Heart alarm points UB-2, Yuyao, St-2, GB-20
Cataracts	Clove Cypress Eucalyptus	Kidney, Liver alarm points UB-2, Yuyao, St-2, GB-20
Glaucoma (open- angle)	Lavender Eucalyptus Sandalwood	Stomach, Gall Bladder alarm points UB-2, Yuyao, St-2, GB-20
Usher syndrome	Frankincense Clove	Kidney, Liver, Heart alarm points UB-2, Yuyao, St-2, GB-20
Diabetic retinopathy	Clove Juniper Sandalwood Cypress	Kidney, Spleen, Stomach alarm points UB-2, Yuyao, St-2, GB-20
Detached retina	Frankincense Helichrysum	Kidney, Liver, Spleen alarm points UB-2, Yuyao, St-2, GB-20
Optic nerve atrophy	Clove	
Optic neuritis	Lavender Cypress	Gall Bladder, Stomach alarm points UB-2, Yuyao, St-2, GB-20
Myopia/astigmatism	Lavender Cypress	Kidney, Heart alarm points UB-2, Yuyao, St-2,

		GB-20
Presbyopia	Clove	Kidney, Liver alarm points UB-2, Yuyao, St-2, GB-20
Traumatic injury	Frankincense Helichrysum Cypress	Stomach, Liver alarm points UB-2, Yuyao, St-2, GB-20
Eyestrain headaches	Eucalyptus Lavender Cypress	Gall Bladder, Liver alarm points UB-2, Yuyao, St-2, GB-20
Photosensitivity	Lavender Eucalyptus	Kidney, Liver, Heart alarm points UB-2, Yuyao, St-2, GB-20
Poor night vision	Clove Sandalwood Cypress	Kidney, Liver alarm points UB-2, Yuyao, St-2, GB-20

Traditional Alarm Points



Lung – LU 1

Pericardium – CV 17

Liver – LV 14

Heart – CV 14

Gall Bladder – LV 13

Stomach – CV 12

Spleen – GB 24

Large Intestine – ST 25

Kidney – GB 25

Sanjiao/Triple Burner – CV 5

Small Intestine – CV 4

Urinary Bladder – CV 3

Chinese Moxibustion at Home

Moxibustion is the burning of tiny cones of loose mugwort (*artemisia argyrii*) on certain acupuncture points. This method activates the acu-point(s) with heat. When done correctly it will add *yang-qi* (function) to the body. Moxa on specific points will activate different areas of the body. Since our objective is to stimulate healing of the eyes, the moxa methods used are designed to do just that.

Moxa sticks and loose moxa can be ordered through acupuncture supply companies. (A few are listed in the [Appendix 3](#) at the end of this book.) The technique of burning moxa is fairly simple.

This method is especially effective for ARMD, glaucoma, retinitis pigmentosa, and patterns where the spleen and kidney *yang-qi* is weak, causing *qi* and blood stagnation. Moxibustion strengthens the *qi* and warms the *yang*, generating metabolic “heat,” which will improve circulation to the eyes.

Moxa therapy should be performed daily for one to three months. Different methods produce various degrees of smoke in the room. Where thread moxa will produce little smoke, using a moxa stick will produce significantly more smoke. To reduce the amount of smoke you may open windows for cross-ventilation, use an air cleaner, or use “smokeless” moxa. Smokeless moxa can be ordered from the same companies.

Moxa Sticks

Procedure

Obtain moxa sticks from any acupuncture supply company. To extinguish the moxa stick after use, simply place uncooked rice in a small bowl or cup, and set the burning end into the uncooked rice. Do *not* use sand, as its grains are too small and will stick to the moxa. You can do this each time you use your moxa stick.

Using a lighter, ignite the moxa stick at one end. Some come wrapped in an extra outer layer of paper, and you may need to remove this before lighting. Once the moxa is smoldering, the lit end is placed about one-half inch above the surface of the skin.

You may vary the distance according to your heat tolerance, but please be sure to use caution and avoid burning yourself. Thermal stimulation is burned over the acu-point(s) for about five minutes each, or until the skin becomes red and very warm to the touch.

You can use a method called “sparrow pecking,” in which the moxa stick is “pecked” up and down, directly above the acu-point. This is method quickly activates circulation of *qi* and blood, adding the hot *yang-qi*.



Moxa Cones/Thread Moxa

Procedure

These are two names for the same thing. Obtain loose moxa from a supply company and use a very small amount to roll between the thumb and forefinger. Roll lightly, forming a loose, thin “thread” of moxa about the size of a grain of rice. Make sure not to roll it too tightly, and keep the size that of a grain of rice. Roll yourself a few threads or cones (the amount you’ll need).

Apply a small amount of Tiger Balm or other type of menthol rub on the point where you will be placing the moxa cone. Stand the moxa cone up perpendicularly directly on the point. Light the

end of the moxa with a burning incense stick. As the moxa cone burns down, you will feel the heat get more intense. Remove the moxa cone between your two fingers or with tweezers when it becomes too hot. *Please be careful not to burn yourself!* You are much better off removing the moxa cone before it gets too hot than waiting and risking a burn. If you do burn yourself, you can apply the Chinese burn ointment called Ching Wan Hong (available at supply companies).

The result is that your skin should be red and hot to the touch, without blistering. You can start with 2–3 cones and work your way up to 12 cones per point treated, or as indicated.

The chart lists a few eye conditions and moxa treatments. These points can be done with either thread moxa or using a moxa stick.

EYE CONDITION	POINTS TO MOXA
Open-angle glaucoma	Moxa point on the middle of the knuckles of the second joint of the thumb and middle finger. Also, St-36, 40
Optic nerve atrophy/optic neuritis	SI-6, LI-1, GB-37
ARMD (wet and dry)/Stargardt's	Sp-6, St-36, CV-6
Diabetic retinopathy	Sp-3, St-36, St-40, CV-8 (navel with ginger), Ki-1
Retinitis pigmentosa and night blindness	St-36, Sp-6 CV-8 (navel w/ aconite root) Low back area and Ki-1

Moxa Glasses

Moxa glasses are fairly modern and were created decades ago in mainland China. Originally, the shells were placed over the eyes and held there by hand. Their method of use was specifically designed for treating degenerative eye conditions. Moxa glasses are made of walnut shells soaked in ju hua tea (chrysanthemum). They are soaked for about a week and then may be attached to pipe cleaners. The pipe cleaners are bent in the shape of eyeglass frames to hold two walnut shells over the eyes, like reading glasses. The pipe cleaner is bent into circles to hold the shells, and then the “arms” of the pipe cleaner glasses will go around the ears. (You’ll want to attach one for each arm.) Attach two more pipe cleaners, one to each “lens holder,” and bend them in an “L” shape over the shells. You can intertwine 2 or 3 pipe cleaners to strengthen this structure if needed to hold the moxa. Two pieces of moxa stick are broken off and stuck onto the pipe cleaners so that they sit about one-half inch above the shells. Placing the moxa on the pipe cleaners is done by running the pipe cleaner through the center of the moxa piece (the long way). The moxa sticks are lit and the *yang-qi* heat penetrates the eyes, increasing circulation of *qi* and blood.

I have also seen a pair of these “glasses” made by popping out the lenses of old reading glasses and placing the walnut shells where the lenses should be. Then copper wire is wrapped around the arms of the glasses, with the other end bent over the walnut shells to hold the moxa. This therapy can be done every day for one month, taking a break for a week and then resuming.

In most cases it is best to seek a licensed practitioner trained in this method to have it performed in their office, or at least initially, with a step-by-step demonstration. Most TCM practitioners should be familiar with this method. If you are bold enough to try this on your own, please use *extreme* caution as the moxa ashes can fall if not placed on the pipe cleaners correctly. It is never a good idea to do this method alone.



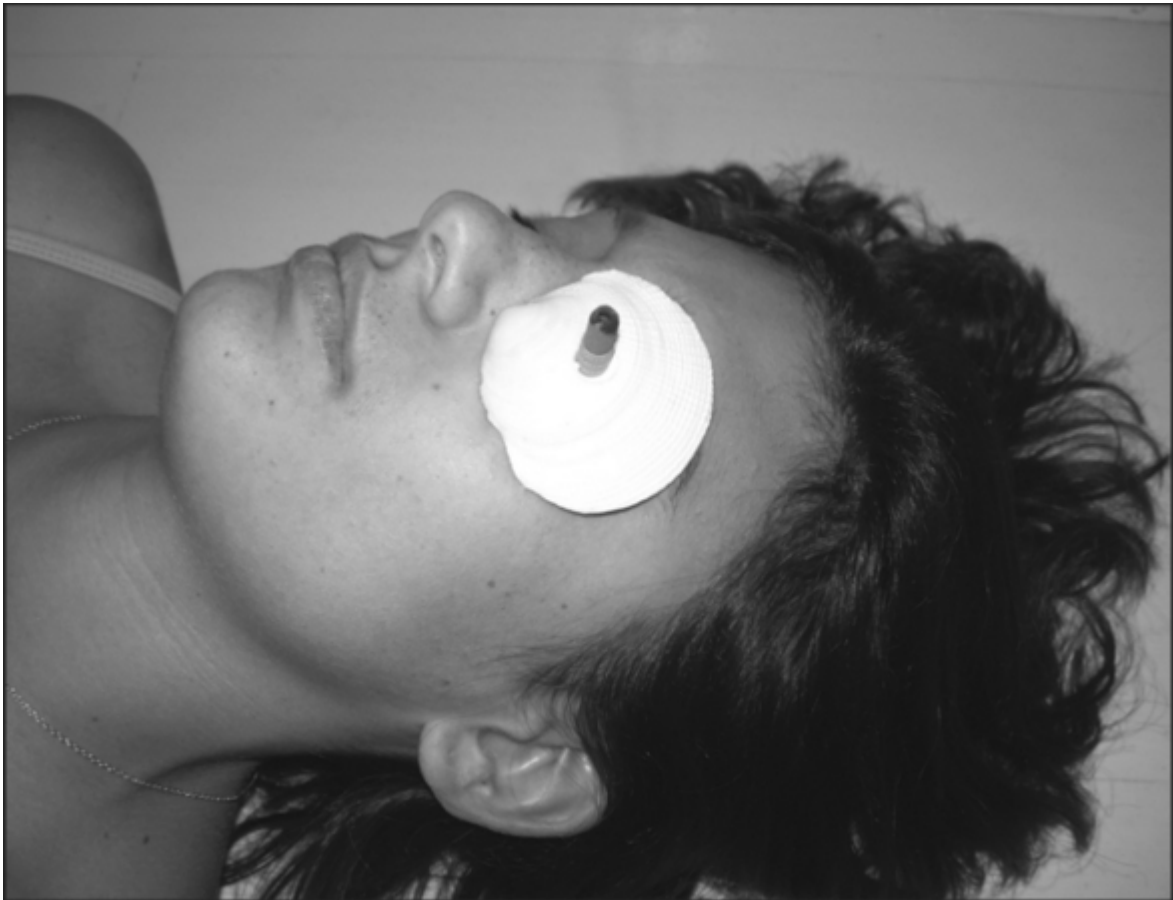
Moxa glassed for the eyes

Moxa Shells

Moxa shell therapy is even more recent than moxa glasses, and I first learned of it through a practitioner in Israel who was using snail-shell moxa for wet-type ARMD. In addition to acupuncture, Dr. Shmuel Halevi uses moxa cones directly on the snail shells to stop retinal bleeding and repair leaky blood vessels. Amazing!

One week after reading his article I had an opportunity to try this on a patient who had a sudden leakage due to wet-type ARMD. After her ophthalmologist made sure that she was stable, we did the snail-shell moxa daily for two weeks (five days a week). Her vision dramatically improved, and upon her return to her ophthalmologist for a check-up, she had no more leaks. The patient reported that after the moxa treatments her vision was better than before the leak occurred. I used herbs as well (Yunnan Paiyao) in this case.

Though this method was effective, I found the snail shells difficult to keep the moxa cones on, and they took a fairly long time to heat up. I decided to use regular clam shells to see if I could get the same result. After treating six people I saw that the results were no different, and these shells seemed to work a bit easier for me. Clinically I have used this method only for wet-type ARMD and retinal bleeding. There could very well be more clinical applications for this method; however, it is still too early to tell.



Chinese Color Therapy

In the Five Element theory of Chinese medicine, each organ has a specific color associated with it, said to resonate at the same frequency on the hydrogen spectrum of colors (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet). The colors can be used to help heal

their associated organ system. The chart lists the Five Element correspondences.

ELEMENT	COLOR	ORGANS	SENSE ORGAN
Fire	Red Red-orange	Heart/Pericardium and Small Intestine	Tongue (speech)
Earth	Yellow Light orange	Spleen/Pancreas and Stomach	Mouth (taste)
Metal	White Silver	Lung and Large Intestine	Nose (smell)
Water	Dark blue Purple Black	Kidney and Urinary Bladder	Ears (sound)
Wood	Blue-green Green	Liver and Gall Bladder	Eyes (vision)

The autonomic system is made up of the sympathetic nervous system (SNS) and the parasympathetic nervous system (PNS). The SNS is responsible for our survival instincts, including the “fight or flight” mechanism. It is designed for handling life-or-death situations. The PNS becomes activated with rest, recovery, and healing.

Early man needed the SNS to escape being eaten by wild animals. Today the SNS can be activated to avoid an auto accident, catch a child from falling, race to office meetings, etc. When the SNS is dominant and the PNS is suppressed, the body has difficulty recovering from trauma and healing from disease. Healing does not take place unless the autonomic system is functioning optimally. In Chinese medicine, the liver (and kidneys to some extent) is responsible for our adaptogenic capabilities. A weakened or stressed-out liver will cause an imbalance of the autonomic nervous system.

The red part of the color spectrum can stimulate the SNS, increasing heart rate and blood pressure, causing inflammation and other conditions. Soothing colors like blue, green, and purple, on the other hand, will deactivate the SNS and activate the PNS.

I am currently using certain frequencies of blue-green light to improve the vision in patients with macular degeneration; and certain frequencies of green light can lower the intraocular pressure in patients with glaucoma. Some patients are seeing benefits, but I have not collected enough data to confirm the efficacy. Some readers may want to experiment with this cost-effective, harmless method.

Each color has its own frequency, and the goal is to identify the frequency that best resonates with the eyes (and the liver). As we've learned, in Chinese medicine most eye diseases are the result of an imbalance in the liver system. Using color therapy (blue-green) to heal the liver may help to improve vision and healing of the eyes.

Chinese Reflexology (Foot Therapy)

Chinese foot therapy or reflexology is a common practice in Chinese medicine. Although reflexology was codified in the West, many Chinese doctors have incorporated the modern form of reflexology into their practice. Foot reflexology is much like Chinese acupuncture (as well as other micro-systems) in the sense that both are microcosmic representations of the whole body. Both can be used diagnostically and for treatment.

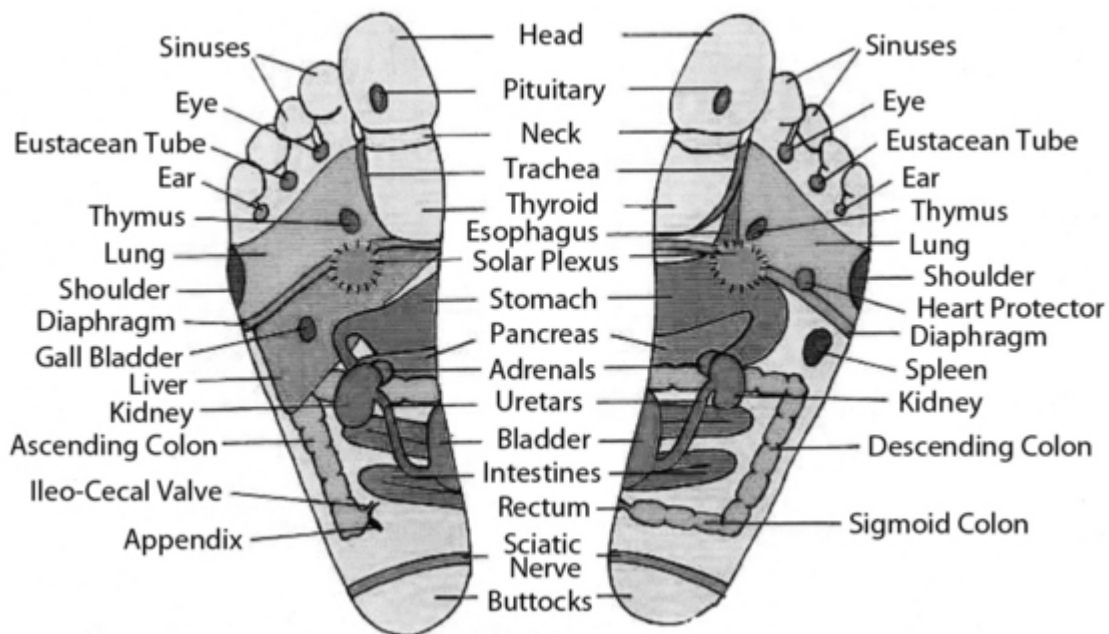
According to reflexology, various locations on the bottom of the foot correspond to specific organs and structures of the human body. We can stimulate these areas by using methods like massage, essential oil application, acupuncture, and dermal stimulation. Most often massage and essential oil application constitute the method of choice for Chinese foot therapy.

To get the maximum therapeutic effect, it is best to soak the feet in warm water prior to commencing therapy. Then you apply

essential oils and/or massage specific areas. You can refer to a Chinese Reflexology illustration, and stimulate the specific areas of the head, face, and eyes. In addition, you can palpate around your foot to see if you can find any tender areas. You can match up tender areas with the foot chart and determine which organ systems may be out of balance. Spend some time massaging the tender area each day.

Foot therapy should go as follows:

1. Soak feet in warm water.
2. Choose an essential oil(s).
3. Massage areas associated with specific organs if desired (pattern organs).
4. Massage tender areas.
5. Massage the area of the foot associated with the eye area.



Chinese Magnet Therapy

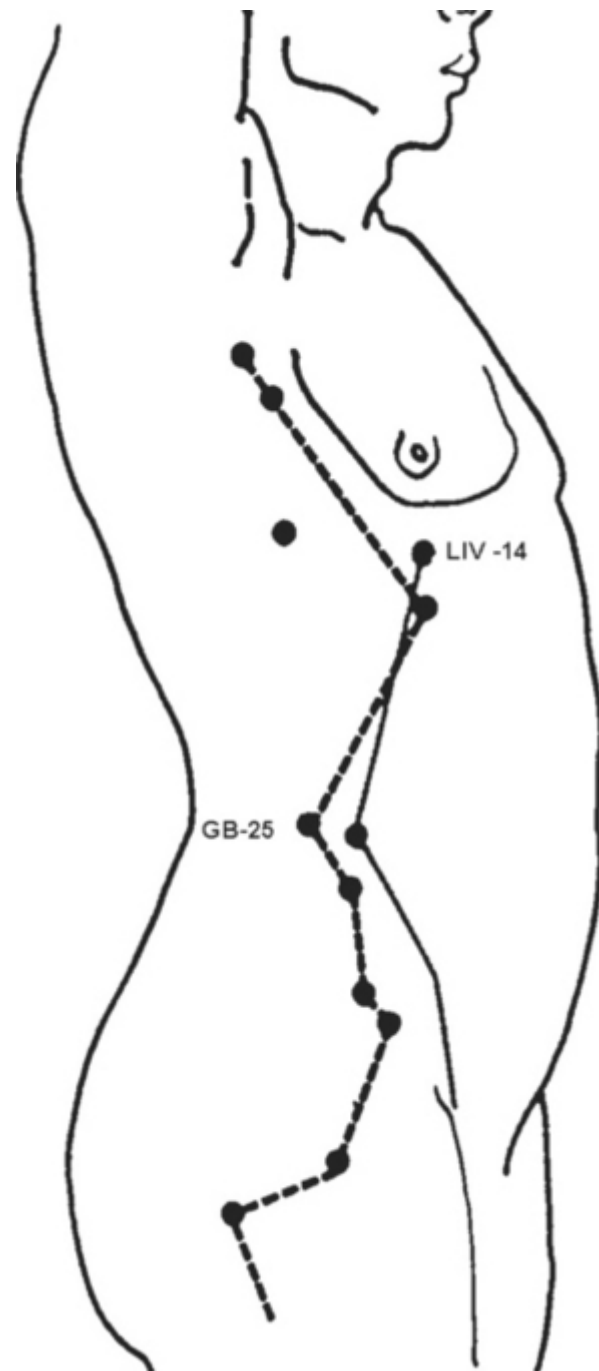
In this type of therapy we place magnets on specific acu-points. Various sizes and strengths of magnets can be used on different areas of the body in order to obtain a therapeutic result. Magnets

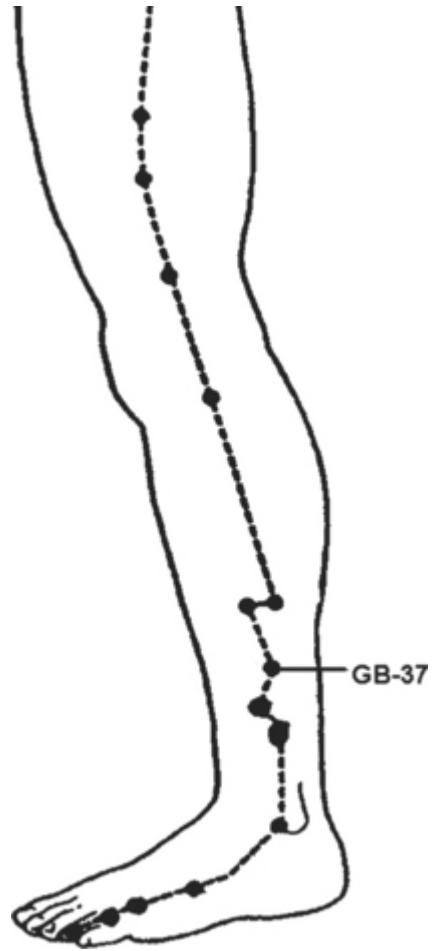
have been utilized in Chinese medicine for thousands of years and can be very effective.

In my experience about 50% of people respond favorably to magnet therapy, so the only way to find out is for each interested person to try it. Self-adhesive magnets can be strategically placed on specific points in order to heal a pattern of disease. You can leave the magnets on constantly without concern. Should you experience symptoms such as dizziness, nausea, a headache, or extreme fatigue, remove the magnets immediately. This means that your body might be too sensitive for these particular magnets and you should try a reduced-strength magnet.

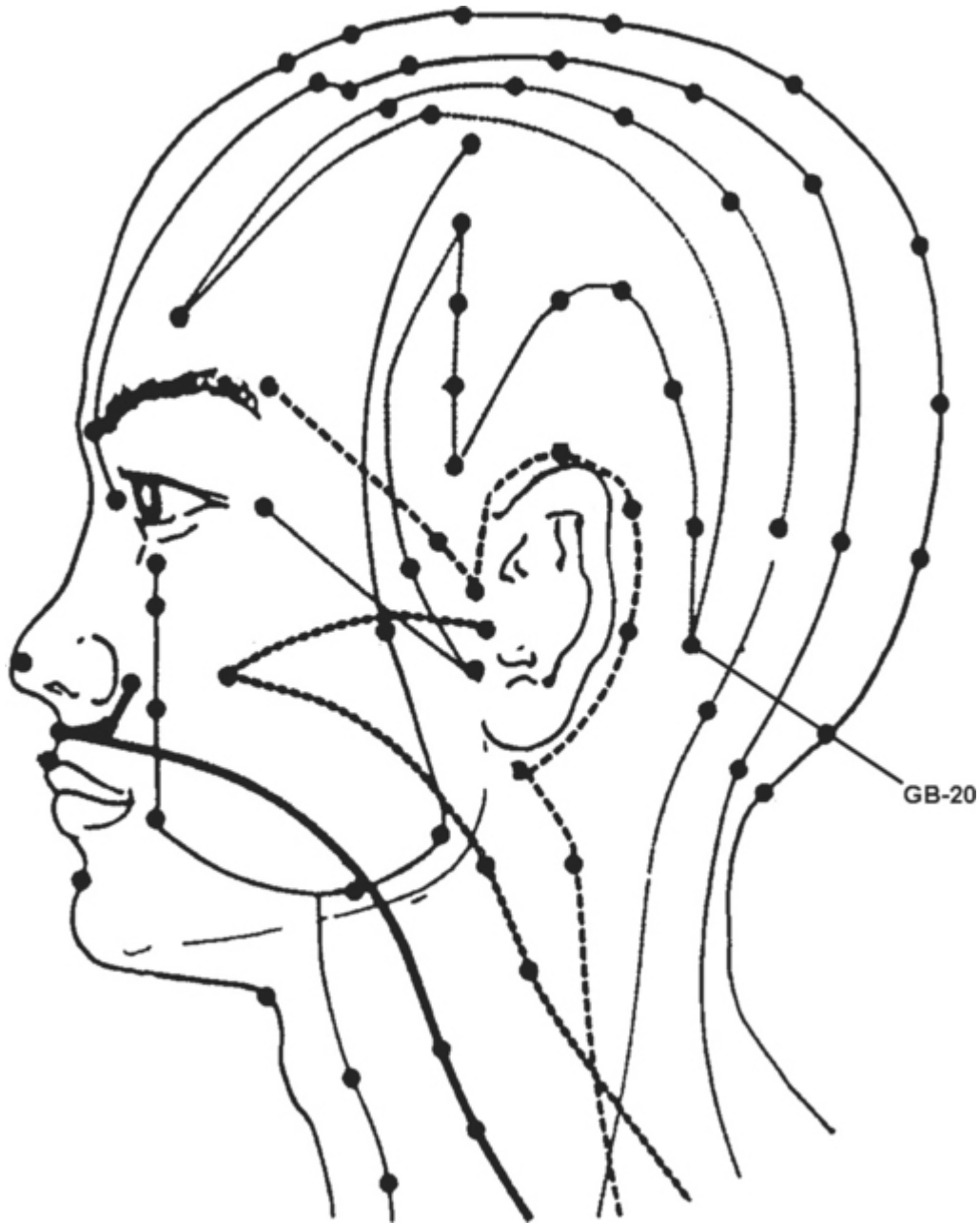
Some magnet companies have created magnet-masks to put over the eyes to improve the vision. I haven't had any direct experience with these, other than reading testimonials. I would think that it would work for about 50% of people who try it. Many of these companies will let you try their product(s) for a few months and if it doesn't work, you can send it back. That seems fair and worth more investigation.

Here is a helpful point prescription for degenerative vision loss, useful for magnets: GB-20, GB-37, GB-25, Lv-3, and Lv-14.









Chinese Acupressure and Self-Massage

Specific methods of Chinese acupressure and self-massage are explained in detail in [Chapter 5](#). Those exercises are better for chronic degenerative eye conditions.

Here I will cover a simple exercise that is taught in Chinese school systems to prevent myopia and other vision problems. These

exercises are designed to combat mild eye conditions that can result from excessive reading and computer activity. Such activity can leave the eyes feeling tired, itchy, sore, and bloodshot. The exercises can be done two to three times each day.

1. With the knuckles bent on both thumbs, massage the eyebrows and just below the eyes (on the orbital ridge); massage from the center outward thirty times.



2. Press and hold UB-1; this should be done with mild shaking or vibration. Press in on the inhale, and release on the exhale. Do this thirty times.



3. Massage Yuyao with the tips of the index and/or middle fingers. Press in on the inhale, and release on the exhale. Do this thirty times.



4. Massage Yintang with the tips of the index and/or middle fingers. Press in on the inhale, and release on the exhale. Do this thirty times.



5. Massage GB-20 with the thumbs. Press in on the inhale, and release on the exhale. Do this thirty times.



6. Massage LI-4 with the thumb and index fingers. Press in on the inhale, and release on the exhale. Do this thirty times.



Chinese “Q-Tip” Eye Massage

To relax tired eye muscles and to increase circulation, massage the eyes with a cotton swab. You can use any type of cotton swab to gently massage the area between the eyeball and the bony orbits of the eyes.

You can use long strokes across the upper and lower borders of the eyelids, or find tender areas and apply light pressure for ten seconds or so (using acupressure). Inhale when you apply pressure to the acu-points, and exhale when you release the pressure.

Please use caution not to use too much pressure. This method of massage should be fairly light, until a slight dull-ache is achieved. Massaging each eye for 2–3 minutes daily should be sufficient.

Swab massage is effective for all eye conditions that are non-inflammatory (ARMD, glaucoma, RP, DR, etc.), as it gets the blood flowing to the eyes and massages away tension in the muscles that control the movement of the eye.

This method is especially effective for acute eyestrain headaches. Apply essential oils (peppermint and lavender) or Tiger Balm on

the eyebrow and on the cheeks and do the eye massage for 5–10 minutes, each eye.



Chinese Qigong for Health

Methods for practicing Chinese Qigong are presented in detail in [Chapter 5](#). Qigong is the easiest and best way I know to maintain health. The overall idea is to combine simple exercises with mindful intention.

You can learn to incorporate Qigong into everything you do. This means learning to put your mind and heart into each activity and thought, and learning to “be in the moment.” This may sound “airy-fairy,” but we should not underestimate the power of conscious living.

Chinese Patent Formulas for Common Eye Conditions	
EYE CONDITION	CHINESE PATENT FORMULAS
Macular degeneration (dry)	Ming Mu Di Huang Wan Yi Qi Cong Ming Wan Zhu Jing Wan

Macular degeneration (wet)	Yunnan Paiyao Zhu Jing Wan Gui Pi Tang
Stargardt's	Ming Mu Di Huang Wan Zhu Jung Wan You Gui Wan Bu Zhong Yi Qi Wan Ming
Retinitis pigmentosa	Mu Di Huang Wan Shi Hu Ye Guang Wan You Gui Wan Yi Qi Cong Ming Wan Qi Ju Di Huang Wan
Usher syndrome	Tien Ma Gou Teng Yin Wen Dan Tang Zhu Jing Wan
Glaucoma (open-angle)	You Gui Wan Bu Zhong Yi Qi Tang
Optic nerve atrophy	Tien Ma Gou Teng Yin Zhu Jing Wan
Optic neuritis	Xue Fu Zhu Yu Tang Zhu Jing Wan
Retinal vein and artery occlusions	Ming Mu Di Huang Wan Qi Ju Di Huang Wan
Dry eyes	Xiao Yao Wan Qi Ju Di Huang Wan
Floaters	Ming Mu Di Huang Wan Qi Ju Di Huang Wan
Color blindness	Ming Mu Di Huang Wan Shi Hu Ye Guang Wan Tien Ma Gou Teng Yin
Photophobia (light sensitivity)	You Gui Wan Shi Hu Ye Guang Wan Bu Zhong Yi Qi Wan
Reduced night vision	Yunnan Paiyao Tien Ma Gou Teng Yin
Detached retina	

Diabetic retinopathy	You Gui Wan Er Chen Tang Wen Dan Tang
Myopia (nearsightedness) and Astigmatism	Ming Mu Di Huang Wan Tian Wang Bu Xin Dan
Presbyopia (farsightedness)	Ba Zhen Tang You Gui Wan Ying Qi Cong Ming Tang

Chinese Herbal Steam Bath for the Eyes

This is a highly effective therapy used throughout China for most kinds of eye conditions. Various Chinese herbs or single herbs are made into tea and used to steam the eyes. Herbs are combined, boiled, simmered with water, and then poured into a large bowl. The head may be covered as if doing menthol steaming for a head cold.

Various herbs are used for different eye conditions. Primarily herbs that “regulate the blood” are used. These kinds of herbs slightly thin the blood to increase *qi* and blood circulation to the eyes. I have never seen any problems with patients using this method who are on “blood thinners” or aspirin.

This method of steaming can be used for just about any eye condition. Changing the Chinese herbs based on the individual diagnostic pattern will alter the therapeutic action. Cooling herbs like ju hua/chrysanthemum and bo he/mint may be used for acute eye inflammation, dry eyes, bloodshot eyes, red and swollen eyes from allergies, etc. And blood-invigorating herbs can be used for degenerative conditions—common herbs used in these cases are hong hua/carthami, ji xue tang, tao ren/persica, yue ji hua/Chinese rose, chi shao/red peony, niu xi/achyranthis. These raw herbs can be purchased through most Chinese herb supply

companies or at Chinese herb shops. A list of a few mail-order companies that are high-quality is provided in [Appendix 3](#).

You can use these herbs singly or combine them in your eye steam bath. Either way seems to work just as well. Rinse the herbs before you cook them, then put 30 grams of herb(s) in 2 cups of already-boiling water. Turn down the heat and simmer for 15–20 minutes, and then remove the herbs to the vessel used for the steam bath. (Note: The total amount is 30 grams. If you combine two herbs, use 15 grams of each, three herbs 10 grams each, etc.) When the herbs cool down you can heat them up again and re-use for up to two days.

For acute conditions, steam the eyes 2–4 times per day until the symptoms abate. For chronic cases, you can do a daily eye steam bath for three months. If you have any reactions to the herbs (which is highly unlikely), seek immediate medical attention. This method is the one most widely used in China for retinal bleeding with pre-existing conditions like diabetic retinopathy and wet-type ARMD.



APPENDIX 1

Acupuncture Research on Selected Eye Diseases

Macular Degeneration

Ji Xiao-ping, "Senile Macular Degeneration," *International Journal of Clinical Acupuncture*, Vol. 7 (3), 1996.

"Electro-acupuncture treatment of diseases difficult to treat in Western medicine, including blindness due to macular degeneration, and retinitis pigmentosa," editorial, *Acupuncture and Electro-therapeutics Res. Int. J.*, Vol. 8, 1983: pp. 177–255.

Lundgren, Alston C., "Medical Acupuncture for Age-Related Macular Degeneration: A Preliminary Report," *American Academy of Medical Acupuncture*, Vol. 14 (2), 2004.

Retinal Disease

Wong, S., and Ching, R., "Acupuncture therapy in the treatment of 'incurable' retinal diseases," *American Journal of Acupuncture*, Vol. 6 (4), 1980: pp. 305–310.

Li Pin, Ching, "Observations on Acupuncture therapy of 403 cases of chronic central agiostastic retinopathy," *Nat. Symp. of Acup. & Moxib Anesth.*, Beijing, 1979: pp. 101–102.

Goutoranov, G., and Ivanova, R., "An attempt for treatment of degenerative retinitis pigmentosa by means of electro-acupuncture," *Abst. Czechosl. Congress on Acupuncture*, Brno, 1981: pp. 67–68.

Lu, J.G., and T.R. Friberg, "Idiopathic Central Serious Retinopathy in China: A report of 600 cases (624 eyes) treated by acupuncture," *Abst. Dept. of Ophthalmology of the First Affiliated Hospital, Zhe-Jiang Medical University, Hangzhou, China*, Aug. 18 (8), 1987: pp. 608–611.

Optic Nerve Atrophy

Wang Xuefeng, Jiang Xiuying, and Guan Xianqing, "Clinical Observation on Treatment of 110 Cases of Optic Atrophy with Acupuncture," *World Journal of Acupuncture-Moxibustion*, Vol. 4 (3), Sept. 1994.

Shengyaun, Hunag, and Zeng Yuchen, "Clinical Observation on the Treatment of Disorders of the Optic Nerve by Acupuncture," *Journal of Traditional Chinese Medicine*, Vol. 5 (3), 1985: pp. 178–190.

Wu, Zrsen, and Ye Xiaolu, "Optic Nerve Atrophy Treated with Acupuncture," *Journal of Traditional Chinese Medicine*, Vol. 9 (4), 1989: pp. 249–250.

Optic Neuritis

Yin Buo and Lu Shao Ping, "Two Cases of Optic Neuritis," *Journal of Chinese Medicine*, Number 41, Jan. 1993.

Glaucoma

Ralston, N.S., "Successful treatment and management of acute glaucoma using acupuncture," *American Journal of Acupuncture*, Vol. 5 (3), 1977: pp. 283–285.

Ji Xiao-Ping, "Glaucoma," *International Journal of Clinical Acupuncture*, Vol. 8 (2), 1997.

Wi Baofa, Yu Yi, and Zhuang Xiaoping, "A Primary Study on the Effects of Ear Needling to Reduce Intraocular Pressure in

Glaucoma Patients,” *International Journal of Clinical Acupuncture*, Vol. 1 (4), 1990.

Cataracts

Wang Fulan and Liu Lian, “Acupuncture Combined with Ear Points Pressing in the Treatment of Senile Cataract: A Clinical Observation of 204 Cases,” *International Journal of Clinical Acupuncture*, Vol. 2 (3), 1991.

Cui Yun-meng, “Senile Cataract Treated with Ear Needling: Observations on 62 Eyes,” *International Journal of Clinical Acupuncture*, Vol. 7 (3), 1996.

Other Eye Conditions

Sato, Y., “Acupuncture treatment of eye fundus diseases,” Fifth World Congress of Acupuncture, Tokyo, Japan, October 22-27, 1977.

Sun, Qing. “Acupuncture therapy of disorders of the eye in China,” *Impact of Science on Society*, Vol. 31 (2), 1981: pp. 200–212.

Blackwell, Richard and Macpherson, Hugh, “Bright Eyes: The Treatment of Eye Disease by Acupuncture,” *Journal of Chinese Medicine*, Number 39, May 1992.

St. Dabov, M.D. “Clinical Application of Acupuncture in Ophthalmology,” *Acupuncture and Electro-therapeutics Res., Int. J.*, Vol. 10, 1985: pp. 79–83.

Khoe, W.H., “Eye Disease treated with Acupuncture and Nutrition,” *American Journal of Acupuncture*, Vol. 4 (1), 1976.

APPENDIX 2

Chinese Herbal Formulas: Ingredients and Dosages

Formulas That Nourish Liver and Kidney *Yin* to Improve Vision

*TCM Pattern: Kidney and Liver Yin Deficiency with Yang rising,
causing vision problems*

Recommended Formula

MING MU DI HUANG WAN (REHMANIA BRIGHT EYE TEA)

Shu di huang (Rx Rehmania)	12 grams
Sheng di huang (Rx Rehmania [prep.])	9 grams
Shan yao (Rx Dioscorea)	6 grams
Ze xie (Rx Alisma)	6 grams
Shan zhu yu (Fr Cornii)	6 grams
Mu dan pi (Cx Moutan)	6 grams
Chai hu (Rx Bupleuri)	6 grams
Fu shen (Sc Poria)	6 grams
Dang gui (Rx Angelica sinensis)	6 grams
Wu wei zi (Fr Schizandra)	6 grams

TCM Pattern: Kidney and Liver Yin Deficiency, causing poor vision

Recommended Formula

QI JU DI HUANG WAN (LYCIL, CHRYSANTHEMUM, AND REHMANIA PILL)

Shu di huang (Rx Rehmania)	12 grams
Shan zhu yu (Fr Cornii)	9 grams
Shan yao (Rx Dioscorea)	9 grams
Ze xie (Rz Alisma)	9 grams
Mu dan pi (Cx Moutan)	9 grams
Fu ling (Sc Poria)	9 grams
Ju hua (Fl Chrysanthemum)	9 grams
Gou qi zi (Fr Lycii)	12 grams

TCM Pattern: Kidney and Liver Yin Deficiency with Damp Stagnation, causing poor vision

Recommended Formula

ZHU JING WAN (PRESERVE VISTAS PILL)

Tu si zi (Sm Cuscutae)	15 grams
Shu di huang (Rx Rehmania)	12 grams
Che quian zi (Sm Plantaginis)	9 grams

TCM Pattern: Liver Yin Deficiency with Yang Rising, causing poor vision

Recommended Formula

TIAN MA GOU TENG YIN (GASTRODIA AND UNCARIA DECOCTION)

Tian ma (Rx Gastrodia)	12 grams
Gou teng (Rm Uncaria)	15 grams
Shi jue ming (<i>Concha haliotidis</i>)	15 grams
Zhi zi (Fr Gardenia)	6 grams
Huang qin (Rx Scutellaria)	9 grams
Yi mu cao (Hb Leonuri)	12 grams
Chuan niu xi (Rx Cyathula)	12 grams
Du zhong (Rx Eucomia)	9 grams
Sang ji sheng (Rx Sangjisheng)	9 grams
Ye jiao teng (Cls Polygoni)	12 grams
Fu shen (Sc Poria)	9 grams

TCM Pattern: Liver and Kidney Yin Deficiency with Yang Rising, causing poor night vision

Recommended Formula

SHI HU YE GUANG WAN (DENDROBII PILL FOR NIGHT VISION)

Tian men dong (Tb Aspartagi)	9 grams
Ren shen (Rx Ginseng)	9 grams
Fu ling (Sc Poria)	12 grams
Mai men dong (Tb Ophiopogones)	9 grams
Tu si zi (Sm Cuscutae)	9 grams

Ju hua (Fl Chrysanthemum)	6 grams
Jue ming zi (Sm Cassia)	9 grams
Xing ren (Sm Prunii)	6 grams
Shan yao (Rx Dioscorea)	12 grams
Gou qi zi (Fr Lycii)	9 grams
Niu xi (Rx Achyranthis)	12 grams
Wu wei zi (Fr Schizandra)	9 grams
Bai ji li (Fr Trubulus)	9 grams
Shi hu (Hb Dendrobi)	12 grams
Rou cong rong (Hb Cistances)	6 grams
Chuan xiong (Rx Ligustici)	6 grams
Zhi gan gao (Rx Glycyrrhizae [honey fried])	6 grams
Zhi ke (Fr Citri)	6 grams
Qing xiang zi (Sm Celosia)	9 grams
Fang feng (Rx Ledebouriella)	6 grams
Huang lain (Rx Coptis)	6 grams
Shui niu jiao (Cn Bubalus)	3 grams
Ling yang jiao (Cn Antelopis)	6 grams

Formula That Moves the Blood to Improve Vision

TCM Pattern: Blood Stagnation in the head, causing vision problems

Recommended Formula

XUE FU ZHU YU WAN (DRIVE OUT STASIS IN THE MANSION OF BLOOD DECOCTION)

Tao ren (Sm Persica)	12 grams
Hong hua (Fl Carthamii)	9 grams
Dang gui (Rx <i>Angelica sinensis</i>)	9 grams
Chuan xiong (Rx Ligustici)	9 grams
Chi shao (Rx Peoniae)	9 grams
Chuan niu xi (Rx Cyathula)	12 grams
Chai hu (Rx Bupleurum)	9 grams
Jie geng (Rx Platycodii)	6 grams
Zhi ke (Fr Citri)	6 grams
Sheng di huang (Rx Rehmania-prep)	9 grams
Gan gao (Rx Glycyrrhizae)	6 grams
Dan shen (Rx Salvia)	6 grams

Formula That Regulates the Liver to Improve Vision

TCM Pattern: Liver Spleen Disharmony with Blood Deficiency, causing vision problems

Recommended Formula

XIAO YAO TANG (RAMBLING TEA)

Chai hu (Rx Bupleurum)	9 grams
Dang gui (Rx <i>Angelica sinensis</i>)	9 grams
Bai shao (Px Paeonia)	9 grams

Bai zhu (Rx <i>Attractylodis</i>)	9 grams
Fu ling (Sc <i>Poria</i>)	9 grams
Zhi gan cao (Rx <i>Glycyrrhizae</i> [honey fried])	6 grams

Formulas That Resolve Dampness to Improve Vision

TCM Pattern: Liver and Stomach Disharmony with Phlegm Accumulation and Gall Bladder Heat, causing vision problems

Recommended Formula

WEN DAN TANG (WARM THE GALL BLADDER DECOCTION)

Zhu ru (Cs <i>bambusae</i>)	6 grams
Zhi shi (Fr <i>Immaturus citri</i>)	6 grams
Ban xia (Rz <i>Pinellia</i>)	6 grams
Chen pi (Pc <i>Citri</i>)	9 grams
Fu ling (Sc <i>Poria</i>)	6 grams
Gan cao (Rx <i>Glycyrrhizae</i>)	3 grams
Sheng jiang (Rz <i>Zingiberis</i>)	6 grams

TCM Pattern: Phlegm and Damp Accumulation from Stomach and Spleen Deficiency, causing vision problems

Recommended Formula

ER CHEN TANG (TWO-CURED DECOCTION)

Ban xia (Rz <i>Pinellia</i>)	9 grams
-------------------------------	---------

Chen pi (Cp Citri)	6 grams
Fu ling (Sc Poria)	9 grams
Zhi gan cao (Rx Glycyrrhizae [honey fried])	6 grams
Sheng jiang (Rz Zingiberis)	6 grams
Dda zao (Fr Ziziphus)	3 pieces

Formulas That Strengthen the Qi to Improve Vision

TCM Pattern: Spleen and Stomach Qi Deficiency with Central Qi Sinking and/or Spleen is not keeping the blood in the vessels

Recommended Formula

BU ZHONG YI QI TANG (CENTRAL QI TEA)

Huang qi (Rx Astragalus)	15 grams
Ren shen (Rx Ginseng)	12 grams
Bai zhu (Rx Attractylodis)	12 grams
Zhi gan cao (Rx Glycyrrhizae [honey fried])	6 grams
Dang gui (Rx <i>Angelica sinensis</i>)	9 grams
Chen pi (Pc Citri)	9 grams
Sheng ma (Rz Cimicifuga)	6 grams
Chai hu (Rx Bupleurum)	9 grams

TCM Pattern: Central Qi Deficiency, causing hearing and vision loss

Recommended Formula

YING QI CONG MING TANG (AUGMENT QI AND INCREASE ACUITY DECOCTION)

Huang qi (Rx Astragalus)	12 grams
Ren shen (RX Ginseng)	9 grams
Gan cao (Rx Glycyrrhizae)	6 grams
Sheng ma (Rz Cimicifuga)	9 grams
Ge gen (Rx Puerariaea)	9 grams
Man jing zi (Fr Viticus)	9 grams
Bai shao (Rx Peoniae)	9 grams
Huang bai (Rx Phellodendrum)	6 grams

TCM Pattern: Heart Blood and Yin Deficiency with Spleen Qi Deficiency, causing eye problems

Recommended Formula

GUI PI TANG (RESTORE THE SPLEEN DECOCTION)

Ren shen (Rx Ginseng)	9 grams
Huang qi (Rx Astragalus)	12 grams
Bai zhi (Rx Attractylodis)	12 grams
Fu ling (Sc Poria)	9 grams
Suan zao ren (Sm Ziziphus)	12 grams
Long yan rou (Als Euphoria)	12 grams
Mu xiang (Rx Aucklandia)	6 grams
Zhi gan cao (Rx Glycyrrhizae [honey fried])	6 grams
Dang gui (Rx <i>Angelica sinensis</i>)	9 grams

Zhi yuan zhi (Rx Polygala [honey fried]) 6 grams

TCM Pattern: Spleen Qi and Blood Deficiency, causing poor vision

Recommended Formula

BA ZHEN TANG (EIGHT TREASURE DECOCTION)

Ren shen (Rx Ginseng)	6 grams
Bai zhu (Rx Attractylodis)	9 grams
Fu ling (Sc Poria)	12 grams
Zhi gan cao (Rx Glycyrrhizae [honey fried])	3 grams
Shu di huang (Rx Rehmania)	15 grams
Bai shao ((Rx Paeoniae)	12 grams
Dang gui (Rx <i>Angelica sinensis</i>)	12 grams
Chuna xiong (RX Ligiustici)	6 grams

Formula That Strengthens the *Yang* to Improve Vision

TCM Pattern: Kidney Yang and Essence Deficiency, causing vision loss

Recommended Formula

YOU GUI WAN (RESTORE THE RIGHT PILL)

Fu zi (Rx Aconite)	12 grams
Rou gui (Cx Cinnamon)	12 grams

Lu jiao jiao (Cornu cervi)	12 grams
Shi di huang (Rx Rehmania)	12 grams
Shan zhu yu (Fr Cornii)	9 grams
Shan yao (Rx Dioscorea)	12 grams
Gou qi zi (Fr Lycii)	12 grams
Tu si zi (Sm Cuscutae)	12 grams
Du zhong (Cx Eucomia)	12 grams
Dang gui (Rx <i>Angelica sinensis</i>)	9 grams

APPENDIX 3

Resources

Acupuncture

ONLINE INFORMATION:

www.acupuncture.com

www.tcmdirectory.com

Micro Acupuncture, Acupuncture Vision Treatments, and Chinese Medicine for Vision Loss

Acupuncture Health Associates

(908) 928-0060

www.acupuncturehealth.net

Chinese Herbs

The herbs I recommend may only be available through your acupuncturist or medical practitioner. I recommend you ask your doctor about these quality products.

RAW CHINESE HERBS (READY MADE)

Kamwo Herb and Tea:

(212) 966-6370

CHINESE HERBAL TINCTURES

Golden Lotus Herbs
(877) 707-0988

Crane Herbs
(800) 227-4118

Holistic Chinese Herbs
www.holisticchineseherbs.com

PILLS/CAPSULES

American Healing Technologies: (888) 236-3164

Seven Forests: (503) 233-4907

Eye Nutrition and Supplements

Vision Works
(888) 735-8475
www.visionworksusa.com

Essential Oils

Young Living Essential Oils
www.youngliving.org

Micro Current Stimulation

Micro Current Technologies
www.microstim.com

Acupuncture Health Associates
(908) 928-0060 ordering
www.acupuncturehealth.net

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bensky, D., and R. Barolet. *Formulas and Strategies*. Seattle, WA: Eastland Press, 1990.
- Bensky, D., and A. Gamble. *Materia Medica*. Seattle, WA: Eastland Press, 1986.
- Bensky, Dan, and John O'Conner. *Acupuncture: A Comprehensive Text*. Seattle, WA: Eastland Press, 1981.
- Ehling, Dagmar, and Steve Swort. *The Chinese Herbalist Handbook*. Santa Fe, NM: In Word Press, 1996.
- Essential Oils Desk Reference*, 3rd ed., Essential Science Publishing, 2004.
- Grossman, Marc, and Michael Edson. *Natural Eye Care: A Comprehensive Manual for Practitioners of Oriental Medicine*. New Paltz, NY: Vision Works, Inc. Publishing, 2002.
- Halevi, Shmuel. "Acupuncture and Snail-Shell Moxibustion in the Treatment of Eye Diseases." *Journal of Chinese Medicine*, Number 46, Sept. 1994.
- Jarrett, Lonny S. *Nourishing Destiny*. Stockbridge, MA: Spirit Path Press, 1998.
- Kendall, Donald E. *The Dao of Chinese Medicine: Understanding an Ancient Healing Art*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Masakazu, Ikeda. *The Practice of Japanese Acupuncture and Moxibustion: Classic Principles in Action*. Seattle, WA: Eastland Press, 1996.
- Ni, Maoshing. *The Yellow Emperor's Classic of Medicine*. Boston, MA: Shambhala, 1995.
- Pitchford, Paul. *Healing with Whole Foods: Oriental Traditions and Modern Nutrition*. Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books, 1993.

- Qingnan, Zeng. *Ancient and Mysterious Chinese Qigong*. Beijing, China: Foreign Languages Press, 1991.
- Scott, Julian. *Acupuncture for the Eyes*. Seattle, WA: Eastland Press, 2005.
- Sionneau, P., and L. Gang. *The Treatment of Disease in TCM, Volume 2: Diseases of the Eyes, Ears, Nose, and Throat*. Boulder, CO: Blue Poppy Press, 1996.
- Thomas, Clayton L. *Taber's Cyclopedic Medical Dictionary* (Edition 17). Philadelphia, PA: F.A. Davis Company, 1993.
- Xiangcai, X. *The Encyclopedia of Practical Traditional Chinese Medicine: Ophthalmology*. Beijing, China, 1990.
- Xiangcai, X. *The Encyclopedia of Practical Traditional Chinese Medicine: Medical Qigong*. Beijing, China, 1990.
- Yanfu, Zuo. *Ophthalmology of Traditional Chinese Medicine*. Shanghai, China: Publishing House of Shanghai University of Traditional Chinese Medicine, 2002.

Additional Sources

Much of the information discussed in the book was originally presented to me by my teachers at various hospitals, courses, and conferences. I have collaborated and refined this information over the years in my teachings and clinical practice. The following provided me with extensive information, ideas, and practical experience that aided me in writing this book:

- WISH-Taiji Five Element Qigong, Guangzhou, China: Notes, 2000. Per Otte, *Micro Acupuncture: Notes*, Hot Springs Village, AR, 2001.
- Nan Lu, *American Healing Technologies: Notes*, New York, NY, 2004.
- Weizhao Wu, *Wu's Eye Qigong: Notes*, Edison, NJ, 2005. Zhejiang College of Traditional Chinese Medicine, Hangzhou,

China, 1998.

Greg Bantik, Pacific College of Oriental Medicine: Notes, San Diego, CA, 1995.

J. Min Fan, Pacific College of Oriental Medicine: Notes, San Diego, CA, 1996.

Bob Flaws, Blue Poppy Seminars: Notes, Boulder, CO, 2003.
Sibhuti Dharmananda, Institute for Traditional Medicine: Notes, Portland, OR: 2003.

Joel Rossen, Micro Stim Technologies: Notes, South Florida, 2005.

Acupuncture Health Associates, Clinical Notes from patient interactions, 1997–2006.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

ANDY ROSENFARB BRINGS OVER twelve years' experience in acupuncture practice, including methods adapted from the US, Europe, and Asia, to his role as Clinical Director of Acupuncture Health Associates in both Westfield and Watchung, New Jersey. In addition to developing specific protocols of essential oil acupuncture for the treatment of various eye conditions, he has adapted traditional methods for eye care, including moxibustion, tuina (massage), Micro Current Stimulation, Chinese herbs, and eye Qigong exercises. Nationally board-certified and licensed in several states, he studied acupuncture and Chinese Medicine at Pacific College of Oriental Medicine in San Diego, California. He earned his master's degree in Traditional Oriental Medicine and continued his studies at Zhejiang College of Traditional Medicine in Hangzhou, China.