

**Case Report**  
**2020-2021 Course**  
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**Acupuncture Used To Treat Biceps Tendinitis In a Border Collie**

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## **1. ABSTRACT**

Acupuncture therapy was used to help to improve pain level and chronic lameness on both front limbs in an older dog. Initially, the dog was treated with nonsteroidal antiinflammatory drugs, injections of the shoulder joint and he also underwent surgery but the results were not satisfactory enough. There were also many rest periods with only leash walks. For now we completed two acupuncture treatments of one week interval and the results are already satisfactory enough for the owner. The dog is still lame, but the lameness is not so evident and the dog is moving much easier than before. We decided to continue with the acupuncture treatments in one week intervals and later we can probably elongate them. The recommendation for the owner is to continue with the acupuncture treatments not to have the symptoms back and to maintain better quality of life of the dog.

## **2. HISTORY**

Kimi, a 12 years old castrated male, border collie, was presented due to intermittent lameness both front limbs. The dog was initially lame on right front leg since 2015. The western diagnosis was biceps tendinitis. The initial x-rays of the shoulder joint were without any pathologies. The diagnosis was made mainly based on the clinical examination and painful response to passive movements of the shoulder joint. First the dog was given a short course of nonsteroidal antiinflammatory drugs and rest period with only short walks on a leash. This helped only for the period of taking the medication. Next the dog underwent corticosteroid injection treatment of the right shoulder joint. This therapy helped him exactly for one month. The dog was completely sound and continued with short leash walks. After one month he started to lame again. As the last option the dog underwent surgery, resection of the biceps tendon which did not help at all. The dog was still lame after the surgery even with only short leash walks.

## **3. CLINICAL SIGNS, DIAGNOSTICS AND DIAGNOSIS - CONVENTIONAL**

Since the surgery the dog is still lame on the right front leg. The lameness is better with rest and worse with longer walks. Due to this problem, the dog gained weight and after a few months he started to lame on the left front leg, too. Today the dog is intermittently lame on both front legs. The dog reacts painfully on the passive movement of both shoulder joints. The owner did not want to take new x-rays or make any other diagnosis than clinical examination because he already spent a lot of money to help the dog with almost no improvement. The presumptive diagnosis is arthropathy of the shoulder joint and/or the biceps tendinitis of both front limbs.

## **4. CLINICAL SIGNS AND DIAGNOSIS - TCM**

Kimi lives with his owner since his 2 months of age. Kimi is a wood personality dog. He is very confident, impulsive, he worries of himself and doesn't react to the touch of any strange person very well. He is also not very tolerable to the acupuncture needles. The dog is a little bit obese since he does not go on long walks with his owner anymore and he is also castrated. He is more slow than he used to be, sometimes he just lays in his bed and doesn't want to wake up. Sometimes he has difficulties to wake up especially from the slippery floor. He is now on the dietary dry food. His appetite is normal. He drinks normal amount of water. His skin is a little bit dry with some dandruff and he has grey hairs in his face. He has some tartar around his teeth. He has mild cataract and worsened vision. He does not hear as good as he used to but he is not completely deaf. His smell is

still very good. He has normal defecation and urination. Sometimes he wakes up at night and disturbs the owner. Tongue is dry, pulse is fine. He has no preference of hot or cold environment and he also has no preference of hard or soft surface.

Kimi was sensitive to palpation and passive manipulation of his shoulder joints. He was also sore on palpation over lumbosacral area.

At the initial presentation Kimi was sensitive over BL 18 (Liver Back Shu point), BL 47 (Second Bladder liner of Liver) and LIV 14 (Liver Mu point). He was also sensitive over SI 9, LU 5 and PC 3.

There was made a diagnosis of Liver Qi and Blood Deficiency secondary to Kidney Qi Deficiency (Water not nourishing Wood).

The diagnosis of underlying Kidney Qi Deficiency was made upon clinical signs – reduced hearing, grey hairs, bad quality teeth, chronic tiredness, no desire to move, lumbosacral soreness.

The diagnosis of Liver Qi and Blood Deficiency was made upon clinical signs and clinical examination – sensitivity over Liver Back Shu and Mu point, wakes up at night, worsened vision, difficulties of waking up, dry skin, gains weight, lethargy, sleepiness, Liver personality.

Shoulder pain can be a result of Qi and Blood Stagnation of the shoulder and chest region.

## 5. WESTERN TREATMENT

Kimi currently doesn't receive any western medication. He only eats some chondroprotective supplements once daily. Last year he received Librela injection two times and the owner says that there was always a big improvement which lasted moreless almost for two months. He only goes for short walks once or twice daily but he has an unlimited movement on the garden.

## 6. TCM (EASTERN) TREATMENT

Our treatment strategy was to move Qi and Blood, eliminate stagnation and stop pain.

As Kimi is an older dog with chronic problems and more than one pattern, it was clear that we will need more acupuncture sessions to address all the problems and not overload the dog.

We used a dry needle technique with Seirin B-Type 0,20 x 15 mm needles for every treatment. The needles stayed in place for approximately 5 minutes or until they spontaneously fell off.

We used a laser pen for 30 seconds for every point that the dog did not tolerate the application of the needles.

May 2, 2022: first acupuncture treatment

For the first treatment we started with only a few points to see how Kimi will react and how he will be feeling after his first acupuncture session.

KI 3 Tai Xi	Kidney Source point. Tonifies the Kidneys and benefits the Kidney fiction of dominating Water metabolism. Strenghtens caudal back.	In the depression cranial to tuber calcanei, at approximately the midpoint of a line drawn from the tip of the medial malleolus to the point of insertion of the
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		common calcaneal tendon.
LIV 3 Tai Chong	Liver Source point. Promotes flow of Liver Qi. Moves Liver Qi and Blood. Calms Mind.	In the depression on the dorsum of the rear foot, between the 2nd and 3rd metatarsal bones, just proximal to their associated metatarsophalangeal joints.
SI 9 Qiang Feng	Shoulder problems, alleviates pain, benefits the shoulder and forelimb.	In the large depression along the caudal border of the deltoid m. and between the long and lateral heads of the triceps brachii m.
LU 5 Chi Ze	Shoulder pain, local point.	In the depression on the transverse capital crease, just lateral to the tendon of the biceps brachii m. (elbow flexed).
PC 3 Qu Ze	Local point, moves Blood, calms the Mind.	In the depression on the transverse capital crease, medial to the tendon of the biceps brachii (elbow flexed).

KI 3 was used to tonify Kidney and strengthen caudal back. LIV 3 was used to move Liver Qi. SI 9, LU 5 and PC 3 were used as local shoulder points.

It was quite challenging to find the points LU 5 and PC 3 on the right front legs as the biceps tendon was resected during the previous surgery. Kimi tolerated the application of the needles to the points KI 3 and LIV 3 and SI 9 quite well but he was not very tolerable to the points LU 5 and PC 3 so we used the laser instead of the needles.

We did not want to use too many needles and points for the first session, so we decided to balance Kd and Liv meridian and add some local points which were sensitive for palpation.

Due to the owners observations, Kimi was quite tired after this first acupuncture session for the first two days. But from the third day after the treatment he looked much happier, he was not so tired, he was getting up much easier and the lameness was not so evident.

May 9, 2022: second acupuncture treatment

One week later Kimi was still sensitive over Liver Shu and Mu points, but much less than during the first session. He was not so sensitive over the local shoulder points. He was still waking up at night and he was still sensitive over BL 47.

We decided to use different points than the last time to see if we will be more successful this time. We also tried to focus more on Kimis behaviour problem, which was waking up at night and disturbing the owner. And we also tried to balance Yin and Yang and to use the points of the front as well as the hind limbs.

GB 34 Yang Ling Quan	Influential point for Sinews. Benefits the Liver function of patency of flow of Qi, strengthens the caudal back and extremities.	In the depression cranial and distal to the head of the fibula.
PC 6 Nei Guan	Master Point for the Chest and Cranial Abdomen. Calms Heart and Shen, regulates Qi, suppresses pain.	In the depression 2 cun proximal to the transverse crease of the carpus, between the tendons of the flexor digitorum

		superficialis and flexor carpi radialis.
BL 60 Kun Lun	Relaxes tendons, strenghtens caudal back, alleviates pain throughout the body.	In the depression cranial to tuber calcanei, at approximately the midpoint of a line drawn from the tip of the lateral malleolus to the point of insertion of the common calcaneal tendon.
TH 6 Zhi Gou	Shoulder pain, moves Liver Qi.	On the lateral side of the thoracic limb, 4 cun proximal to the carpus, on a line connecting TH 4 and the olecranon.
ST 36 Zu San Li	Build Qi to build Blood, general Qi builder. Calms the mind.	In the depression just lateral to the distal aspect of the cranial border of the tibial tuberosity.

GB 34 was used to bendit Liver Qi flow, strenghten caudal back and help sinews. PC 6 was used to calm Shen, help with night wake ups, to help suppress pain. BL 60 was used to help suppress pain. TH 6 was used to help with shoulder pain, help to move Liver Qi. ST 36 was used as general Qi builder.

The owner noticed similar behaviour like after the first session. Kimi was quite tired for the first two days and than he looked much happier and he started to move more easily. He also did not wake up so often at night.

The owner was already very satisfied with the results. The dog looks happier, moves easier, he gets up with less effort and the owner can sleep much better at night. We advised the owner to continue with the weekly treatments for the first month not to have the symptoms back and if we will be successful enough, we can than lower the amount of the treatments. There was still quite a lot of problems to work on and the front limb lameness did not disappear totally.

## 7. DISCUSSION

Kimi is a 12yo border collie, castrated male dog. His initial problem started in 2015. He was diagnosed with biceps tendinitis. He was treated with nonsteroidal antiinflammatory drugs, rest and only leash walks, corticosteroid injection of the right shoulder joint and finally he underwent surgery – resection of the biceps tendon because conservative treatment only helped for a short period of time. Unfortunately the surgery was not helpful, too. The owner was quite frustrated because he already spent a lot of time and money for all the treatments and the dog was still the same. The dog gradually gained weight because his movement was restricted and they could only do leash walks.

Kimi was presented to tcm - acupuncture diagnosis and treatment in 2022 which is 7 years after his inical problems developed. He is already an older dog and he has already much more problems. For example obesity, bad quality teeth, deafness, painful lower back, difficulties to get up and he also wakes up at night and disturbs the owner. The owners biggest complaint was the dogs lameness, sore back, difficulties to get up and waking up at night.

Kimi was diagnosed with Liver Qi and Blood deficiency due to Kidney Qi deficiency due to his clinical signs and sensitive Back Shu and Mu points. We started with the treatment of these problems and we just selected a few points to see how the dog will react and not to do too much in the beginning.

At the first acupuncture treatments we chose points to tonify Kidney (KI 3), Liver (LIV 3), to bring more Qi and we also added some local shoulder points (SI 9, LU 5, PC 3). We used laser to stimulate local shoulder points because they were quite sore and sensitive to palpation and we did not want to cause more pain. After this first session the dog was more tired for the first two days, but after that he was much happier, he was getting up much easier and the lameness was not so evident.

During the next session we decided to use different points and different strategy. We focused more on Kimis behaviour problem, which was waking up at night. We also tried to to balance Yin and Yang and to use the points of the front as well as the hind limbs. We chose BL 34 as an influential point for sinews, to support the biceps tendon, PC 6 to calm Heart and Shen, BL 60 to alleviate pain in general, TH 6 to alleviate shoulder pain and move Qi and ST 36 to move Qi and Blood and also calm the mind. After this second acupuncture treatment the owner noticed similar behaviour of the dog like after the first treatment. The dog was more tired for the first two days, but than he started to move more easily and looked happier and he also did not wake up so often at night.

The owner was already very satisfied with the results after the first treatment but we strongly recommended to continue with the treatments not to have the symptoms back. We did not solve all the problems and the dog was still lame, but he was definitely feeling much better. The reason is definitely that the problem was already very chronic and the patient was an older dog with probably some other underlying patterns that will probably show up during the next treatments.

The effects of acupuncture cannot be explained by a single mechanism. What starts as a local event spreads by way of the nervous system to affect most of the body. Ultimately, the nervous system effects create changes in the endocrine system and the immune system. All the acupuncture points are located along the nervous system. When a needle is placed in an acupuncture point, there is local tissue trauma and whole cascade of reactions and release of different substances. As such, acupuncture can be thought of as a form of counterirritation where the process set up a local reaction that ultimately results in increased blood flow to the area, increased local immune responsiveness, and relaxation of the muscles and tissues in the area.

## **8. REFERENCES**

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