

# 7-Day TCM Treatment for Brain Injury

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Craniocerebral injury refers to injuries to the cranium and brain tissues from external physical forces, with symptoms including dizziness, nausea, headache, memory loss, and uncoordinated limb movements; in the worse case scenario it can lead to coma, vegetative state or even death. In Traditional Chinese

Medicine (TCM), craniocerebral injury is the damage to blood vessels in the brain and disturbance in the flow of qi caused by external forces, causing sequelae such as disorders of consciousness or limbs. It is categorized under asphyxia, unconsciousness, and delirium, and clinically it is classified as acute and



**The Integrative TCM and Western Medicine Inpatient Care Center of Hualien Tzu Chi Hospital is located on the fifth floor of Da Ai Building, providing interdisciplinary care in convenience for patients during their stay. Photo/ Liu Ming-Sui**

## Treatment for mild injury (concussion)

**Syncope:** Apply the opening of orifices with Su He Xiang Wan, Tong Guan San, Zhi Bao Dan, Li Dong Wan or Duo Ming Dan.

**Recovery:** For dizziness, nausea and vomiting, apply Fu Su Tang, Chai Hu Xi Xin Tang, Yu Shu Dan

**Restoration:** For headache, dizziness, agitation, apply Xiong Zhi Tang, Zhen Gan Xi Feng Tang, and Wu Zhu Yu Tang modified.

**Acupuncture:** Anorexia and nausea: Zu San Li, Wei Yu, Nei Guan, San Yin Jiao; Dizziness: Feng Chi, Tai Yang.

## Treatment for severe injury (brain contusion, intracranial hematoma, brain stem injury)

**Opening orifices:** Su He Xiang Wan, Zhi Bao Dan

**Hemostasis:** Chuanqi, Baiji, Xianhe Cao

**Reducing dampness and swelling:** Zhuling Tang, Chuanxiong, Gouteng, Mutong, Cheqian, Puhuang, Baimaogen,

**Heat-clearing and detoxification:** Wuwei Xiaodu Yin, Huanglien Jie Du Tang; patients with central fever, convulsion, or twitching can ingest An Gong Niu Huang Wan and Zi Xue Dan.

## Treatment for Sequela

**Headache and dizziness:**

Xiong Zhi Tang, Zhen Gan Xi Feng Tang, Tianma, Gouteng

**Nausea and vomiting:** Ping Wei San, Xiao Banxia Jia Fuling Tang

**Palpitation and insomnia:** Gui Pi Tang, Yang Xin Tang

**Convulsion:** Da Ding Zhu Tang, Ling Yang Jiao Tang, Shu Feng Huo Xie Tang

**Paralysis, hemiplegia, drooping mouth, slurred speech:**

Bu Yang Huan Wu Tang

**Coma:** Acupuncture in Renzhong, Shixuan, Yongquan.

critical injury.

There are several documentations of traumatic brain injury found in ancient Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) doctrines. In *Arcane Essentials* from the Imperial Library (Waitai Miyao) by Wang Tao in Tang Dynasty documented the prognosis of brain trauma, which refers to symptoms following an open brain injury like speech difficulty, eyes staring forward, throat creating boiling sound, drooling, and arms swinging as signs of impending death and is untreatable. In *Supplementary to Traumatology* (Shangke Bu Yao) mentioned the following on traumatic brain injuries, that when there are injuries to the cranium where the skins are intact but the bones shattered, meninges penetrated, accompanied with hemorrhaging, speech difficulty, pale face and black lips, the patient is untreatable; or when the parietal bone caves in, injuring the brain, blood oozes from all seven openings of the head, body rigid, comatose and unresponsive, the patient is untreatable; or when the cranium is shattered and the brain is exposed, the patient is untreatable.

Most people think of TCM as mild and takes time to see its effect. It is in fact a misconception. In the case of traumatic brain injury and stroke for example, “Visit a TCM practitioner within seven days after a traumatic brain injury or within three to five days after a stroke and begin



**The photo depicts the director of the Integrative TCM and Western Medicine Inpatient Care Center Lin Ching-Wei massaging his patient. Photo/ Liu Ming-Sui**

acupuncture therapy, TCM medicine, and massage would show significant effect in patients’ recovery.” With more and more trauma patients recover from their injuries, it demonstrate the importance of integrating TCM and western medicine during the golden hour for treatment.

Hsu, a 17 years old student, received traumatic brain injury and several contusions in the body in an automobile accident last Nov. While transported to a hospital ER, his pupil dilated, scoring a 3 on the Glasgow Coma Scale (GSC).

He was transferred to an ICU after an emergency neurosurgery. Three days later, TCM was consulted. The patient began to receive acupuncture therapy, where dry needles and moxibustion were applied on his meridian points in accordance with his symptoms in order to improve energy and blood circulation and dredging the meridian; Chinese massage manipulation was applied as well, focusing on meridian massage techniques on specific parts of his body to improve the degree of his limb activities.

With the integrative effort of both the western medicine and TCM, Hsu showed dramatic improvement in his recovery after receiving granulocyte colony-stimulating factor (G-CSF) therapy, routine acupuncture therapy and rehabilitation. From comatose to eyes opening, and now he can utter single syllables and gradually focus his vision. Although he still relies on intubation for his dietary needs, he begins to eat with his mouth. His gradual and steady recovery amazed even the medical team.

TCM's approach to traumatic brain injury is to, in addition to complementing with the routine Western Medicine treatment, provide a combination of acupuncture and massage therapy that would stimulate and improve neural functions, enhance the strength and stability of limb activities, reduce insomnia

severity resulted from craniocerebral injuries, and improve cognition and attention. Studies have shown that TCM acupuncture therapy can reduce the risk of stroke, and thus reduce the medical expenses and the rate of readmission of discharged patients, optimizing the advantages of TCM and western medicine integration.

People who prefer TCM acupuncture therapy are often amazed by meridian points and their functions. This integrative treatment of TCM and western medicine has been a distinguishing feature of Hualien Tzu Chi Hospital, particularly in its application on rehabilitation of complicated diseases and injuries.

Hualien Tzu Chi Hospital has effectively integrated ancestral wisdoms with modern medical technology. In addition to evaluating the appropriate TCM medicine, acupuncture therapy and massage therapy for patients with brain trauma during outpatient clinic consultation, the Integrative TCM and Western Medicine Inpatient Care Center founded last year also integrate the best of both fields to provide innovative therapeutic options for patients with cerebrovascular disease, craniocerebral injury, and spinal cord injury, or malignant tumor patients suffering from sequelae of surgery, radiotherapy or chemotherapy, creating new opportunities for effective recovery.