A Case Study of Simultaneous Recovery from Multiple Physical Symptoms with Medical Qigong Therapy

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ABSTRACT

Background: It is well known that qigong practice is beneficial to human health, but it is less known, even in China, that qigong may also be an effective therapy to treat various diseases. This report documents the story of a 58-year-old Caucasian male patient with a series of chronic conditions, including high prostate-specific antigen (PSA) mark (but not a confirmed cancer), atrial septal defect, asthma, allergies, multiple injuries by an automobile accident, high blood pressure, and edema in legs. Can medical qigong help such a patient to cure multiple symptoms simultaneously?

Method: The intensive qigong workshop involved the training and practice of gathering qi, magnifying qi energy and using it for self-healing with visualization and guided imaginary; plus supervised energetic fasting. The patient practiced qigong 4-plus hours per day during intensive training, and approximately 1 to 2 hours daily thereafter. About 10 sessions of external qi healing were performed by a qigong master for his pain and systematic adjustment.

Settings/Location: The intensive medical qigong workshop took place in the World Institute for Self-Healing, Inc. (WISH) office at Middlesex, NJ; and the patient practiced qigong at home for the rest of time.

Results: After workshop and qigong therapy, the patient discontinued all medications (8 in total) and lost 35 pounds; his blood pressure dropped from 220/110 with medication to 120/75 without medication (in 2 weeks); pulse rate dropped from 88 beats per minute resting to 68 beats per minute in the mornings and 55 bpm in the evening; the edema in his legs went away; symptoms of asthma or allergies disappeared; PSA level dropped from 11 to 4 (normal), all without any medications.

Conclusion: This kind of simultaneous recovery from multiple “incurable” conditions and other documented successes cannot be explained by any known medical theories, and call for formal clinical trials to closely examine the qigong self-healing therapy.

INTRODUCTION

Qigong (pronounced “chi kung”) is a general term for a large variety of traditional Chinese energy exercises and therapies. With more than 3000 years of recorded history, there have been thousand different qigong forms in China. Most qigong forms were not designed for treating or curing disease, but for the purpose of maintaining health or spiritual cultivation (as religious qigong does). Although most qigong may bring health benefits to some degree, only medical qigong emphasizes the vital energy (qi) to help diagnose and take control of or eliminate illness or diseases, as well as prevent their onset. Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) postulates the existence of a subtle energy (qi) cir-

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culating throughout the body, and when qi is strengthened or balanced, it can improve health and ward off or slow the progress of disease. All TCM therapies—herbs, acupuncture, massage, cupping, diet and qigong—are based on this philosophy and perspective on human health. Today, millions of people in China and around the world practice qigong and use qigong to deal with various diseases ranging from hypertension to cancer (see a review by Sancier, 1996).

It is generally known that qigong practice is beneficial to human health and can prevent disease, however, it is less known, even in China, that qigong may also be an effective therapy to treat various diseases. Because all qigong are not the same, and it is an unfortunate fact that there are more forms of “fake” qigong without any real tradition than the genuine traditional qigong in the market for historical reasons. Therefore, it is necessary for us to describe the form of qigong involved in this case. Taiji Five-Element Qigong is one of the 14 forms of medical qigong recommended by the Chinese government in 1998. Mr. Binhu He, the lineage holder of a secret Daoism qigong tradition, created this self-healing system in response to the fact that modern medicine failed to provide a cure for many chronic diseases, and that many drugs used to treat these diseases had negative long-term side-effects. This self-healing system includes two major forms of static meditation (Jin Gong—meditation without movement) and one standing form (Zhan Zhuang Gong or magnification—starting with a standing position, followed by possible spontaneous movements in response to the motivated qi flow). The core of the classic meditation in this qigong is a still form of meditation, involving guided imaginary to absorb energy from moon, sun, and five planets, cleansing the body from outside to inside and from head to feet with imaginary water, and an empty mind state or conversation with the sick locations. The entire classic meditation was recorded on an audio CD with instruction and music, which takes 60 minutes to complete, and students can practice daily as many times as they choose.

In 1994, the Chinese Society of Qigong Science appointed Mr. He as the director of the Qigong Anti-Cancer Research Center after discovering that patients with late-stage cancer had recovered completely by practicing this form of medical qigong alone without any other therapy. Mr. He then started formal clinical exploration of qigong anticancer therapy in the Qigong Anti-Cancer Research Center. Many patients with advanced cancer (many of whom were turned away by hospitals because of the lack of exist- ent medical treatment at such a late stage) and other chronic diseases participated in Mr. He’s intensive medical qigong training. Most of these patients achieved significant short-term improvement in their health and/or a recovery from cancer through qigong practice alone. Furthermore, during the last 5 to 9 years, a large proportion of these patients have become cancer-free (Liao, 1997; Shen 1997). In an official assessment meeting held in 1996 by the Chinese govern-
 Medical qigong intervention

After the report of elevated PSA level in July 2000, the patient started to worry about his vulnerability to cancer because his family had a serious history of cancer. After he had heard about the anticancer qigong therapy from a colleague, he attended a 2-day workshop sponsored by the World Institute for Self-Healing, Inc. (WISH) in the fall of 2000. The workshop involved the training and practice of gathering qi, magnifying the energy and using it for self-healing with visualization and guided imaginary. After the workshop, the PSA test was repeated and the PSA level dropped from 11 to 7. Six months later, in anticipation of repeating the PSA test, the patient had individual sessions with the qigong healer for external qi adjustment, the process by which, it is said that, qigong healer directed his qi energy to help others break qi blockages to induce the sick qi out of body so as to relieve pain, or balance the qi flow in the body and get rid of diseases. The PSA level dropped to 5.6 on the repeated test after these individual sessions. During these sessions, the patient was asked about his general health, and he described the multiple conditions listed above. The qigong healer suggested the patient to attend the coming 20-day intensive qigong anticancer seminar.

The intensive qigong anticancer seminar involved the intensive practice of the Five-Element Qigong (4-plus hours per day), collective qi adjustment by the qigong healer, and lectures on the significance of active participation in the healing process, with the addition of an ancient technique called Bigu, that means, literally, stop eating or energetic fasting. During this time, the practitioner was allowed to eat a maximum of 10 raw peanuts or 10 Chinese dates supplemented by mineral water for electrolytes per day. The Bigu process began after 7 days of the seminar with intensive qigong training and continued for 36 days. Food was reintroduced over the next 36 days: the first 12 days was a liquid diet, the second 12 days was a semiliquid diet, and the last 12 days was reduced food intake (75% of normal diet).

The qigong healer suggested that the patient discontinue all of his medications during Bigu (energetic fasting) to maximize the therapeutic effect. At that time, the patient was taking three cardiovascular medicines (verapamil, Lanoxin, and Coumadin [Bristol-Myers Squibb, Plainsboro, NJ]), four medicines for allergies and asthma (Claritin [Schering-Plough HealthCare Products, Inc., Berkeley Heights, NJ], Proventil [AmeriSource Health Service Corp., Columbus, OH], Serevent [Glaxo-SmithKline, Research Triangle Park, NC], and Aerobid [Forest Laboratories, St. Louis, MO]), and one medicine for pain associated with the accident (Vioxx, Merck & Co., Whitehouse Station, NJ). He discontinued all medications, while carefully monitoring his pulse rate and blood pressure during the fast.

The patient continued his qigong practice on a daily basis (about 1 to 2 hours per day) after the intensive qigong seminar, and actively participated in promoting qigong as a self-healing method to fight against chronic conditions.

The outcome

During the intensive qigong seminar, the patient lost 35 pounds. His blood pressure dropped from 220/110 with medication to 120/75 during the seminar without any medication (this occurred within 2 weeks). His pulse rate dropped from 88 beats per minute resting to 68 beats per minute in the mornings and 55 bpm in the evening after his regular work (seeing patients) continuing throughout the evening. The edema in his legs went away.

His allergy and asthma remitted even though the workshop was in the spring—the worst time of the year for an allergy patient. Finally, from the perspective of the cancer progress, the PSA level dropped to just above 4.0, which is a normal level (the standard error for PSA test is approximately 0.2, and any change of 0.5 is considered significant).

In addition, the pain associated with the automobile accident decreased greatly and there was improvement in the vertigo. There was intermittent improvement of the tinnitus.

The patient consulted with four of his physicians who had been following these medical problems. They were all amazed and pleased with the outcome and agreed that he did not need to continue taking the medications although cautioning that he should monitor his status because the problems might return. Three of them checked his lungs and noted that they were clear.

After the death of the patient’s mother, his qigong practice was not as disciplined and his PSA level was tested at 12 again. After an individual session with the qigong healer (external qi healing) and a 6-day intensive workshop accompanied by Bigu, his PSA level dropped to 9.9. Two months later with continuous qigong practice, another test showed the PSA level had dropped to 4 (within normal range, which was the latest test result). His urologist could not explain this result in terms of traditional medicine.

DISCUSSION

Although the patient’s original motive for participating in the intensive qigong practice was to lower his elevated PSA level, the outcome of the intensive qigong training was really much better than he had expected—a complete recovery from multiple chronic symptoms. One of the unique characteristics of the current case is that most of his previ-
ous physical conditions were not curable by the known conventional medications or healing procedures, yet he achieved simultaneous recovery with Taiji Five-Element qigong therapy in a short period and stays medication-free for more than 2 years. None of his doctors can offer an explanation on the source of the simultaneous recovery from the multiple symptoms in such a short term.

It should be noticed that at no time did a biopsy reveal a diagnosis of prostate cancer despite the elevated PSA level, which might well be the results of increased stress and other unknown sources. However, the fact of PSA level went down without taking any medication was something interesting in this case.

There are similar case reports of simultaneous recovery of patients with cancer in Chinese literature with Taiji Five-Element Qigong therapy. For example, Ms. Liao, a high-school teacher from Liuzhou, recovered from recurrent breast cancer with postsurgery metastasis to bone using this form of qigong therapy alone. Not only her metastatic cancer was gone, but other chronic diseases she had previously suffered (before cancer), such as diabetes, prolapse of lumbar intervertebral disc, fatty liver, and so on, all disappeared without any medication (Liao, 1997). She has lived a healthy life for more than 9 years. Mr. Shen, 68, the formal vice principal of Shantou University, used the same qigong therapy to treat his reoccurring liver cancer after three failed surgeries. After 4 months of intensive qigong practice without any drugs or other therapies, his liver cancer disappeared completely; meanwhile, his hepatocirrhosis and hepatitis B disappeared as well without any medication (Shen, 1997).

Mechanisms behind simultaneous self-recovery from multiple chronic conditions using qigong therapy are not clear and need further studies. A review of Chinese literature has found that qigong practice is associated with improved immune functions, raised pain threshold, and increased microcirculation function (Chen and Yeung, 2002). These improvements in function might contribute to self-recovery from various chronic conditions, but do not explain the observed improvement and complete recovery in the currently reported case. We need to know more on how this therapy works for patients. A well-controlled clinical trial is needed to verify such a complicated simultaneous recovery.

Caution should be given when applying this self-healing therapy, especially with regard to the Bigu technique. Bigu is a significant component of the Five-Element Qigong anticancer program. However, it could be dangerous to carry out this technique without the guidance and close supervision of an experienced qigong instructor or qigong healer. In addition, not all students in the same intensive qigong seminar achieved such a miraculous result. Not all forms of qigong are effective with cancer. Most popular forms of qigong in China are for the purpose of maintaining health and provide certain health benefits if one is persistent in practicing the technique. However, they were not developed for medical healing or treating cancer and other chronic conditions.

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