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# Governing Vessel Acupuncture

by Prof. Richard Liao, L.Ac.

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## Author

Professor Liao, L.Ac. has served as professor of herbology and acupuncture at the Academy of Chinese Culture & Health Sciences and at Five Branches University. He teaches and practices Taiji, Qi Gong, acupuncture, and herbal medicine. His many years of teaching experience bring the highest quality of courses to HealthCMI.

Prof. Liao has spent decades studying Taoism and the roots of Chinese medicine. For the last two decades, Prof. Liao has taken an annual retreat to China to study with Master Wang Li Ping. He translated the *Ling Bao Tong Zhi Neng Nei Gong Shu* for Wang Li Ping, which is a guide for meditation in the way of the Taoist Dragon Gate Sect (Long Men Pai). Wang Li Ping is an 18th generation Taoist Master of Long Men Pai. The *Ling Bao Tong Zhi Neng Nei Gong Shu* includes Taoist secrets of the golden flower and five souls that was delivered by the ancient masters Zhong and Lu. This text includes methods of practice and theory.

Prof. Liao's extensive experience in Taoist theory and meditation practice inform an understanding of the acupuncture points included in this course, according to both ancient and modern Chinese medicine.



*Prof. Richard Liao, L.Ac.*

# Governing Vessel

The governing vessel (Du Mai, GV) guides qi circulation from the lower to the higher: from GV1 to GV20. The qi then flows anteriorly to the conception vessel (ren mai). The governing vessel (GV) assists the conception vessel in moving the qi from the top to the bottom, on the anterior portion of the body through the conception vessel (from the crown of the head to the bottom).

The governing vessel has a regulating function for qi in the body. The GV balances energies from both the left and right side of the body and helps to rise qi from the lower to the higher (GV1 to the crown of the head).

One concept in traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) is that the left is yang and right is yin. According to TCM, facing south is facing the direction of the fire element and the back-north is yin-water kidney. Facing the south, the sun rises from the left (east) to the top of the sky and goes toward the right (westward). The left is yang because the sun is rising upward. The left side is the liver energy and yang side. The when the sun goes down, it is yin time. Overall, the governing vessel has a regulatory function on energies from all directions: left, right, up, down.

## General Characteristics

**The governing vessel is the confluence of all yang channels. As a result, this channel governs all yang channels.** There are eight extraordinary channels, but only two of them have their own acupuncture points—the governing vessel and the conception vessel. Although there are often said to be 12 primary channels, sometimes the governing vessel and conception vessel are included in this count and therefore it is said that there are fourteen primary channels.

## Meeting Points

Meeting points with the governing vessel are CV1, CV24, and BL12:

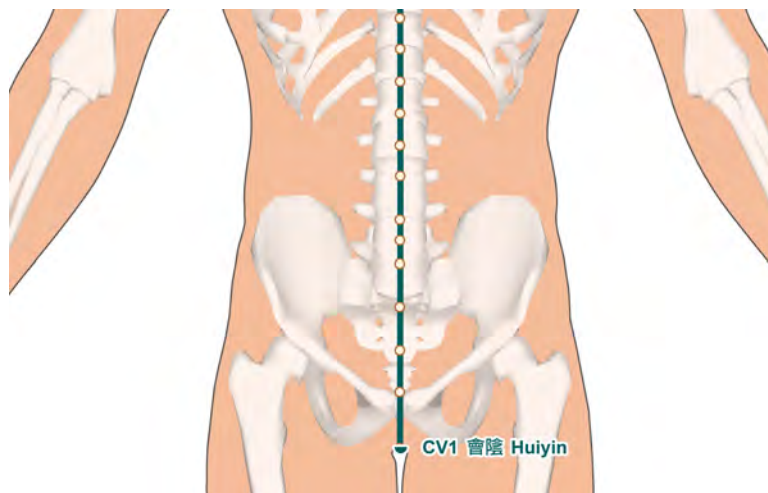
### CV1 (Huiyin, Yin Convergence, 會陰)

CV1 is located between the anus & root of the scrotum (males) or between the anus & posterior labial commissure (females).

This is the meeting point of the conception vessel, penetrating (Chong Mai), and **governing vessels**. CV1 is a Sun Si-miao ghost point.

Located in the lower aspect of the body, qi rises from this point. As the winter blossoms into the spring, so too does the qi from this point rise to sprout into the upper portion of the body. As a result, this point is associated with anti-aging functions.

Indications include urination dysfunction and urination disorders, irregular menstruation or dysfunction, cold sensations from the lower aspect of the body rising into the heart (running piggies), genital damp-heat, revival from drowning, difficult bowel movement, impotence, cold sensation of the male genitalia. Sources indicate that this point is contraindicated or used with caution during pregnancy.

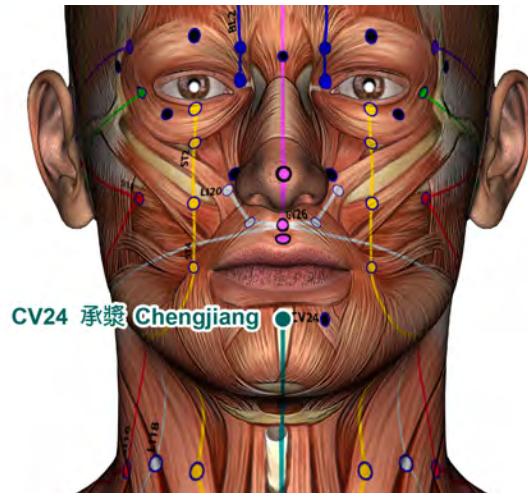




## CV24

### (Chengjiang, Jade Fluid Receptacle, 承漿)

CV24 is in the depression in the center of the mentolabial groove.

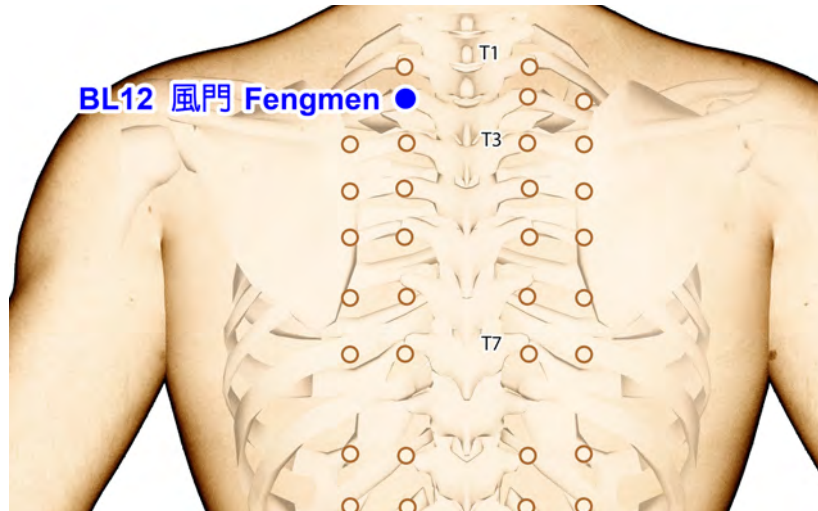


CV24 is a meeting point of the conception vessel with the **governing vessel**. In addition, CV24 is a meeting point of the large intestine and stomach channels with the conception vessel. CV24 is a Sun Si-miao ghost point.

The jade fluid is purified saliva as discussed in the description of CV23. The kidney water of the governing vessel goes up to the crown of the head and then descends to this point and contributes to the jing-essence of the jade fluid. This is the transfer of jing-substance from kidney water to the jade fluid as it embraces qi. Taoist textbooks note that the qi of the governing vessel descends to this acupoint, which is the transfer of jing to qi.

CV24 extinguishes wind, benefits the face, and regulates the conception vessel. Indications for use include facial paralysis, diabetes, mouth canker sores, eating well but cannot maintain proper weight, eats very little but gains weight due to low metabolism, compulsive overeating, deviation of the mouth, and facial pain or numbness.

## BL12 (Fengmen, Wind Gate)



BL12 is 1.5 cun lateral to T-2, at the level of the lower border of the spinous process of the vertebra.

It is a meeting point of the bladder channel with the **governing vessel** (Du Mai). BL12 opens the lungs, disperses wind and releases the surface, and regulates qi. BL12 strengthens defensive qi and also benefits the nose. Indications include headaches, neck stiffness, common cold, nasal congestion, influenza, cough, fever, epistaxis, and neck or back pain.

Caution: deep insertion may injure blood vessels or may cause pneumothorax. An oblique or transverse-oblique insertion towards the spine (0.5–0.7 cun) is standard. It is not recommended to use perpendicular needling or needling away from the spine.

## Primary Channel

There are four primary paths of the governing vessel. Path #1 starts in the perineum, ascends along the center of the spine up to GV16 (Fengfu) at the nape of the neck. Next, path #1 enters the brain while ascending to the vertex, and traverses the midline of the forehead across the bridge of the nose and finally terminating at the lips.

Path #2 begins in the pelvic region and descends to the genitals, perineum, and to the tip of the coccyx. Next, path #2 diverts into the gluteal region, intersects the bladder and kidney channels, and returns to the spinal column. Next, it joins with the kidneys.

Path #3 originates bilaterally at the inner canthus of the eyes (the bladder channel shares this origination point). The bilateral channels ascend to the forehead, travel to the vertex, and enter the brain. Next, path #3 emerges at the lower aspect of the nape of the neck. It divides into bilateral branches, which descend on both sides of the spine, eventually terminating in the kidneys.

Path #4 begins in the lower abdomen. It rises across the umbilicus, ascends to the heart and throat. The branch continues upwards, encircles the mouth, and terminates below the middle of the eyes.

## Pathological Symptoms

This channel innervates the brain and spinal region and intersects the liver channel at the vertex; obstruction of governing vessel qi may result in stiffness and pain along the spinal column.

Deficient qi in the channel may produce a heavy sensation in the head, vertigo, and shaking. Mental disorders may be due to wind entering the brain through the governing vessel.

Febrile diseases are commonly associated with this channel. GV14, GV13, and GV12 may be combined to combat febrile diseases and prevent illness.

One branch of this channel ascends through the abdomen. If channel is unbalanced, qi may rush upward toward the heart. There may be colic, constipation, enuresis, hemorrhoids, and functional infertility resulting from imbalances in the channel.

## Luo-Connecting Channel

The luo-connecting channel of governing vessel separates from GV1 (Changqiang) in the perineum and travels up both sides of the spine and to the nape of the neck. It continues upwards to the top of the head. Notably, before ascending to the neck, the GV luo-connecting channel joins with the bladder channel at the level of the scapulae and moves through the spine as well.

Excess in the luo-connecting channel manifests as stiffness along the spine; deficiency manifests as heaviness or dizziness in the head. GV1 supervises all the activities of the yang luo-connecting channels of the head and back.

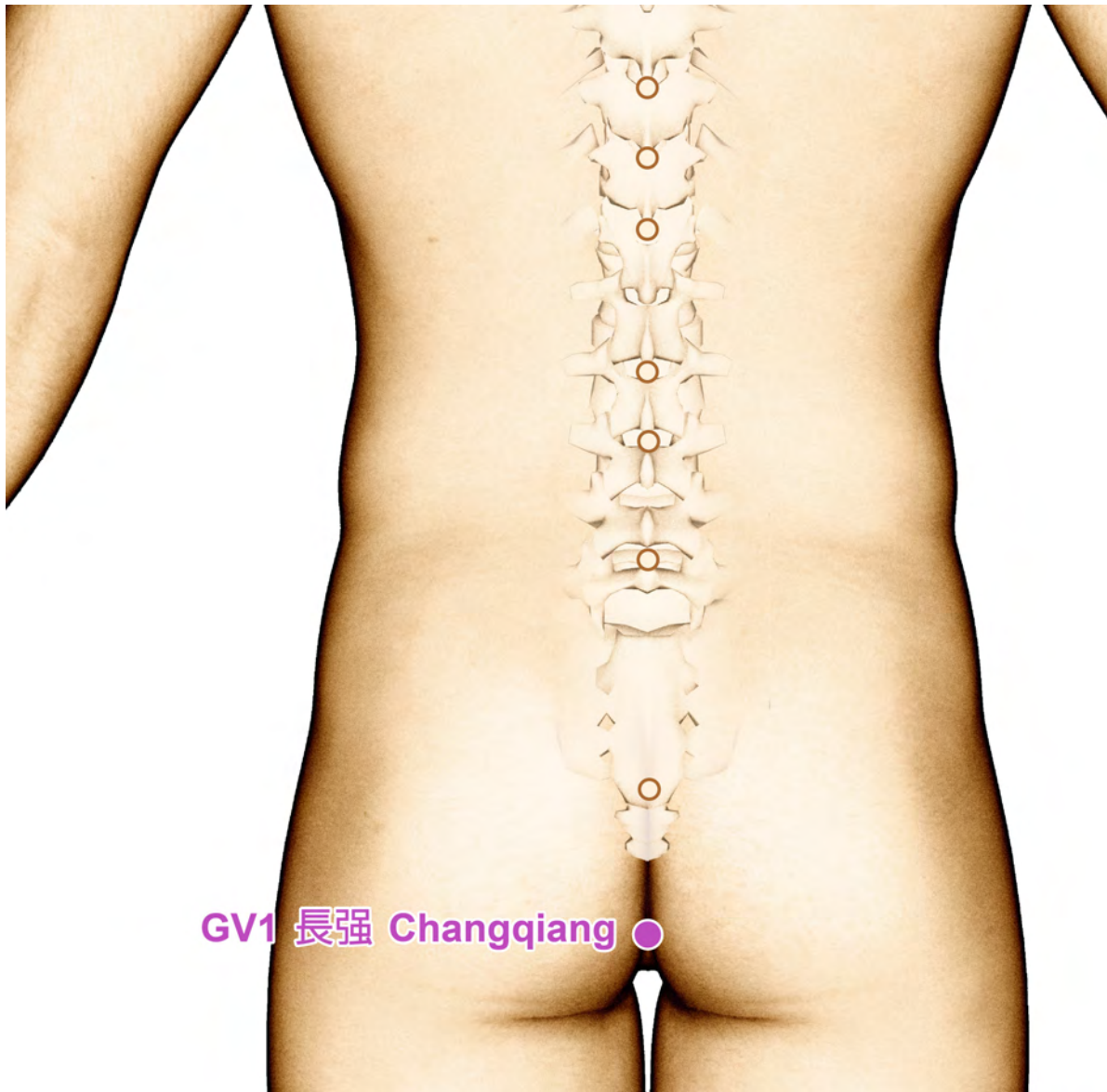
## Confluent Point: SI3

**SI3 (Houxi) is the confluent point of the governing vessel.** SI3 pairs with BL62, which is the confluent point of the yang heel (yangqiao) vessel. Together, these points are used for the treatment of the neck, shoulder, back, and inner canthus.

### Next:

The following section covers the meaning of acupuncture point names and functions according to original ancient principles.

# GV1 (Changqiang, Longevity Strong, 長強)



This point is midway between the tip of the coccyx and the anus. Locate the point in the prone position. This point is often needled perpendicularly 0.5 to 1 cun.

GV1 is the meeting point of the governing vessel with the conception vessel, gallbladder, and kidney channels. This point opens the conception vessel and governing vessels and also regulates the intestines.

GV1 is the luo-connecting point of the governing vessel. A principle function all luo-connecting points is joining the yang primary channel with the paired yin primary channel. Here, the yang of the governing vessel is connecting to the yin of the conception vessel. Connecting points are used specifically to regulate diseases that affect both of the paired channels. As a result, GV1 is appropriate for the treatment of illnesses associated with both channels. GV1 supervises all the activities of the yang luo-connecting channels of the head and back.

Common indications for use include the following: hemorrhoids, prolapsed anus, diarrhea, infantile convulsions, epilepsy, infertility, impotence. GV1 activates the channel and calms the spirit.

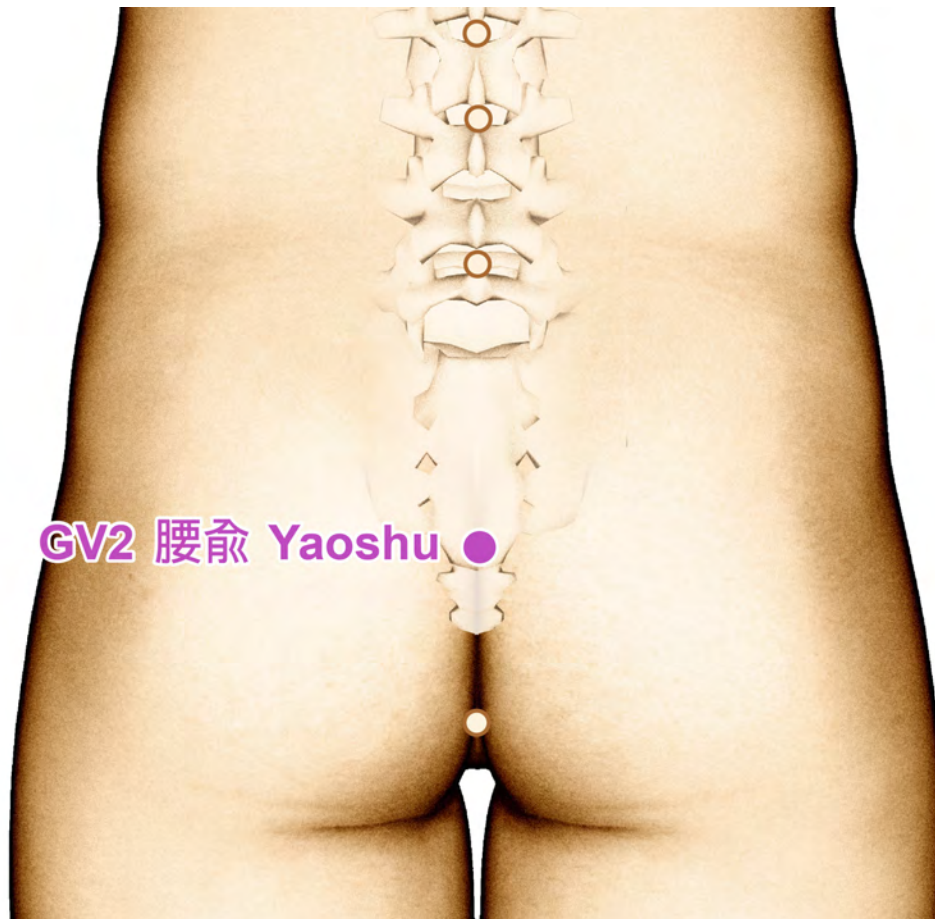
As a local point, this point has a significant functional power for the treatment of hemorrhoids, prolapsed anus, and disorders relating to the rectum and defecation.

## GV1 Energetics

This point is often translated as long strong, but a more accurate understanding is the use of the word longevity. The meaning is that strength will last a very long time. Stimulating this point helps collapsed energy reconnect with yuan-source qi.

The idea is that the initial qi starts at GV1, and refreshes the cycle of qi. The energy sprouts from the base at GV1 and moves upward. It is the beginning of the rise of qi. Similar to midnight changing to day, from a baby to an adult, or from winter to spring, the qi sprouts upward like a new year and grows strong.

## GV2 (Yao Shu, Lumbar Shu Point, 腰俞)

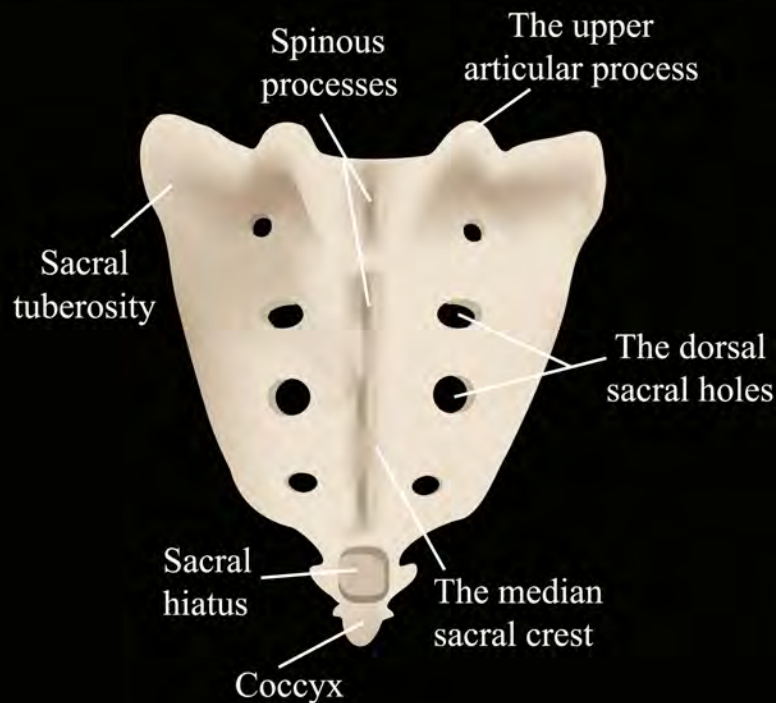


Located at the midline, GV2 is located at the sacral hiatus. Needling depths range from approximately 0.5 to 1 cun, obliquely and upward.

Anatomical note: “The fifth sacral nerve root exits via the sacral hiatus. The sacral hiatus is covered posteriorly by the sacrococcygeal ligament, subcutaneous fatty layer and the skin.”<sup>1</sup>

1. [radiopaedia.org/articles/sacral-hiatus?lang=us](http://radiopaedia.org/articles/sacral-hiatus?lang=us)

# The structure of the sacrum

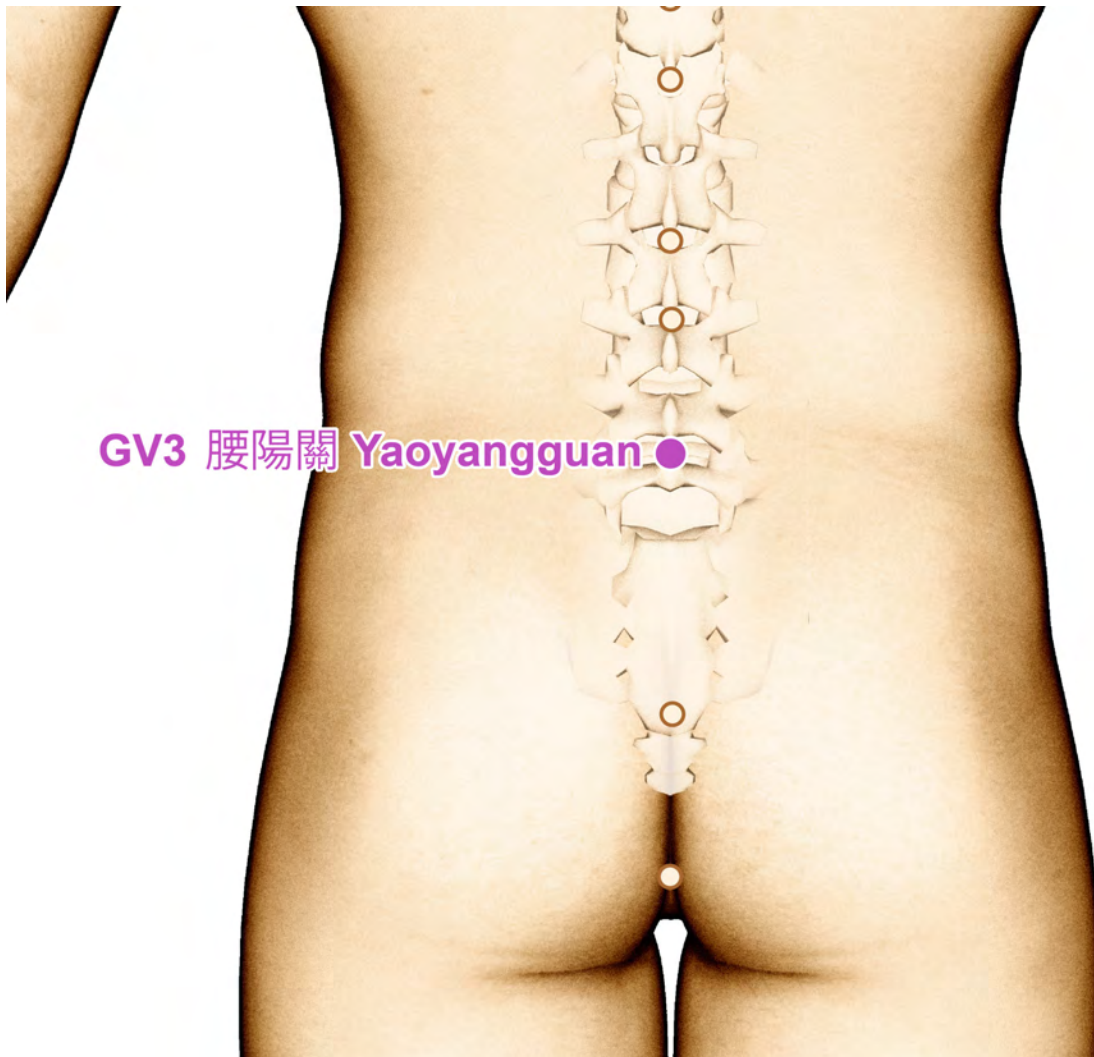


The qi springs from GV1 and slowly gathers into the power of the lumbar shu point (GV2). This point benefits the lumbar region and lower extremities.

GV2 dispels wind-dampness and benefits the lower back and legs. This point is used for the treatment of sacrum and low back pain, local shingles outbreaks, hemorrhoids, irregular menstruation, seizures, muscle atrophy of the legs, epilepsy, and paralysis.



## GV3 (Yaoyangguan, Lumbar Yang Gate, 腰陽關)



GV3 is located on the midline in a depression below the spinous process of the fourth lumbar vertebra, level with the crista iliaca. Caution: the spinal canal is at depth of approximately 1.25–1.75 cun. This point is innervated by the medial branch of the dorsal ramus of the lumbar nerve. Standard acupuncture needle insertion is perpendicular 0.5–1 cun.

GV3 dispels wind-dampness. GV3 benefits the lower back, knees, and legs, regulates kidney qi, and supports mingmen fire at GV4. GV3 eliminates cold-dampness, warms the blood, and warms the jing-essence and semen. Indications for use include spermatorrhea, nocturnal emission, impotence, irregular mensuration, lumbosacral pain, and lower limb paralysis, numbness, stiffness, and atrophy.

## Energetics

In ancient times there were four gates at the four corners of many cities. There were guards at the gates. The qi springs from GV1, gathers at GV2, and then traverses the gate at GV3 to travel upwards.

The yang power at this gate is useful for energizing the flow of yang power to treat conditions such as cold hands and feet, wind-damp bi pain, muscle spasms, and muscle soreness of the legs. GV3's yang power activates the sanjiao (triple burner), especially the lower jiao, to support the power of GV4.

## Anatomical note

GV3 is innervated by the medial branch of the dorsal ramus of the lumbar nerve. After spinal nerves pass through the intervertebral foramina, they split into several branches: dorsal rami, ventral rami, meningeal branches, rami communicantes. A dorsal ramus is a branch of a spinal nerve that innervates muscles and skin of the dorsal aspect of the back. Lower back, gluteal, and hamstring pain that is relieved by blocking signal conduction along dorsal rami is attributable to dorsal ramus syndrome.

## GV4 (Mingmen, Life Gate, 命門)



GV4 is located in a depression below the spinous process of the second lumbar vertebra. Since the superior aspects of the iliac crests form a line at the lower border of L3, GV4 is often located one intervertebral space above the line. Standard needle insertion is 0.5–1 cun, perpendicularly. Caution: the spinal canal is at depth of approximately 1.25–1.75 cun.

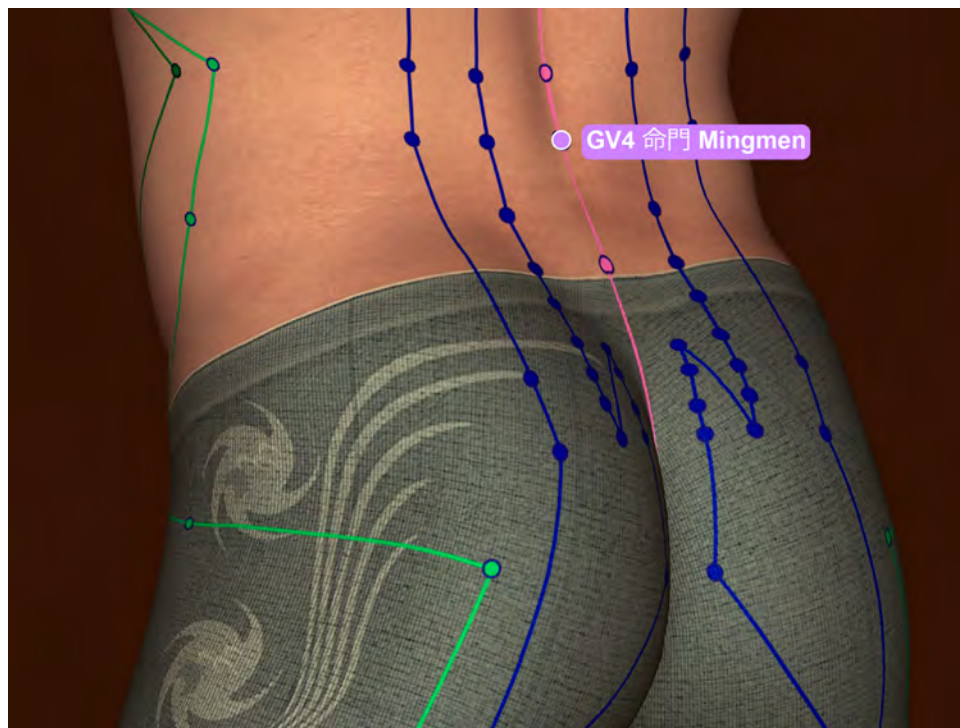
This point nourishes yuan-source qi, strengthens the kidneys, and benefits the lumbar vertebrae. Indications for use include lower back

pain, stiffness of the spine, spermatorrhea, infertility, nocturnal emissions, impotence, hemorrhoids, anhidrosis due kidney yang deficiency, leukorrhea, and diarrhea due to kidney and spleen qi and yang deficiency. This point can also be used to treat kidney yin deficiency heat, including headaches due to rising yang.

## Energetics

There are two ideas in the term life gate. First is creating newborns by nourishing sperm and eggs. The other idea is to extend life by reinvigorating health and vitality by nourishing the ocean of jing, blood, and qi.

This gate regulates sperm and ovarian eggs, which is one reason why this is referred to as the life gate. In this way, this point helps bring new life. This point regulates jing-essence and qi to benefit sperm. This point regulates jing-essence and blood (the ocean of jing and blood) to nourish eggs. This point nourishes the jing and blood to extend the length of life, another reason why this point is called life gate.



## GV5 (Xuanshu, Suspended Hub, 懸樞)



GV5 is located in a depression below the spinous process of L1, on the midline. Standard needle insertion is 0.5–1 cun. Caution, the spinal canal is at a depth of approximately 1.25–1.75 cun. This point is innervated by the medial branch of the dorsal ramus of the lumbar nerve.

GV5 benefits the lumbar spine and lower jiao (burner). General indications for use include low back pain and stiffness, diarrhea, and indigestion.

## Energetics

The qi from the life gate travels upward through this point and is suspended at this hub, which is a junction of the qi of the upper and lower parts of the body. It is the source of the Sanjiao (three burners) at its base. It is the meeting area (the hub) of the lower and higher regions of the Sanjiao.

GV5 is the hub of the lower burner and higher regions of the triple burner and therefore treats food stagnation and running piglets. As a result, indications for use include diarrhea, indigestion, abdominal bloating and discomfort, and lower back pain (including spasms of the back muscles and spinal disorders).

## Running piglets

Running piglets are caused by qi and phlegm stagnation in the lower burner region or kidney deficiency (kidneys cannot grasp qi, creating instability) that causes qi to rise up. This point is a hub that communicates the middle & upper with the lower and creates balance to address this condition.

Symptoms of running piglets including feeling like a small pig running from the lower part of the body to the upper. If the pig runs to the lower abdomen, there is a pulsing below the navel and if the bundle of qi rises to the stomach, there is fullness of the stomach, nausea, or vomiting. If the qi rises to the throat, there is the feeling of a plum pit stuck in throat. In the chest, this can cause wheezing, difficulty breathing, and asthma.

Running piglets patients often have fear, anxiety, and lack of confidence because the kidney qi is deficient and therefore cannot properly stabilize and descend the qi. Some patients may feel a release of qi from the crown of the head followed by a resolution of this condition. This may release occur during an acupuncture session.

## GV6 (Jizhong, Middle Spine, 脊中)



GV6 is located in a depression below the spinous process of T11, on the midline. Standard needle insertion is 0.5–1 cun. Caution, the spinal canal is at a depth of approximately 1.25–1.75 cun. This point is innervated by the medial branch of the dorsal ramus of the 11th thoracic nerve.

### Energetics

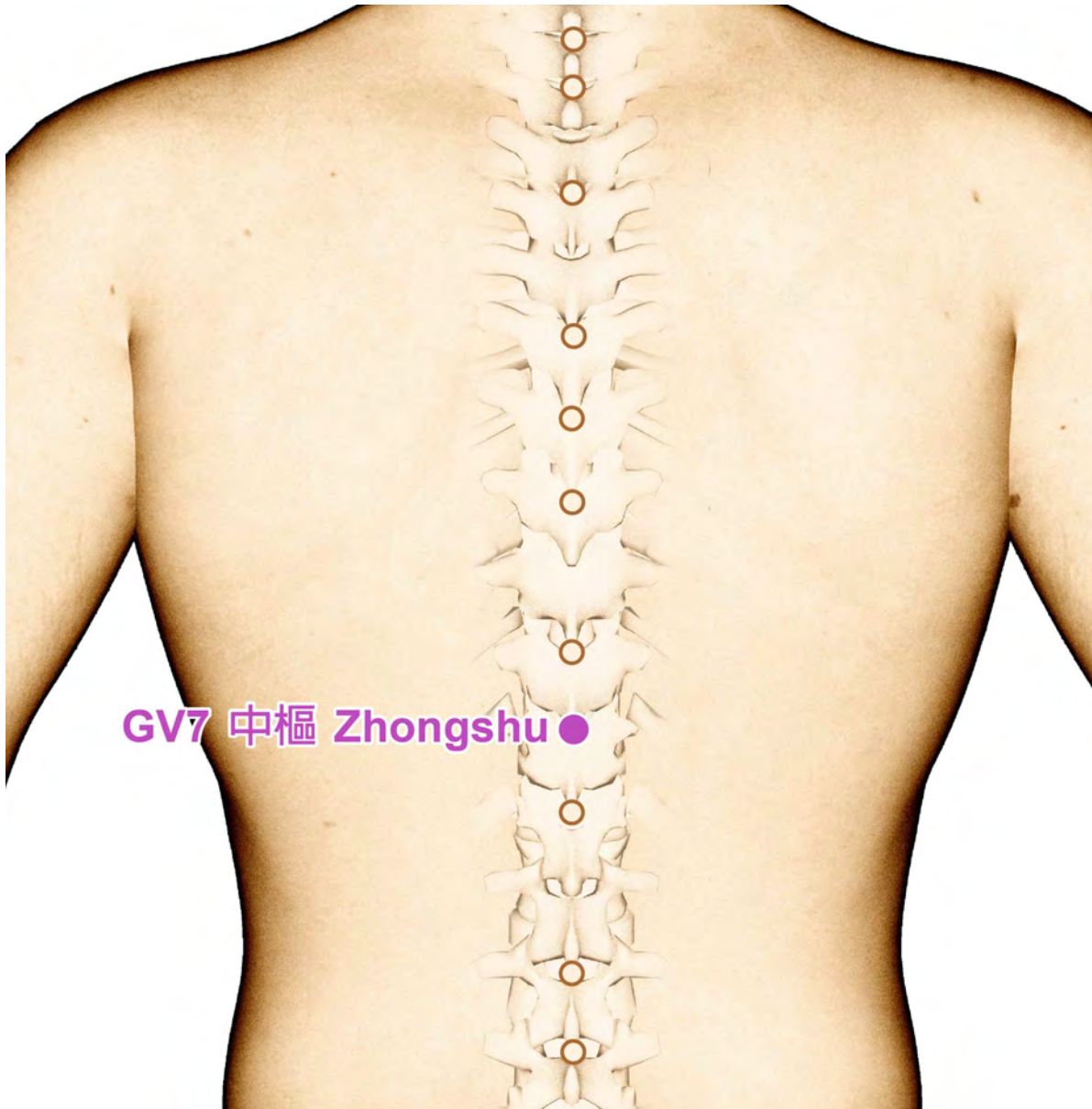
Ji means spine and zhong means middle. This point is midway between GV5 and GV7. GV6 communicates qi between these points.

This point harmonizes the lower and middle parts of the body, between GV5 (Suspended Hub) and GV7 (Middle Hub). Indications for use are seizures, epilepsy, warm febrile diseases, stagnation in the abdominal region, epigastric pain, diarrhea, and low back pain.

### Wind & Phlegm Stagnation Seizures

Seizures and epilepsy arise due to imbalances between the upper and lower parts of the body resulting in wind and phlegm stagnation. GV6 harmonizes the lower and upper parts of the body and therefore addresses imbalances due to wind and phlegm stagnation.

## GV7 (Zhongshu, Middle Hub, 中樞)



GV7 is located in a depression below the spinous process of T10, on the midline. Standard needle insertion is 0.5–1 cun. Caution, the spinal canal is at a depth of approximately 1.25–1.75 cun. This point is innervated by the medial branch of the dorsal ramus of the 10th thoracic nerve.



## Middle Hub for Middle Burner

This middle hub is in the middle of the spine, below T10. This point benefits the middle jiao (burner) and spine. The qi from the lower part of the body runs up to this point and gradually turns into substance.

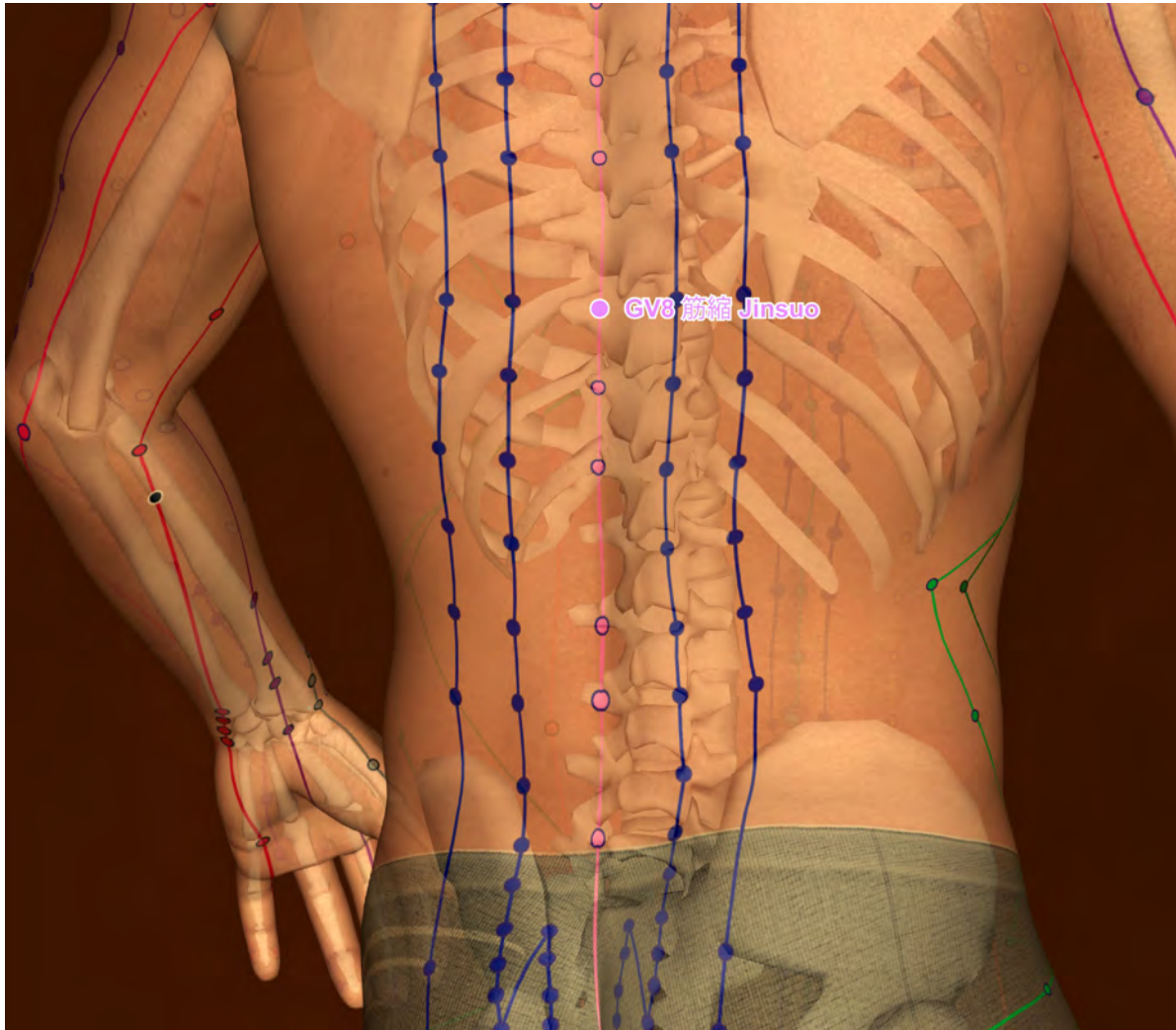
Indications for use include epigastric pain, stomach region pain, fullness of the stomach, qi deficiency without blood deficiency, cholecystitis, spinal pain, and lower back pain. This point benefits the spleen qi to help absorb food and smoothes the liver qi, thereby benefitting patients with hyperthyroidism or hypothyroidism.

## Qi and Jing Communication

This point helps communication between qi and jing. If the body cannot transform and transport jing-substance into middle jiao qi, this point is useful. For example, if a person eats well but cannot absorb nutrition, this point assists in supporting the transforming and transporting functions of spleen qi to resolve this condition.

Another example: if the patient has hypothyroidism and gains weight easily without eating much, this point helps the qi to move to help transform the substance. This point harmonizes both ways: if one eats a lot but cannot gain weight or if someone eats very little but continues to gain weight. GV7 harmonizes the jing and qi to resolve the substance absorption issues.

## GV8 (Jinsuo, Sinew Contraction, 筋縮)



GV8 is located on the midline of the back, below the spinous process of the 9th thoracic vertebra. Standard needling is oblique superior insertion, approximately 0.5 to 1.0 cun. Caution: the spinal canal is 1.25–1.75 cun deep to the skin surface.

## Energetics

GV7 qi substance transfers to GV8 and benefits the liver and liver blood. GV8 helps move and nourish the blood of the liver. The qi is more emphasized in GV7 and substance-blood is more emphasized in GV8.

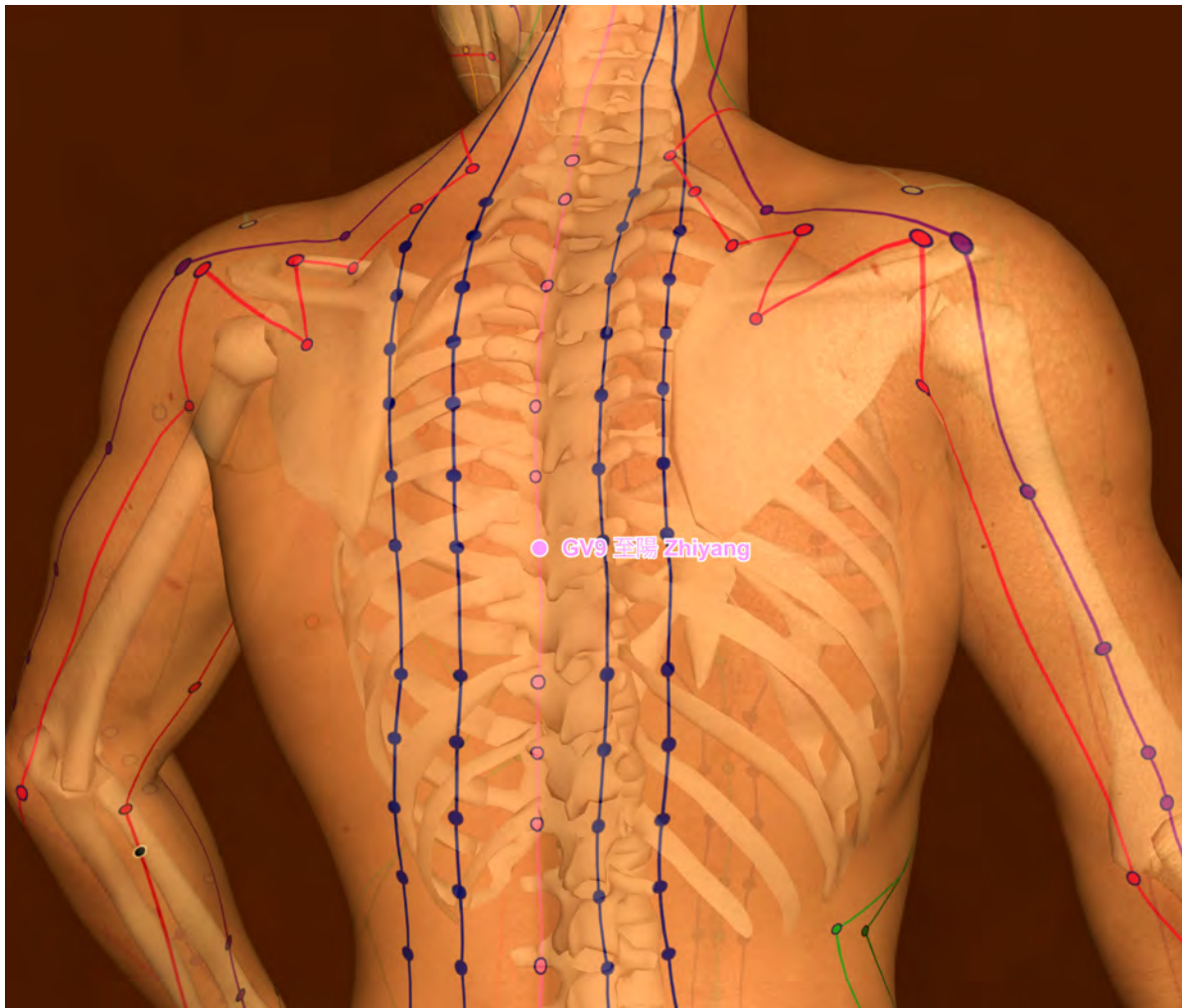
## Functions

Chinese Medicine theory notes that the liver governs the tendons, which gives the body the ability to move. If the liver blood does not nourish the tendons, there may be spasms and contracture.

This point is effective for treatments wherein tendons and sinew have spasms, this is reflected in the name sinew contraction. This point is at the same anatomical level as BL18 (Ganshu), which is the liver back shu point. As a result, this point benefits the liver, sinew, and treats liver wind disorders.

This point soothes the liver, quells the wind, and relieves spasms. This includes treatment of eye disorders (the eye is a liver wood element related sense organ) and contraction of the spine. This point calms the spirit, especially when liver wind is the root cause of epilepsy, seizures, and dizziness. This point nourishes liver blood and treats dry tendon disorder. This point benefits the liver qi, and therefore treats anger and irritability, especially in cases of liver and heart fire. If liver attacks spleen and stomach qi, this point benefits digestion and treats gastric pain and cholecystitis.

## GV9 (Zhiyang, Reaching Yang, 至陽)



GV9 is on the midline of the back, below the spinous process of the 7th thoracic vertebra. Standard needling is oblique superior insertion, approximately 0.5 to 1.0 cun. Caution: the spinal canal is 1.25–1.75 cun deep to the skin surface.

### Energetics

GV8 is liver-wood element related, and is therefore (according to the five elements) the mother of fire. The mother of fire from GV8 supports

GV9 to burn extremely brightly. Therefore, this point treats the yang of the heart.

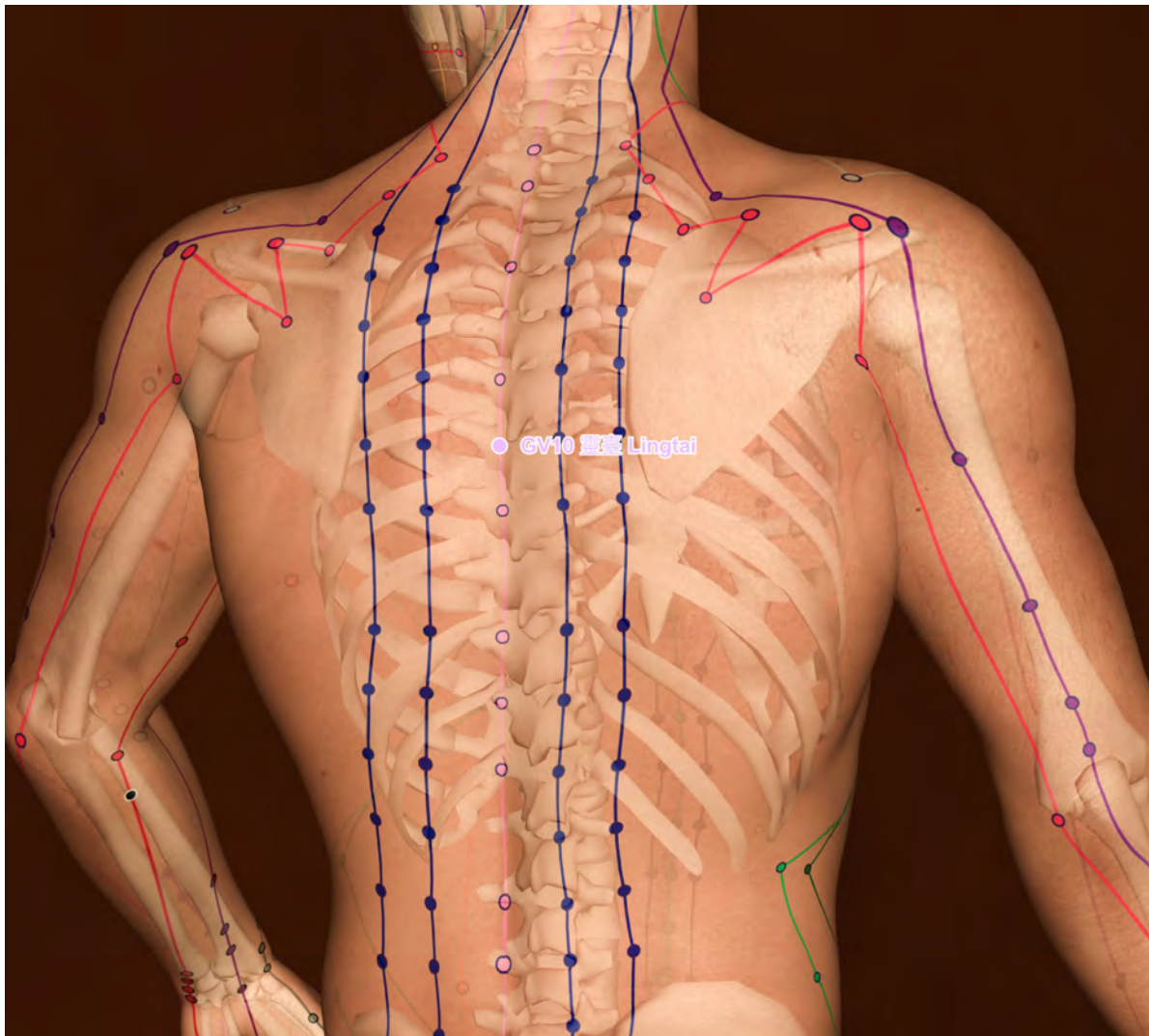
This point treats extremes of fire, when the yang of the heart is not strong enough to support the body: heart failure, edema, palpitations, weakness of the heart, atrial fibrillation, and shortness of breath. This point treats excess yang and fire relating to the heart, including anger. This point treats both deficiency and excess of yang.

GV9 is at the place where the middle and upper jiao (burners) meet. As a result, GV9 benefits the spleen and middle jiao.

GV9 regulates the qi, transforms damp-heat, and also expands the chest and diaphragm. This acupoint is level with BL17 (Geshu), which is the diaphragm back shu point. This is one reason why this point is effective for the treatment of coughing, dyspnea, chest tightness, and asthma.

Treatment of damp-heat includes jaundice and cholecystitis. Located at the junction of the upper and middle jiao, this point is also helpful for cold and dampness affecting the spleen and stomach, including treatment of poor appetite. The point also treats local back pain.

## GV10 (Lingtai, Soul Platform, 靈台)



GV10 is on the midline of the back, below the spinous process of the 6th thoracic vertebra. Standard needling is oblique superior insertion, approximately 0.5 to 1.0 cun. Caution: the spinal canal is 1.25–1.75 cun deep to the skin surface.

## Energetics

The GV9 heat yang fire energy rises to the soul level at GV10. The soul is the source of shen (spirit). Heart yang is postnatal; however, the soul is prenatal. As a result, this point is effective in cases where yin and yang begin to separate.

## Applications

- The soul level treats autism, indecisiveness, emotional insecurity, insomnia, shen disturbances, and emergencies wherein the soul is leaving the body.
- This point is indicated for the treatment of coughing, asthma, and neck & back pain and stiffness.
- GV10 clears heat and fire toxins and is used for the treatment of carbuncles and red thread furuncles (lymphangitis).

## Emergency Use

This is an emergency application point for the soul platform (this point is also translated as spirit tower). If the patient is very sick, and yin and yang are separating, this point may help the soul return to the body before leaving completely.

## GV11 (Shendao, Shen-spirit Path, 神道)



GV11 is on the midline of the back, below the spinous process of the 5th thoracic vertebra. Standard needling is oblique superior insertion, approximately 0.5 to 1.0 cun. Caution: the spinal canal is 1.25–1.75 cun deep to the skin surface.

### Energetics

The shen (spirit) of this acupoint references the postnatal mind. This is at the level of T5, which is level with BL15 (back shu point of the heart).



GV10 is the soul platform, which transfers its prenatal soul power to the postnatal shen power in GV11. Level with the heart back shu point, this acupoint treats mental and emotional disturbances.

## Attachments

GV11 treats emotional and mental disturbances that are attachments developed after birth. Postnatal pathological attachments to the mind involve attachments to the shen (spirit). Circumstances and events during one's lifetime may create shen attachments that are difficult to release. GV11 helps to release these attachments from the shen.

## Overall Functions & Indications

GV11 tonifies the heart and lungs, calms the spirit, clears heat, and quells internal wind. GV11 tonifies both heart yin and yang. GV11 treats sadness, anxiety, poor memory, palpitations due to fright, and general disorientation.

## Heart Wind

Heart wind comes and goes strongly and unpredictably. Heart wind manifestations treated by this point include palpitations, irregular heart beats, atrial fibrillation, bipolar disorder, forgetfulness, emotional disturbances, anxiety, infantile convulsions, chills & fever, and malaria.

## Heart Stagnation

This point addresses stagnation affecting the heart and is indicated for patients with heart disease or cardiac pain.

## GV12 (Shenzhu, Body Pillar, 身柱)



### Location

GV12 is on the midline of the back, below the spinous process of the 3rd thoracic vertebra. Standard needling is oblique and upward insertion, approximately 0.5 to 1.0 cun. Caution: the spinal canal is approximately 1.25–1.75 cun deep to the skin surface.

### Body Pillar (Shenzhu)

The physical location of this point is in the spinal region, between the lungs, and between the scapulae and is referenced in the name body pillar. This point helps to strengthen and support the entire body,

including the kidney and lung qi. Needling the body pillar supports healthy aging, including preventing the spine from bending over due to weakness from aging.

## Kidneys, Lung & Brain

This point also supports lung communicating with the brain. The brain is the sea of marrow and the kidneys connect with the sea of marrow. This point benefits both kidney and lung qi and promotes communication between the lungs and brain.

## Functions & Indications

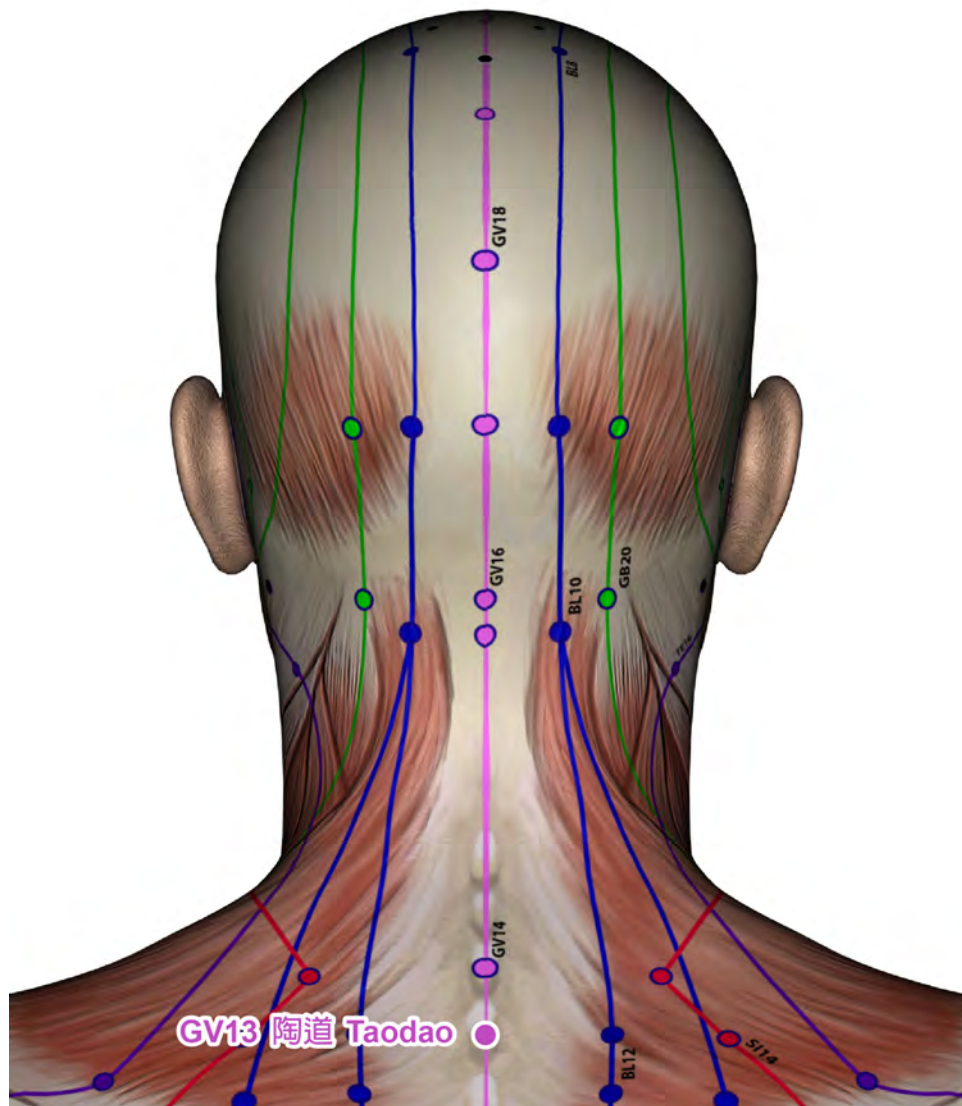
GV12 clears heat from the lungs and heart (including clearing heat from the chest), calms the spirit, quells internal wind, and expels external wind. Indications for treatment include mania, delirium, excess heat, anger, seizures (including infantile convulsions and epilepsy), asthma, coughing, back pain, and boils due to heat.

## 3rd Thoracic Vertebra Level

GV12 is below the spinous process of the 3rd thoracic vertebra and is therefore at the same vertical level as BL13 (Feishu), which is the lung back-shu point. As a result, this acupoint shares similar functions and indications, including clearing heat from the lungs and for the treatment of dyspnea and coughing.

The same is true for the lung's relationship to the heart because both are in proximity to each other in the upper jiao (burner). As a result, this acupoint benefits the heart and heart spirit (shen), especially for the treatment of mental disorders.

## GV13 (Taodao, Kiln Path, 陶道)



### Location

GV13 is on the midline of the back, below the spinous process of the 1st thoracic vertebra. Standard needling is oblique and upward insertion,

approximately 0.5 to 1.0 cun. Caution: the spinal canal is approximately 1.25–1.75 cun deep to the skin surface.

## Taodao (陶道)

Taodao (陶道) may be translated as pottery kiln path, the way of happiness, or the path of Tao. A kiln is fiery hot. This translation emphasizes treating deficiency or excess fire.

This point also supports healthy fire and therefore has anti-aging properties. This point is also translated as a happiness path, because GV13 nourishes kidney yang and calms the spirit. This acupoint is specifically indicated for the treatment of unhappiness.

## Meeting Point

This point is the meeting point of the governing vessel with the bladder channel.

## Primary Functions

GV13 regulates the governing vessel, clears heat, relieves exterior conditions, and calms the spirit.

## Indications

Indications include steaming bone syndrome, chills, fever, headaches, heaviness of the head, blurry vision, spasms or stiffness of the spine, anhidrosis (absence of sweating), unhappiness, disorientation, and malaria.

## Deficiency Fire: Steaming Bone

Steaming bone syndrome is a deficiency fire condition. Patients often experience one or more of the following:

- sensation of heat in the bones but the skin is a normal temperature
- afternoon tidal fever
- chronic low-grade fever
- severe night sweats
- dark red cheeks

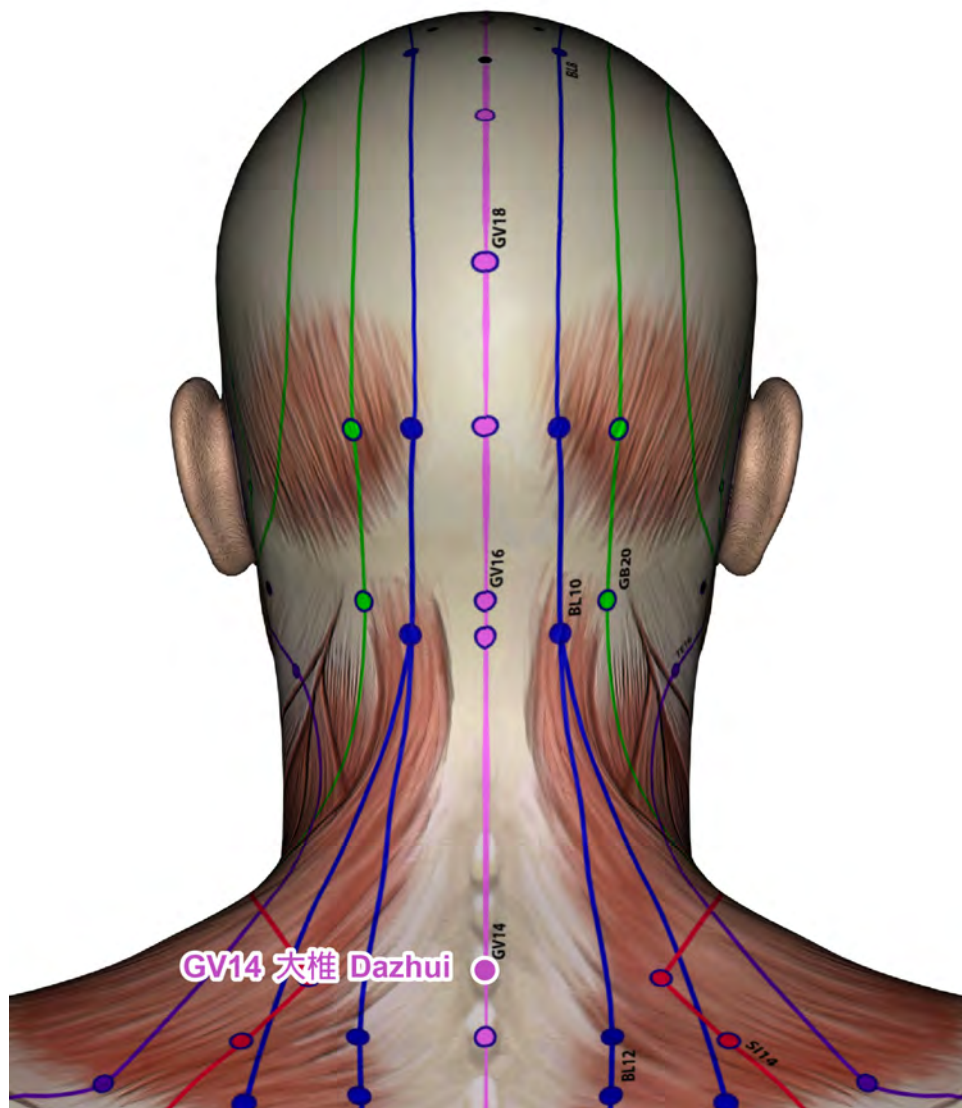
A common herbal formula used for the treatment of steaming bone deficiency fire is Qing Gu San (cool the bones pills). This herbal formula is contraindicated during pregnancy. Qing Gu San contains the following herbs:

- Yin Chai Hu
- Zhi Mu
- Hu Huang Lian
- Di Gu Pi
- Qing Hao
- Qin Jiao
- Bie Jia
- Gan Cao

## Wellness Visits

This acupoint is effective for relieving exterior conditions and clearing heat. As a result, GV13 combines with GV14 and GV12 for the treatment and prevention of external pernicious influences, including bacterial infections, viral infections, and other exteriorly contracted illnesses. GV14, 13, and 12 are often combined with LI11 and ST36 for wellness visits.

## GV14 (Dazhui, Great Vertebra, 大椎)



### Translation

The name great vertebra (Dazhui) refers to the size of C7.

## Location

GV14 is on the midline of the back, below the spinous process of C7. Standard needling is oblique and upward insertion, approximately 0.5 to 1.0 cun.

**Caution:** the spinal canal is approximately 1.25–1.75 cun deep to the skin surface. Deep insertion is contraindicated. If an electric or numbing sensation extends to the limbs, remove the needle immediately.

## Innervations

GV14 is at the posterior ramus of the 8th cervical nerve and the medial branch of the posterior ramus of the 1st thoracic nerve.

## Intersection of All Yang Meridians

GV14 is the meeting point of the governing vessel with the six yang channels of the hand and foot.

## Functions

GV14 releases exterior conditions, regulates and opens the yang, quells the wind, clears the brain, and calms the spirit.

## Fire & Deficiency Heat

This point governs many conditions and is powerful for the treatment of chills, fever, and malaria. It is located above the kiln (GV13): the fire from the kiln at GV13 firms and supports GV14. As a result, GV14 at the apex of the back and kiln on the yang side of the body, is useful for the treatment of any fire or heat condition, whether excess or deficiency, and is also effective for balancing emotions.



## 4 Levels & 6 Stages

GV14 is often a useful point for the treatment of taiyang, shaoyang, and yangming stages of cold induced disorders and also also wei, qi, and ying level disorders.

## Indications

Indications for use include neck and shoulder pain and rigidity, seizures, epilepsy, febrile diseases (including tidal & afternoon fevers), fever with chills, paralysis and hemiplegia, mental disorders, coughing, and asthma. GV14 is also applicable for the treatment of eczema, bronchitis, pulmonary tuberculosis, blood diseases, emphysema, heat stroke, malaria, and hepatitis.

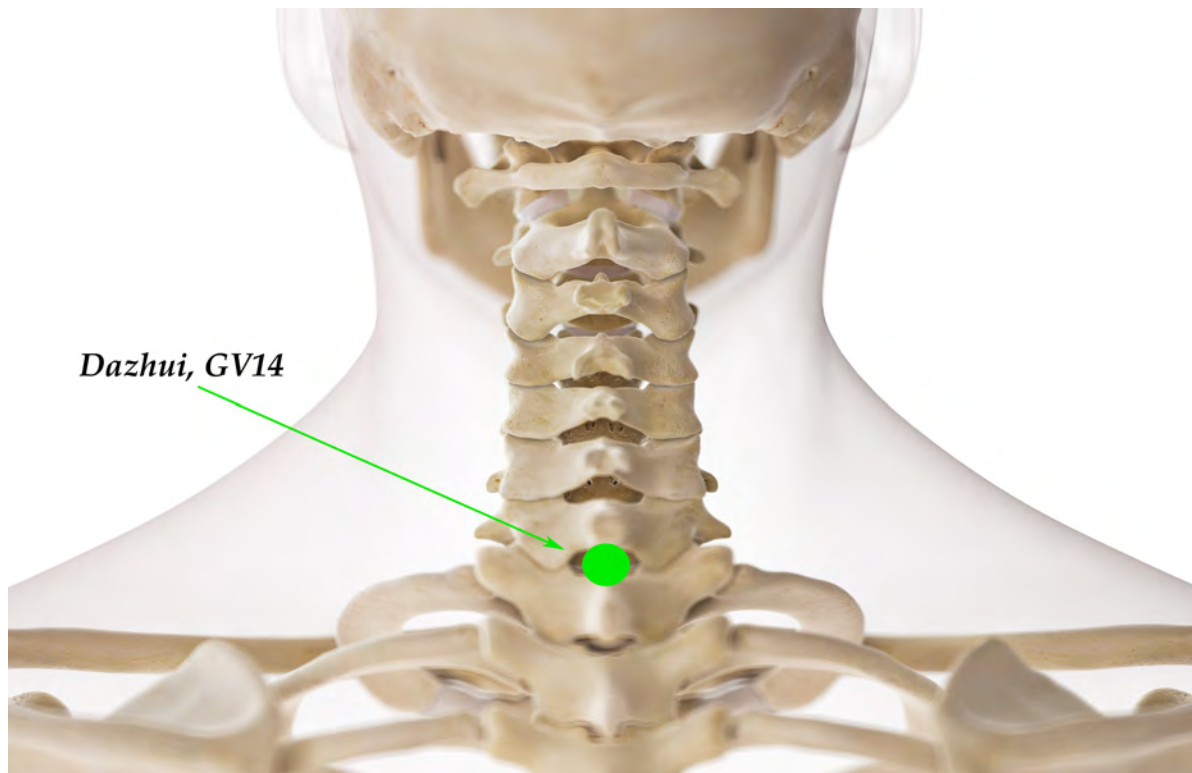
## Four Seas

There are four seas. GV14 is a sea of qi point. Notably, the governing vessel is the sea of the yang channels and GV14 is the sea of qi point on the sea of yang. This underscores the powerful healing properties of this vital acupuncture point. Texts also include ST9, CV17, GV15, and BL10 as sea of qi points. For excess, sea of qi points are used for chest pain, dyspnea, and flushed complexion. For deficiency, sea of qi points are indicated for the inability to speak. Many texts note that GV14 tonifies both qi and yang.

The sea of nourishment includes ST30 and ST36, which treat abdominal distention due to excess and the inability to eat due to deficiency.

The sea of blood includes BL11, ST37, and ST39. For excess, sea of blood points treat a feeling of the body being larger than it is. For deficiency, sea of blood points treat illnesses wherein the patient feels malaise but cannot ascertain what the illness is.

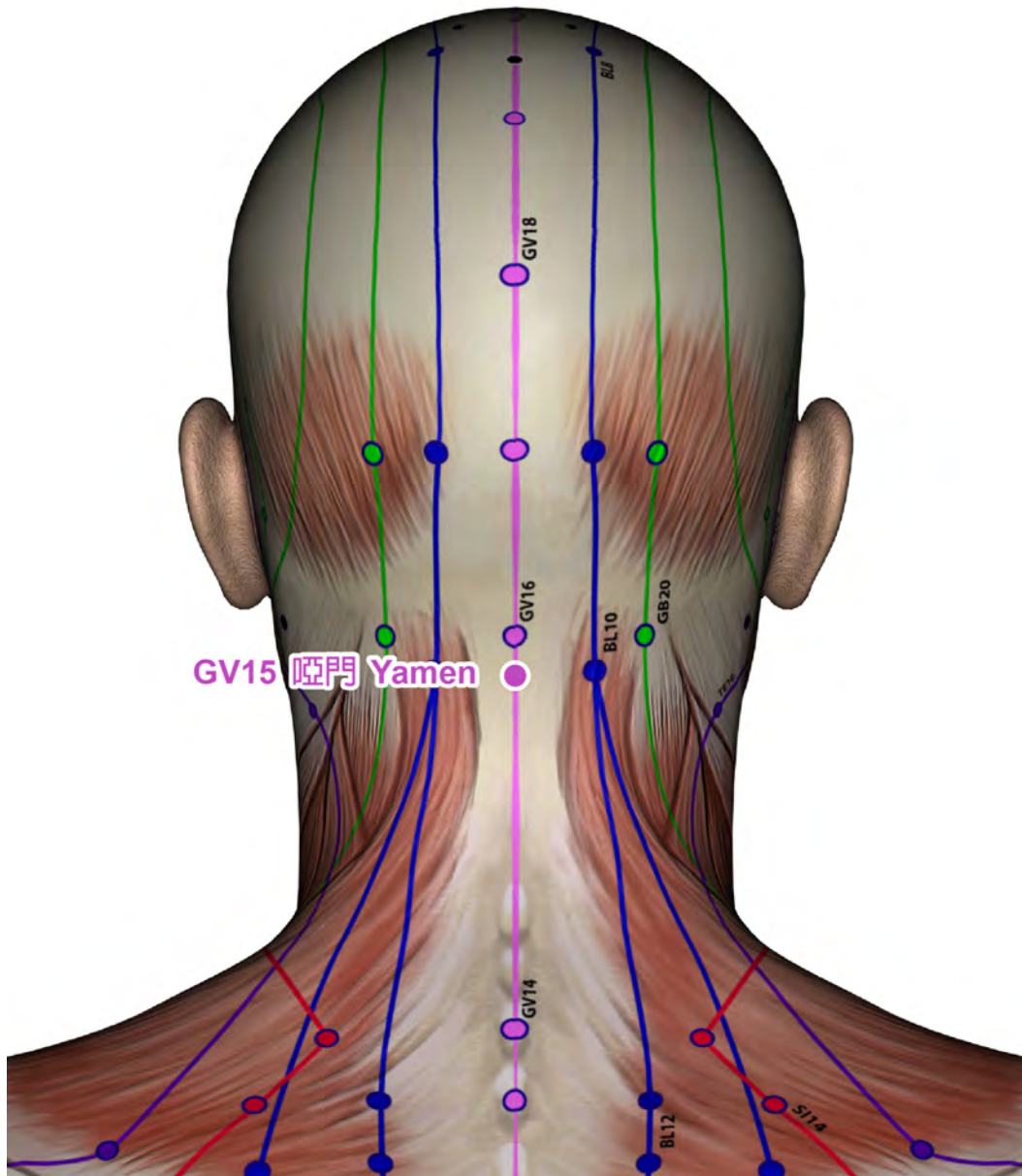
The sea of marrow includes GV20 and GV16 as its acupoints. For excess, these points treat a sensation of excess energy and for deficiency treat fatigue and cramping in the lower extremities.



## Infectious Disease

This acupoint is effective for relieving exterior conditions and clearing heat. As a result, GV14 combines with GV13 and GV12 for the treatment and prevention of external pernicious influences, including bacterial infections, viral infections, and other exteriorly contracted illnesses. GV14, 13, and 12 are often combined with LI11 and ST36 for wellness visits. This applies to active external pernicious influences, clearing lingering pathogenic factors, and recovery from chronic externally contracted illnesses.

# GV15 (Yamen, Mute Gate, 啞門)



## Location

Below the spinous process of C-1, 0.5 cun above the posterior hairline and in the depression 0.5 cun inferior to GV16. Use extreme caution: avoid deep insertion, do not angle upward (the medulla oblongata is present)!

Standard insertion is 0.5–0.8 cun perpendicularly and slightly inferiorly.

## Classical Point Notations

GV15 is the meeting point of the governing vessel with the yang linking vessel and is a seat of qi point and a sea of marrow point.

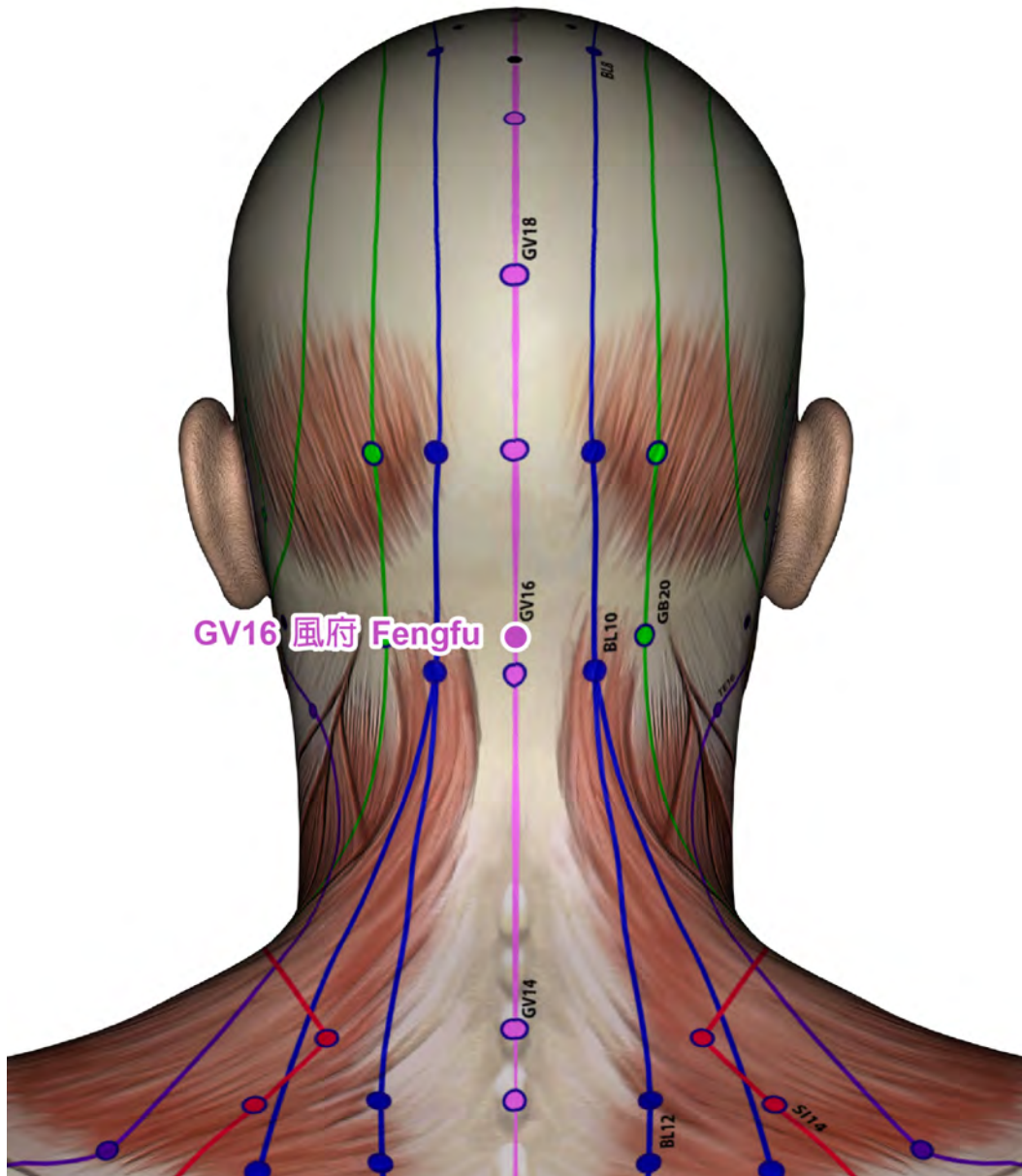
## Functions

GV15 clears the senses and consciousness. GV15 regulates the tongue.

## Indications

GV15 is a main point for the treatment of deaf-mutism from pre-natal causes. Indications for use include mental disorders, seizures, epilepsy, apoplexy, stiff tongue, aphasia, occipital headaches, and stiff neck. This point is also beneficial for the restoration of the sense of taste (ageusia), including for the treatment of post-acute COVID-19 syndrome related ageusia.

# GV16 (Fengfu, Wind Mansion, 風府)



## Location

GV16 is in the depression below the occipital protuberance, 1.0 cun above the posterior hairline and in the depression between the m. trapezius of both sides. Note that the external occipital protuberance is a bony protuberance at the base of the skull.

Use extreme caution: avoid deep insertion, do not angle upward (the medulla oblongata is present)!

Standard insertion is 0.5–0.8 cun perpendicularly and slightly inferiorly.

## Classical Point Notations

GV16 is a sea of marrow, window of sky, and a Sun Si-miao ghost point. GV16 is a meeting point of the governing vessel with the yang linking vessel.

## Functions

GV16 eliminates wind, calms the spirit, and benefits the sea of marrow (brain & spinal cord region), head, and neck.

## Emphasis

Common usage for GV16 (Wind Mansion) is for the treatment of internal wind, especially compared with GB20 (Wind Pool), which is often more employed for the treatment of external wind. However, GV16 is indicated for the treatment of influenza and both points are appropriate for internal and external wind.

Regarding taiyang stage wind-cold external pernicious influences, in chapter 60 of the *Essential Questions*, Qi Bo notes that when there is external wind with chills, sweating, headaches, aversion to cold, and heaviness of the body, needling GV16 is an appropriate choice.

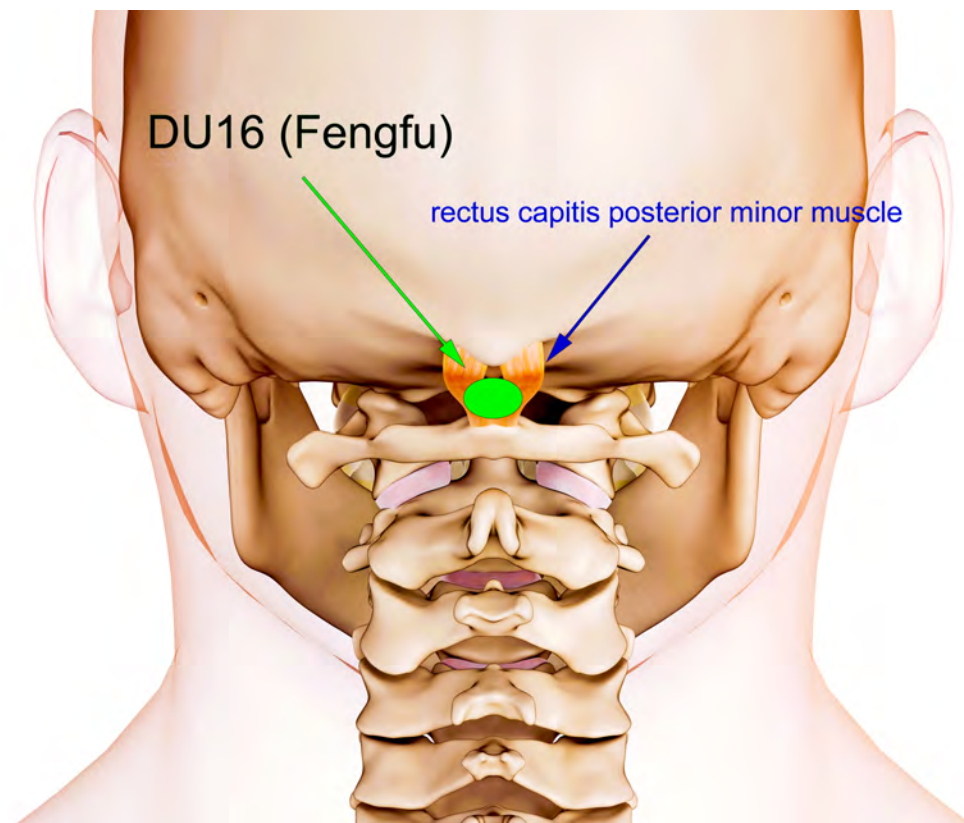
Conversely, GV16 is also very effective for the treatment of internal wind. GV16 is beneficial for the treatment of shen-spirit disturbances.

## Indications

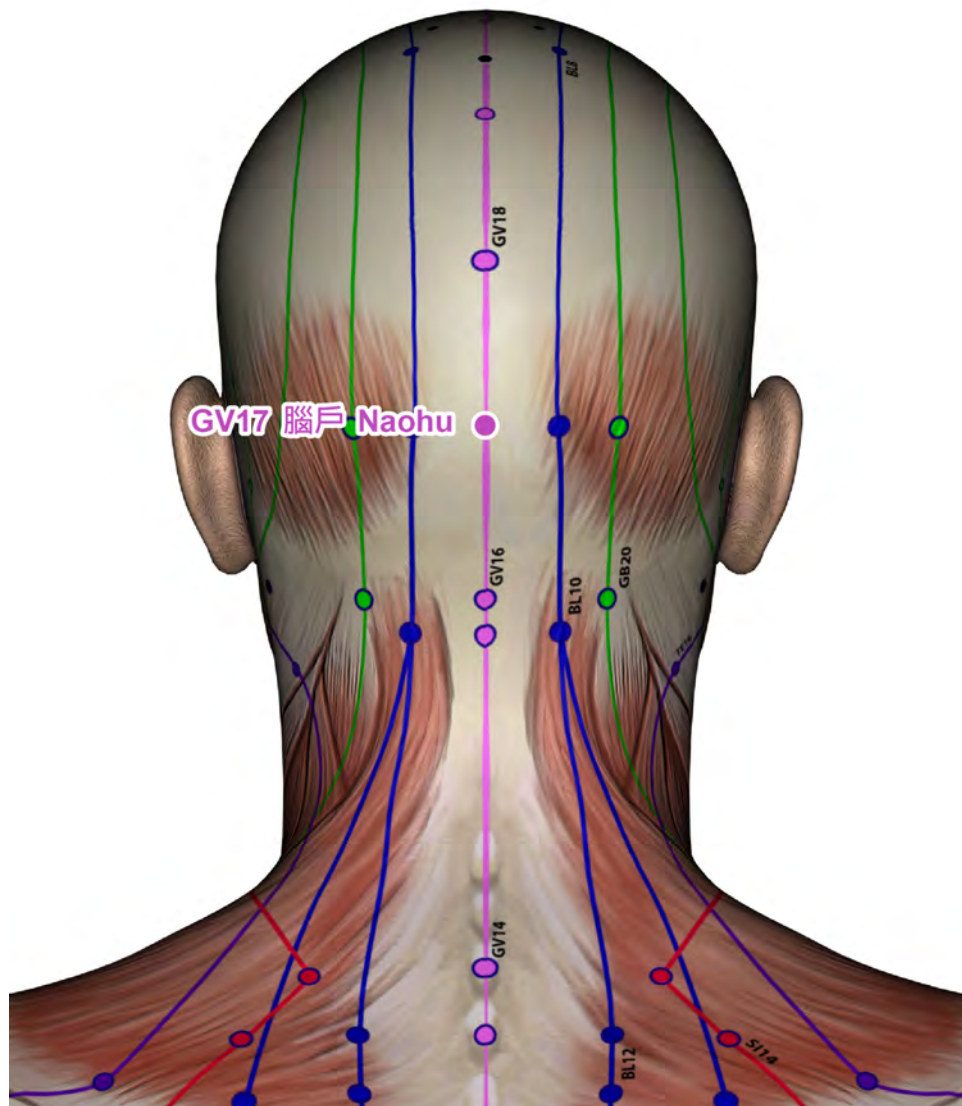
Indications for treatment include paralysis, influenza, deviation of the tongue, shen-spirit disturbances, confusion of the mind, insomnia, mania, schizophrenia, spasms or stiffness of the neck, neck pain, headaches, sore throat due to wind-cold or wind-heat, hemiplegia, apoplexy, and post-stroke syndrome.

## Shen-Spirit: Mental Disorders

This point is beneficial for the treatment of patients that talk to ghosts or to themselves in an incoherent fashion. Notably, this point is indicated for patients that hear voices.



## GV17 (Naohu, Brain's Door, 腦戶)



### Location

On the head midline, GV17 is 1.5 cun above DU16, superior to the external occipital protuberance. Standard insertion is transverse (superior or inferior) 0.5–1.0 cun.



## Upper Jiao (Burner) Excess & Lower Jiao Deficiency

Brain's Door communicates the brain with the body. This point treats excess in the upper and deficiency in the lower. As a result, this point treats excess heart fire and kidney deficiency. In this regard, this point treats excess worrying, hypertension, hearing voices, and insomnia.

## Classical Point Notation

GV17 is the meeting point of the governing vessel with the bladder channel.

## Heart, Kidney, & Spleen Communication

If the heart fire does not descend to warm the spleen earth, there is bloating, gas, loose stool, and diarrhea. If the kidneys are weakened there are weak knees, frequent urination, and lower sexual energy because the warmth of the heart fire element cannot descend to nourish and warm the ocean of the kidney. GV17 promotes heart & kidney communication and heart & spleen communication.

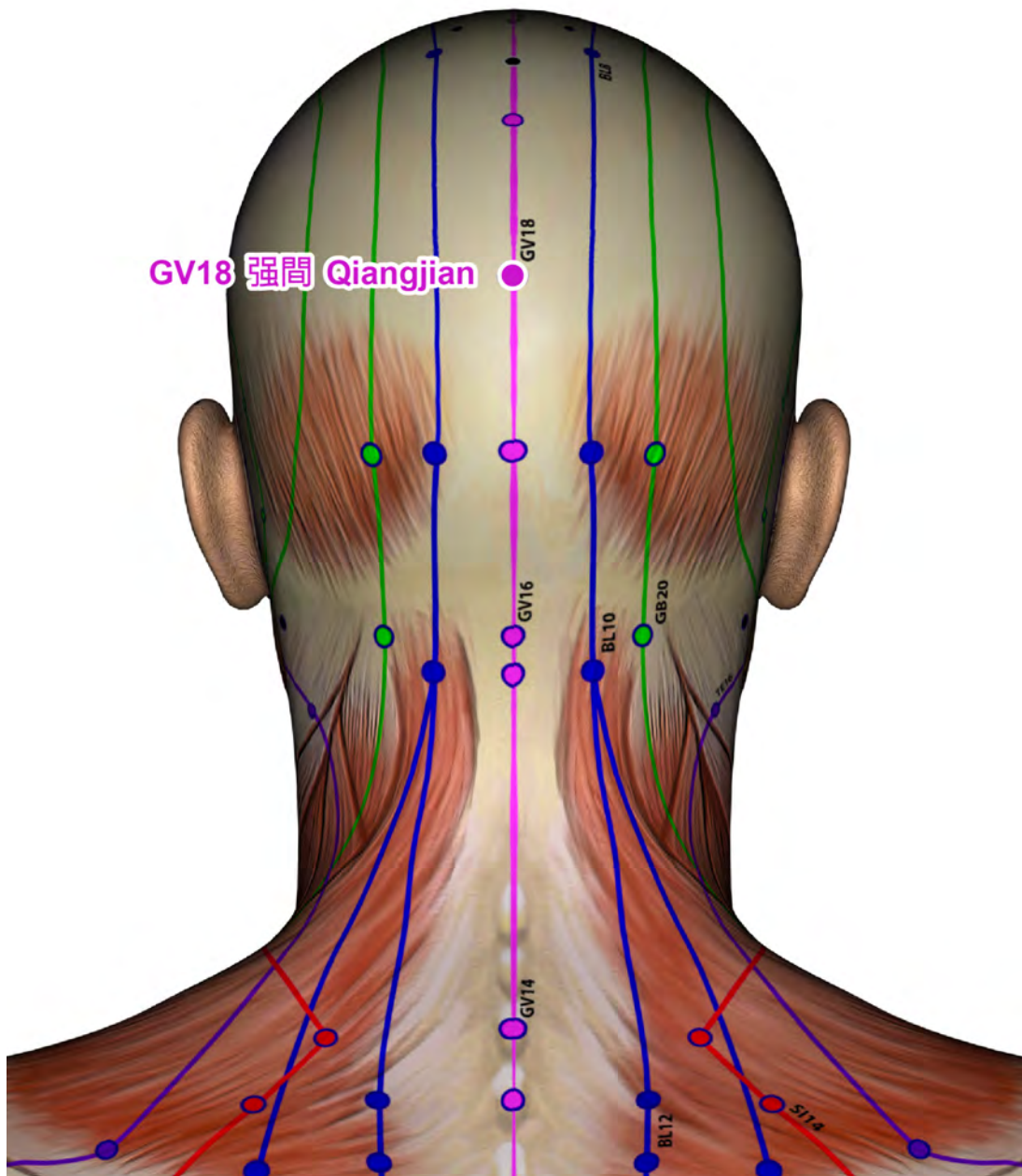
## Functions

GV17 benefits the eyes, calms the shen-spirit, and eliminates wind.

## Indications

Indications for treatment include pain of the eyes, blurry vision, yellow eyes, dimness of vision, red or swollen eyes, swelling of the head, pain at the top of the head, mania, epilepsy, giddiness, stiff neck, and bone pain.

# GV18 (Unyielding Fissure, Qiangjian, 強間)



## Location

GV18 is 4 cun above the midpoint of the posterior hairline. GV18 is 1.5 cun above GV17, on the line between GV16 and GV20. Standard insertion is 0.3–1.0 cun transversely.

## Translation

The term fissure (jian) in the name of the point refers to the location of the point in the scalp and the unyielding character (qiang) indicates something that is strong and rigid that may lead to spasms. As a result, this point is beneficial for the treatment of severe headaches and head pain. Jian indicates a location of fissures, where the point is located. Together, the characters of qiang with jiang indicate intransigence (refusal to change). This emphasizes the treatment of individuals with a stubborn mind.

## Functions

This point quells the wind and calms the shen-spirit.

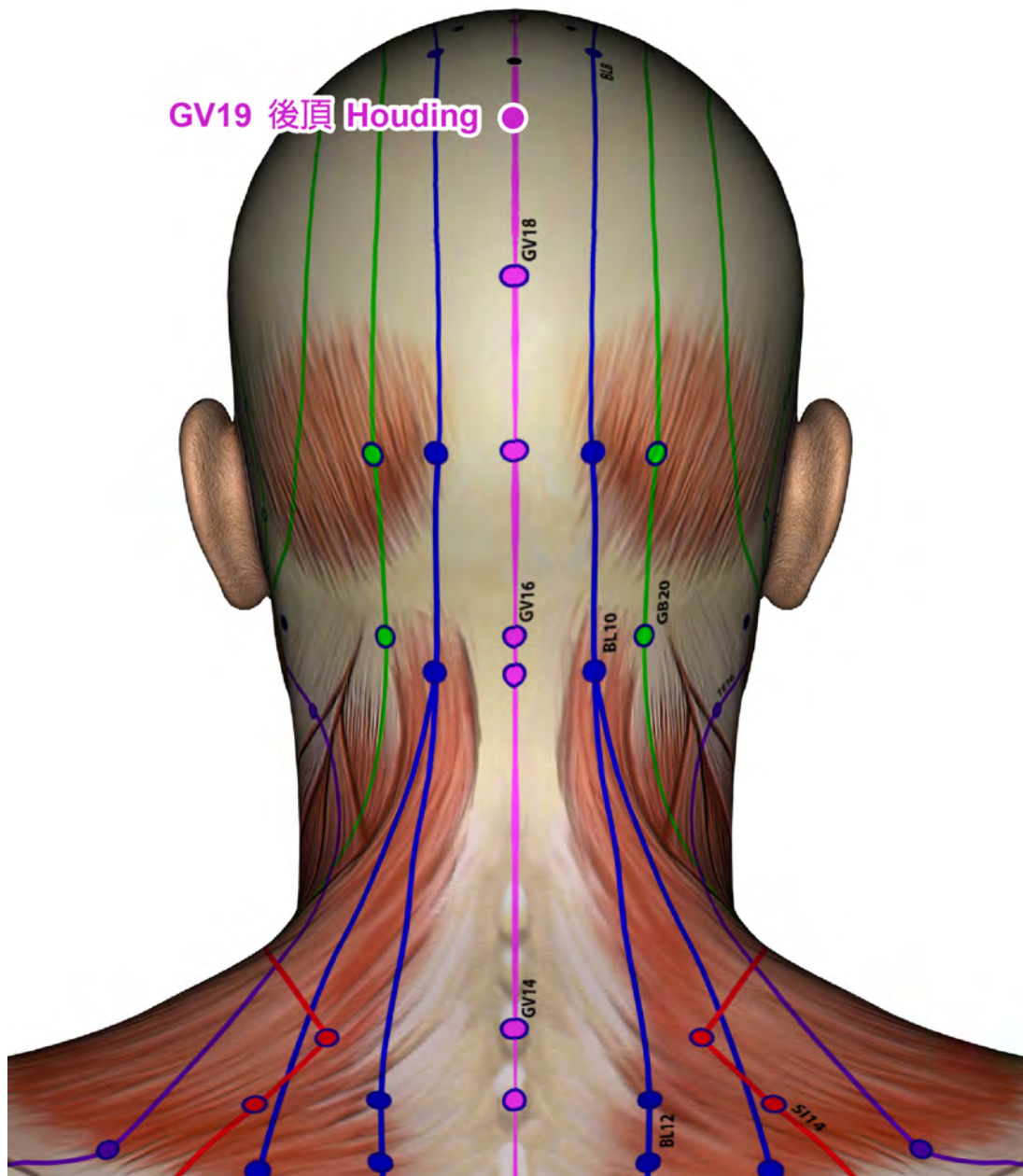
## Indications

This point treats severe headaches, mental disorders, insomnia, stiffness of the neck, eyes cannot move easily (especially due to stroke), drooling of saliva, blurry vision with dizziness, vomiting, and forgetfulness. This point treats spasms of the muscles due to brain disorders (including post-stroke syndrome).

## Combination

One classical treatment is to combine GV18 with ST40 (Fenglong) for the treatment of headaches.

# GV19 (Houding, Posterior Vertex, 後頂)



## Location

GV19 is located 5.5 cun above the midpoint of the posterior hairline. GV19 is 1.5 cun superior to GV18 and is also located by measuring 1.5 cun posterior and inferior to GV20. Standard insertion is 0.3–1.0 cun transversely.

## Energetics

The term posterior vertex (also translated as behind top or behind the crown) refers to the location of the point, behind the crown of the head (1.5 cun behind GV20). This point supports the qi of GV20 and has some redundant qualities of GV20. GV19 lifts the yang energy for patients whose energy does not move well.

## Functions

GV19 expels wind, alleviates pain, and calms the spirit.

## Indications

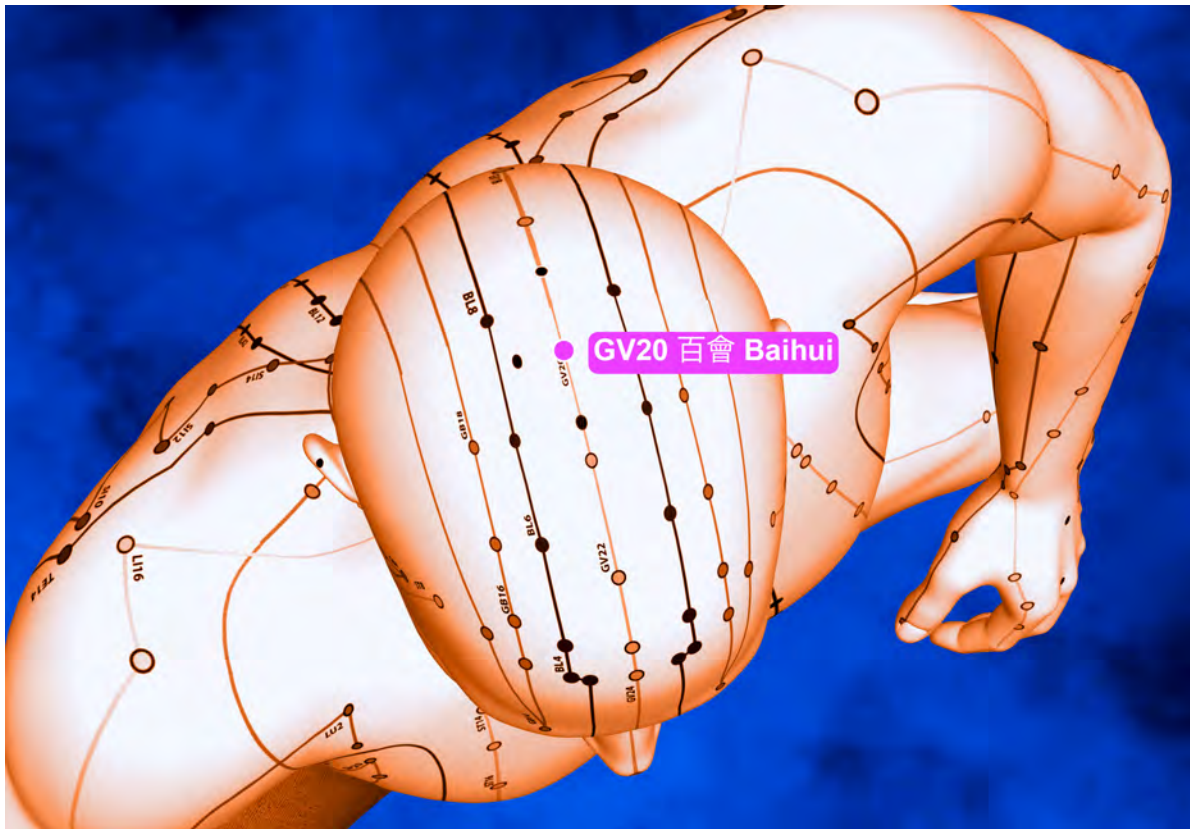
As a result, this point helps patients with insomnia, depression, bipolar disorder, mania, stiff neck, dizziness, and headaches (including migraines and vertex headaches). The emphasis is on treating deficiency of qi for patients that cannot psychologically motivate themselves because the qi has difficulty circulating. Additional indications for use include chills, neck pain, blurry vision, and eye disorders.

## Classic Combinations

GV19, GV20, and LI4 combine well to treat headaches with pain at the nape of the neck.

For headaches with eye pain, GV19, HT5, and GV20 are a classic combination.

## GV20 (Baihui, Hundred Convergences, 百會)



### Location

GV20 is located at the head midline, 7 cun above the posterior hairline, approximately on the midpoint of the line connecting the apex of the ears. GV20 is 1.5 cun superior to GV19 and is 5 cun posterior to the anterior hairline. This point is traditionally needed 0.5 to 1.0 cun transversely.

### Energetics

GV20 (DU20) is the meeting point of the governing vessel with the bladder, gallbladder, triple burner (sanjiao), and liver channels. GV20 is a sea of marrow point.

All the yang of the body converges with this point. Ancient texts note that all of the yang channels of the hands and legs reach GV20. Any condition with yang deficiency as its root is well treated with this acupoint.

## Functions & Indications

GV20 clears the senses, calms the spirit, extinguishes liver wind, and stabilizes ascendent yang.

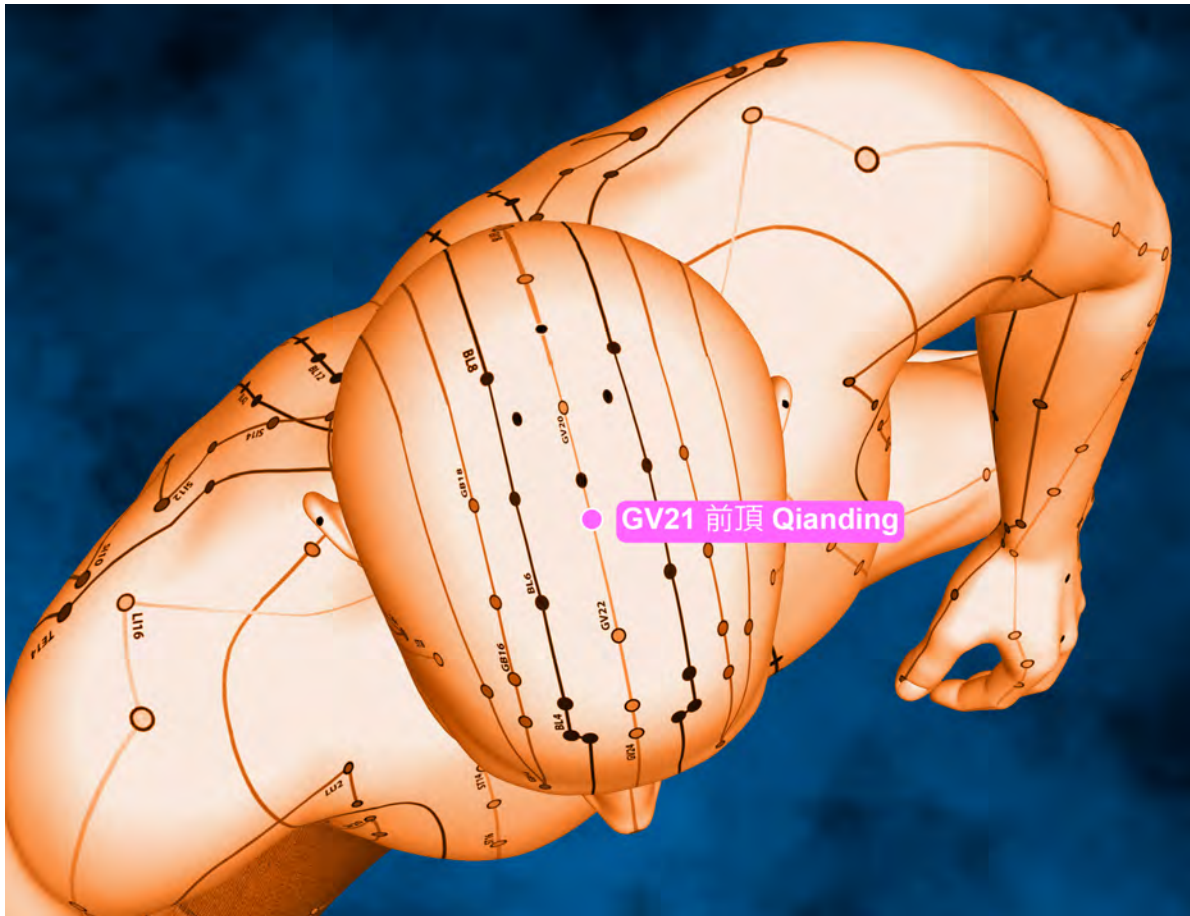
Traditional indications include headaches, vertigo, dizziness, tinnitus, nasal congestion, coma, shock, stroke, mental disorders including depression, hypertension, prolapsed rectum, emotional swings that are up and down, muscle spasms, and prolapsed uterus.

GV20 lifts the yang and also descends the yang. This is because GV20 harmonizes the yang balance of the body. If there is spleen yang deficiency with a prolapsed anus, gallbladder, liver, or uterus, this point lifts the yang qi to treat these conditions.

For depression with crying, loss of confidence, and phobias, GV20 helps lift the yang and restore stability. GV20 is also beneficial for patients with morning diarrhea due to kidney and spleen yang deficiency. Functional uterine bleeding and excessive menstrual bleeding due to deficiency are also treated by GV20, which helps the spleen and kidney yang hold the blood in the vessels.

GV20 helps restore balance by descending yang that has risen upwards. GV20 anchors the yang and therefore treats hypertension, red eyes, headaches, shoulder and neck pain, and a tendency to anger or excite easily. This point can sedate the excess desire for smoking. In essence, GV20 regulates the rise and descent of yang.

## GV21 (Qiangding, Anterior Vertex, 前頂)



### Location

GV21 is on the head midline, 1.5 cun anterior to DU20. This point is traditionally needled transversely 0.5 to 1.0 cun. This point is located where a branch of the frontal nerve communicates with a branch of the great occipital nerve.

This point is strictly contraindicated for infants at the ages where the fontanelle has not closed.



## Energetics

The term anterior vertex refers to the location of the point, in front of the crown of the head. This point (anterior vertex) treats excess yang that rises upwards, whereas GV19 (posterior vertex) emphasizes treatment of qi that is deficient.

## Functions & Indications

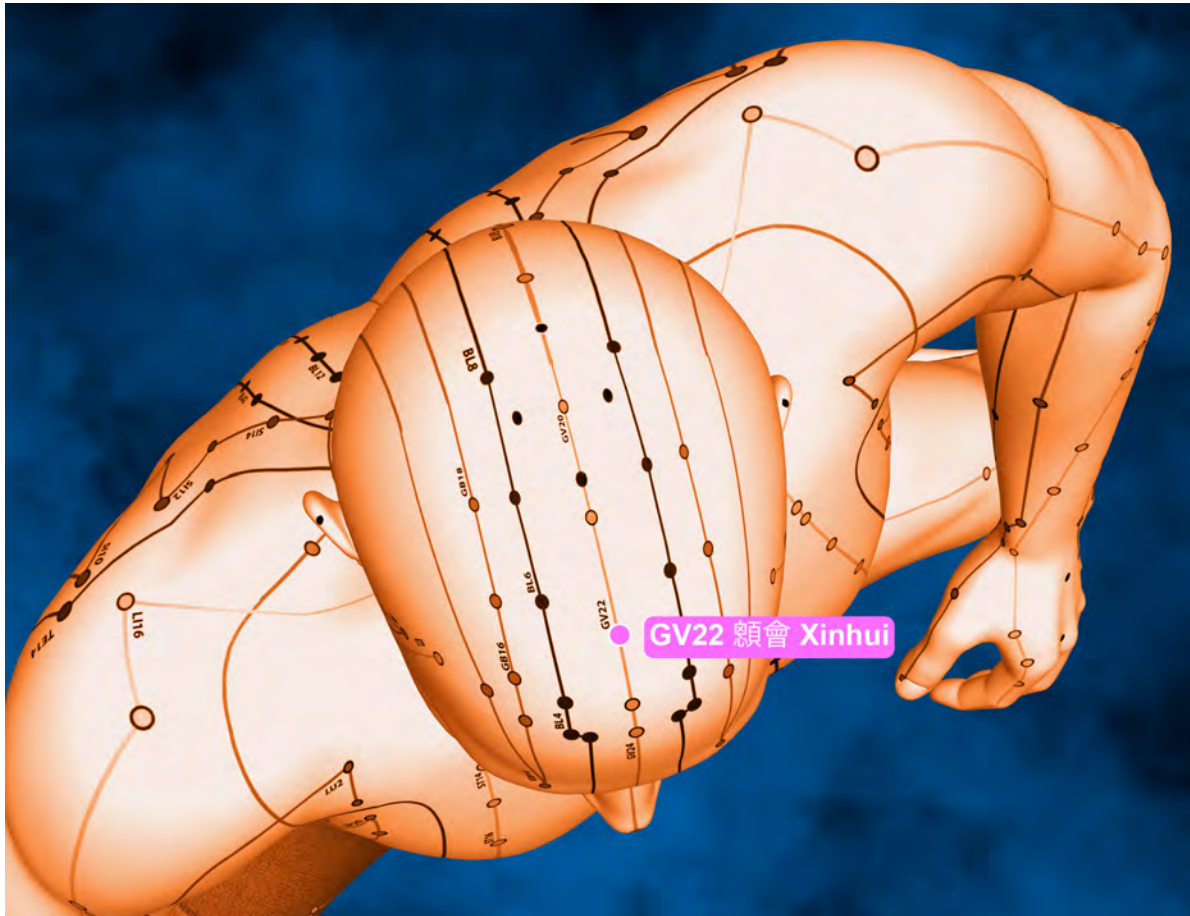
GV21 harmonizes excess yang for the treatment of headaches, angering easily, insomnia, and shoulder and neck pain. This point balances excess of yang and emphasizes the treatment of qi that is overexcited.

Note that GV21 translates as anterior vertex and GV19 translates as posterior vertex. GV19 lifts qi and treats deficiency and GV21 is more for excess conditions.

If there is liver yang excess wherein the qi stagnation attacks the spleen and stomach qi, GV21 can treat excess stomach acid secretion, bloating, constipation, or diarrhea.

Additional indications include convulsions including epilepsy, pain at the top of the head, face and eyes swollen, dizziness, vertigo, and rhinorrhea (runny nose).

## GV22 (Xinhui, Fontanelle Convergence, 囟會)



### Location

GV22 is 2 cun posterior to the midpoint of the anterior hairline, 3 cun anterior to GV20. GV22 is 1 cun posterior to GV23. This point is traditionally needled transversely 0.3 to 1.0 cun. Caution: do not needle this point for infants whose fontanelles have not closed. Use caution when using moxibustion at this point. GV22 is innervated by a branch of the frontal nerve.

## Energetics

An alternate name of this point is Heaven's Gate (Dingmen). This indicates that the yang shen (yang spirit) goes in and out of this gate from the heavens. Needling this point helps this point communicate with the heavens.

The heaven's gate (GV22) is open when in a fetal stage and the governing vessel and conception vessels are united as one channel at this stage of development. In addition, the five senses are sealed within the governing vessel and conception vessels in the fetal stage.

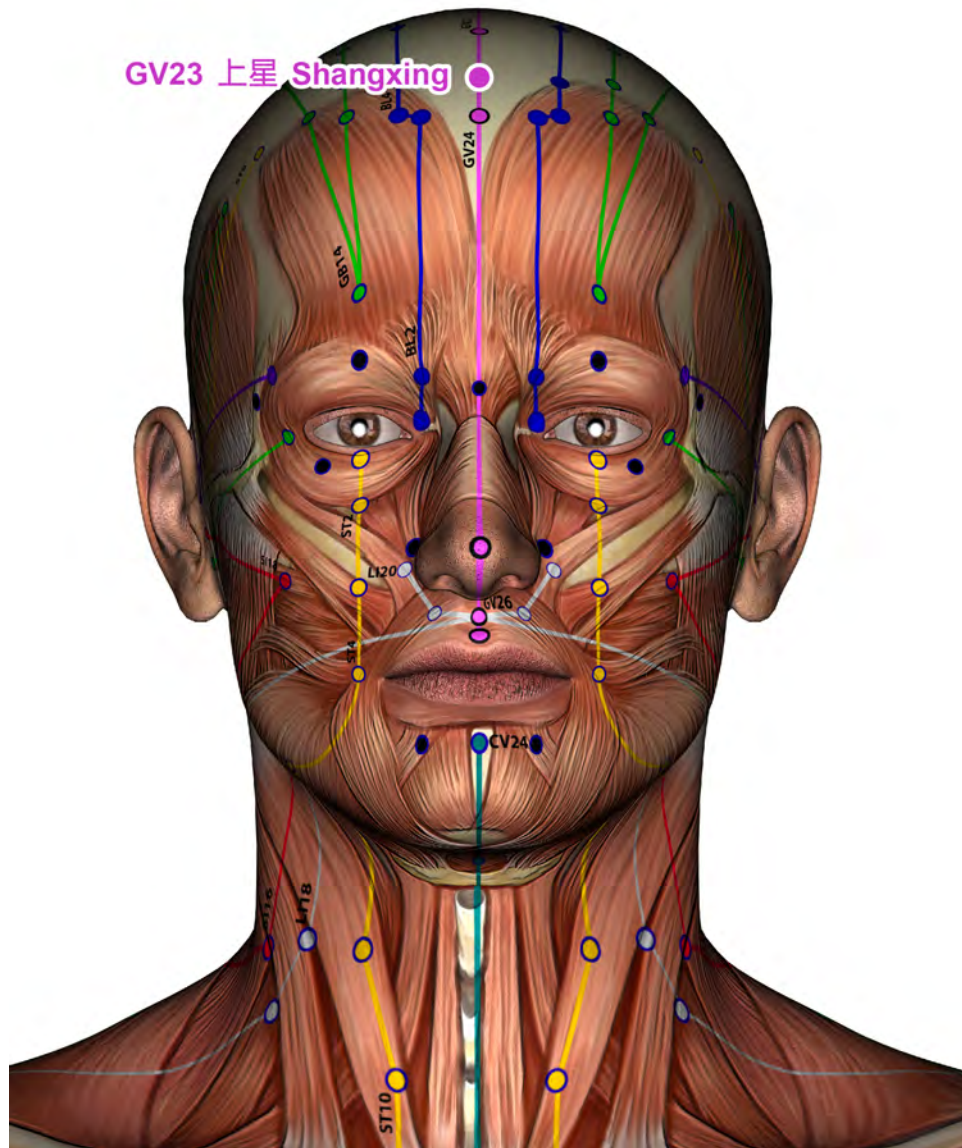
For newborns, GV22 slowly begins its closing process (including the closing of the fontanelle) and the senses open to the external environment. As a result, this acupoint is useful for the treatment of learning disabilities, autism, and slow development and growth.

## Indications

This point is indicated for the treatment of mental disorders, disturbances of the shen (spirit), childhood convulsions, rhinorrhea (runny nose), headaches, epistaxis, dizziness, and blockages of the nasal passages.



## GV23 (Upper Star, Shangxing, 上星)



### Location

GV23 is 1 cun directly above the midpoint of the anterior hairline. GV23 is also located 0.5 cun posterior to GV24. Transverse insertion 0.5–1 cun is traditionally used.

## Energetics

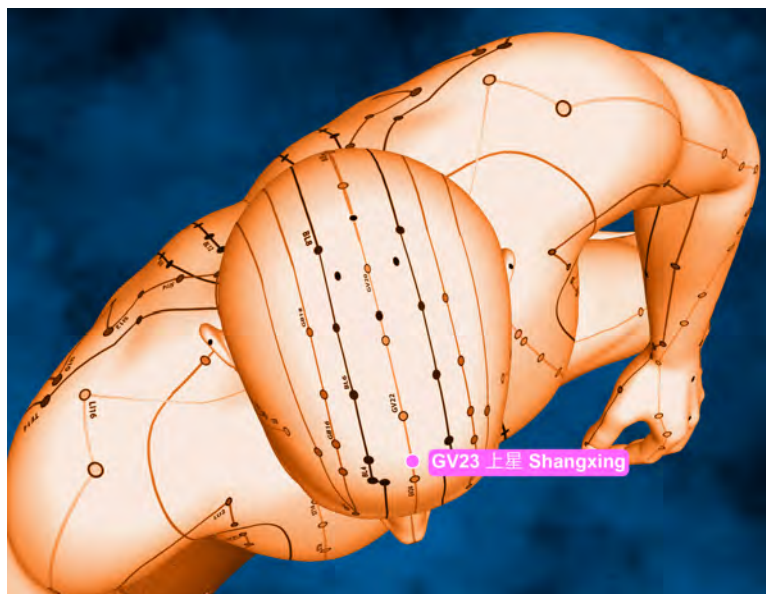
The upper star point (GV23) is a gathering of jing and qi at this point. If there is a balanced brightness of the upper star, this indicates a person is harmonized and healthy. If the light (aura) of the upper star is dim or confused, it indicates a lack of harmony and yin and yang concerns. If the light is dim, it is traditionally noted that the patient will have bad luck. This upper light references the aura from this point, which is visible from a spiritual dimension.

## Functions & Indications

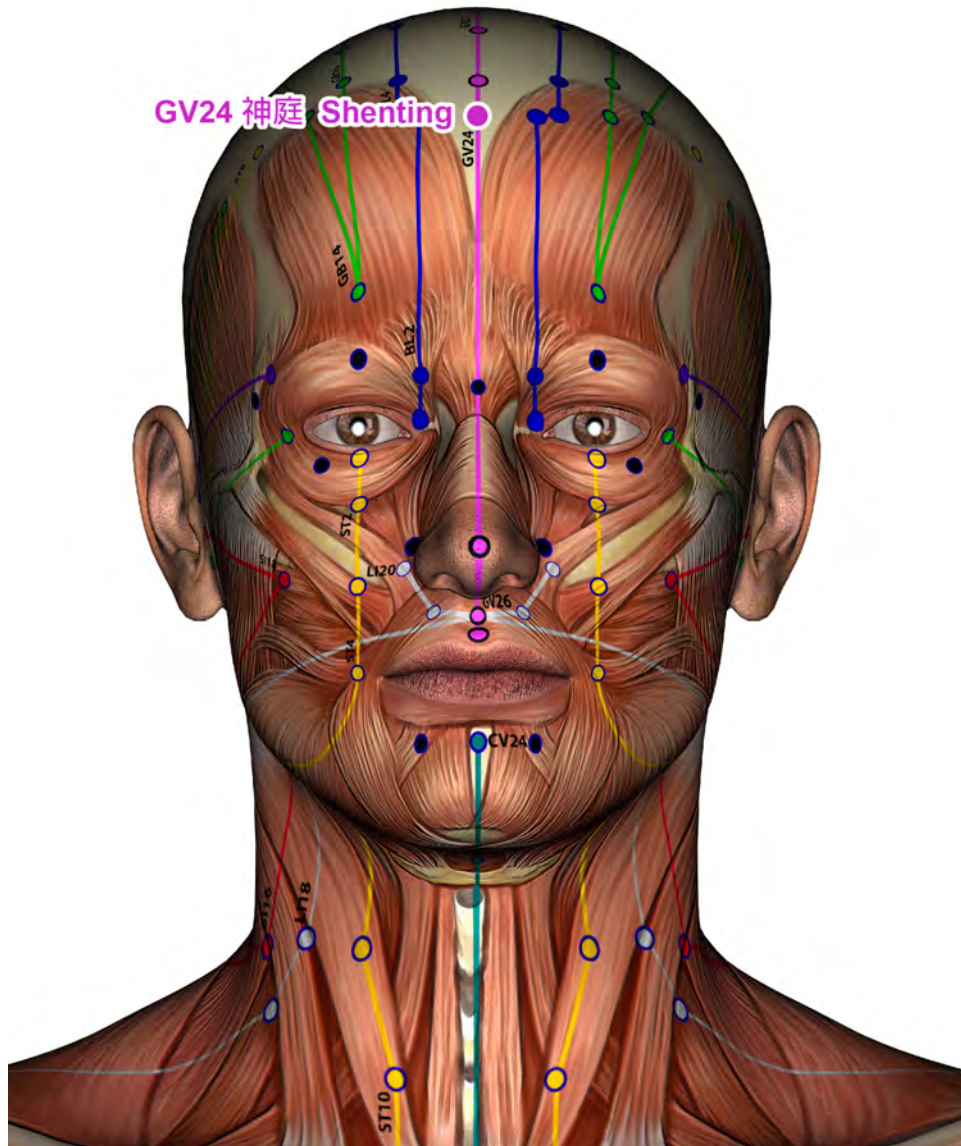
GV23 is a Sun Si-miao ghost point. GV23 disperses wind-heat and clears the nasal cavity.

This point balances the internal organ qi and regulates the shen (spirit). This point balances the qi and light at this point, whether excess or deficient.

GV23 is indicated for the treatment of insomnia, mental disorders (including bipolar disorder), epilepsy, depression, headaches, eye disorders (including myopia and pain in the eyes), epistaxis, rhinorrhea, nasal passage blockages, and atrophic rhinitis (ozena).



## GV24 (Shen-spirit Court, Shenting, 神庭)



### Location

GV24 is 0.5 cun directly above the midpoint of the anterior hairline. Transverse insertion 0.5–1 cun is traditionally used.

A branch of the frontal nerve and a branch of the frontal artery and vein are located at this acupoint.

## Energetics

The Shen-spirit Court (GV24) is the court of decision making. This point is connected with the brain, decisiveness, the head, nose, and eyes.

## Channel Connectivity

GV24 is the meeting point of the governing vessel with the bladder and stomach channels.

## Functions

GV24 benefits the brain, improves decisiveness, powerfully calms the shen (spirit), expels external wind, regulates internal wind, and benefits the head, nose, and eyes.

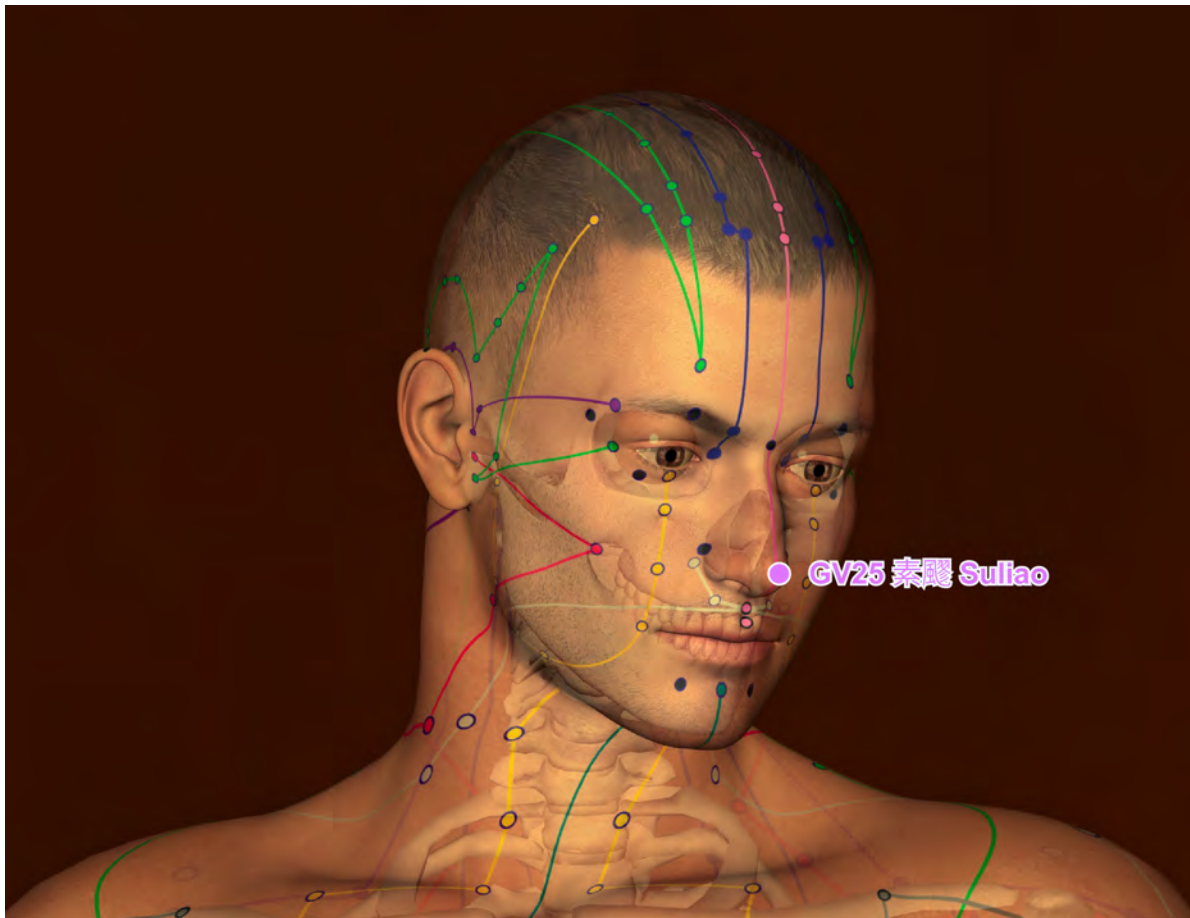
## Indications

Needling GV24 treats conditions including insomnia, bipolar disorder, dizziness, indecisiveness, mania, fear and fright, depression, headaches (including frontal headaches), epilepsy, vertigo, rhinitis, rhinorrhea, palpitations, post-stroke syndrome, and forgetfulness.

## GV24 Benefits GV23 Energetics

The application of GV24 treats the listed indications, improves patient health, and consequently benefits the light (aura) at the prior acupoint on this channel, GV23.

## GV25 (White Crevice, Suliao, 素膠)



### Location

GV25 is on the tip of the nose.

Perpendicular insertion 0.2–0.3 cun or transverse insertion superiorly 0.5–1.0 cun are used.

### Translations & Energetics

The first character, Su, has three translations. The first is the shade of white, which belongs to the the lungs and metal element. The refers to this point's ability to address issues of nasal discharge, rhinitis,



dyspnea, and loss of smell. In general, this refers to the treatment of nose and lung problems.

Another ancient translation of Su refers to the transparency of the face to show what are the health concerns within the body. There is a Chinese idiom that one can see their guest without makeup. This expression symbolizes the ability to see the true character of health beneath the exterior. The white or clear nose shows a healthy state within the body and a red nose may indicate an alcohol problem or another problem, including yangming channel disorders.

A third ancient translation of Su refers to prenatal. Su means supported by essence (jing). If the nose is healthy, the body is healthy. If the nose is dry or has an unhealthy appearance, this indicates that there may be a serious prenatal disorder or current postnatal disorder.

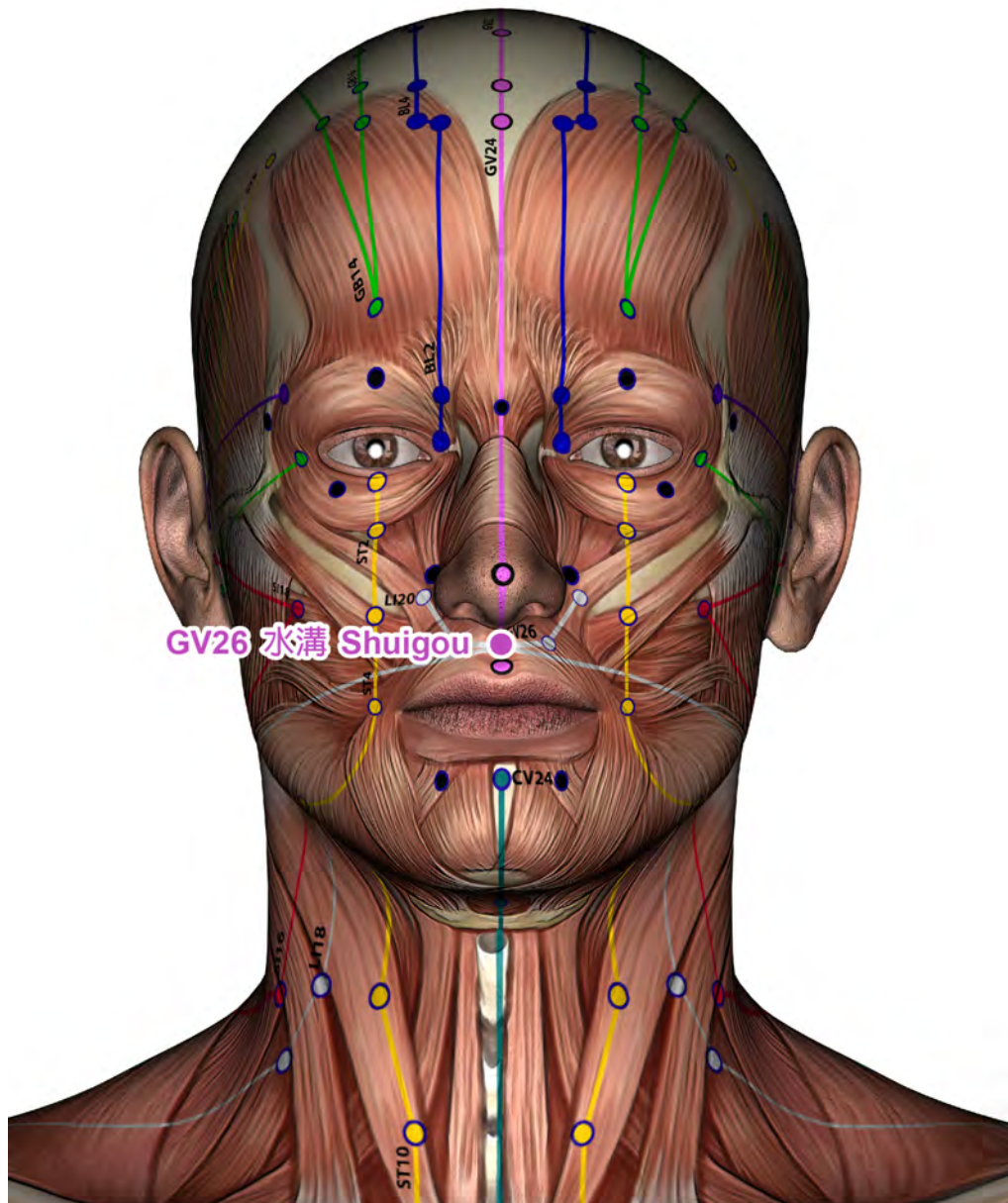
The second character, Liao, refers to the location of the point and a cleft that connects to the lungs, prenatal essence (jing), and life force. If the nose appears healthy, many conditions are more easily treated than if the nose appears unhealthy. The visual appearance of the nose gives insight into the overall prognosis.

## Functions & Indications

GV25 raises the yang, restores qi, clears the senses, drains heat and is indicated for the treatment of loss of consciousness, shock, nasal obstructions, epistaxis, rhinorrhea, rosacea, and red nose (including drinker's nose). This point may be used to reduce the effects of alcohol intoxication.

# GV26

(Water Ditch , Shuigou, 水沟)  
(Human's Middle, Renzhong, 人中)



## Location

On the midline of the body, GV26 is at the junction of the upper third and lower two thirds of the philtrum, near the nostrils.

Oblique insertion superiorly 0.3–0.5 cun is standard. A buccal branch of the facial nerve and a branch of the infraorbital nerve innervate this acupoint.

## Translations

There are two major translations for this point: Shuigou, Renzhong.

Renzhong is human's middle. The nose is upper and the mouth is below. Air goes to the nose with the qi of the heavens, the mouth receives the spleen qi of the earth and food. Between heaven and earth is the human. This is the person in the middle, where this point is located.

The term Shuigou refers to essence that looks like water (shui), which flows from the air in the nose towards the earth (and therefore food) at the mouth, and the human is in the middle. This point is the ditch between the air (nose) and food (mouth). The human is the middle where the water ditch (Shuigou) receives the energy of the heaven and earth.

## Functions & Channel Connectivity

GV26 is a Sun Si-miao ghost point. GV26 clears the senses, cools heat, calms the spirit (shen), and benefits the lumbar spine.

GV26 is a meeting point of the governing vessel with the large intestine and stomach channels.

## Indications

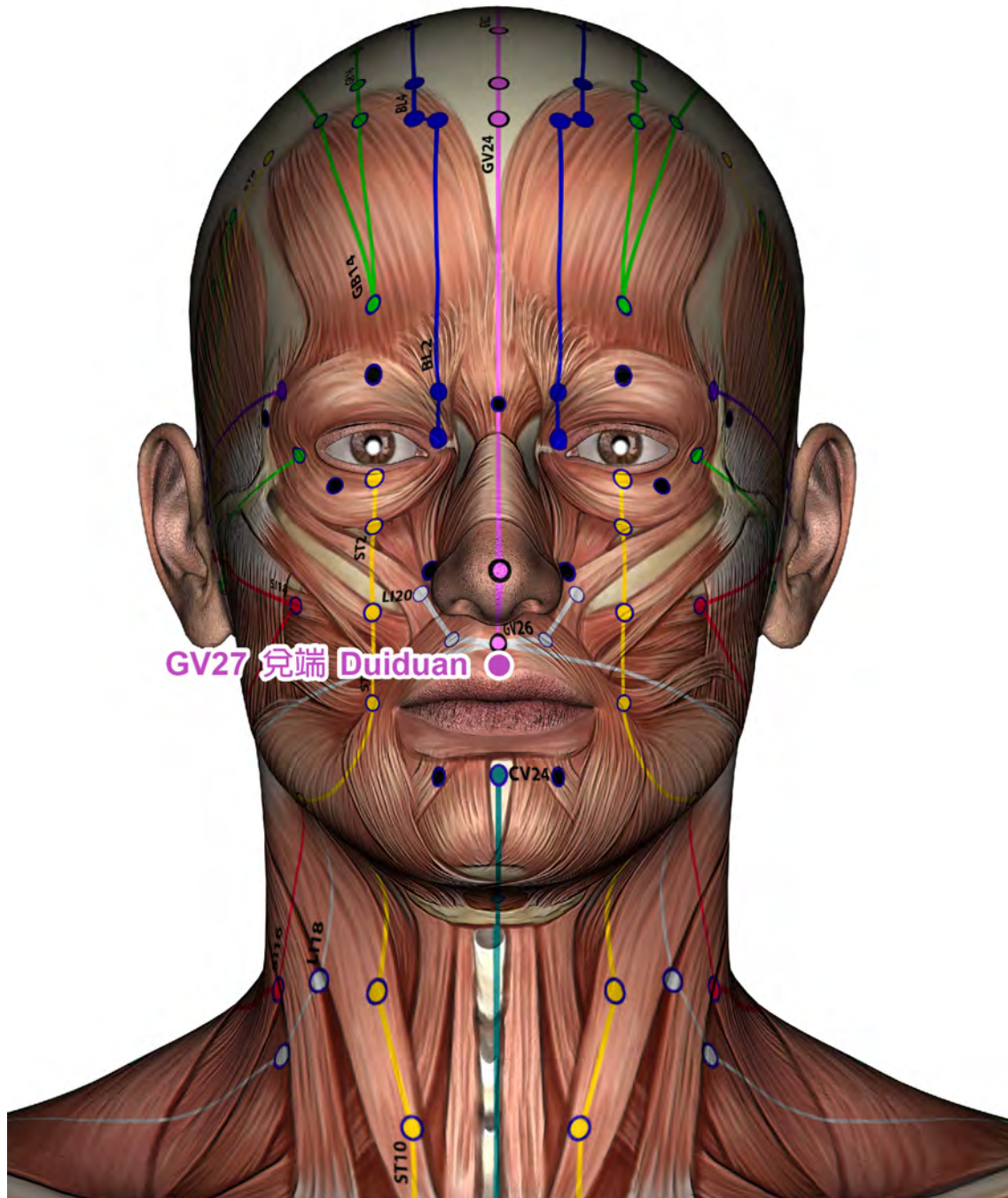
Indications include sudden loss of consciousness, coma, shock, sun-stroke, epilepsy, loss of consciousness due to stroke (apoplexy due to cerebral hemorrhage or stroke), tight jaw, mania, and edema of the body.

Traditional indications include mental disorders, seizures, apoplexy, trismus (i.e. lockjaw, bilateral restriction of the mouth opening), deviation of the eyes and mouth, facial edema, motion sickness, low back pain (especially acute cases), and low back stiffness.

For syncope due to fear with dilation of the pupils, acupressure (including pressure with the fingernails) may be applied to this point to revive the patient and restore the pupils to normal function. Modern usage finds needling this point effective for alleviation of drowsiness when driving a motor vehicle.



# GV27 (Borderline Exchange , Duiduan, 兌端)



## Location

GV27 is on the median tubercle of the upper lip, at the junction of the skin (philtrum) and upper lip.

Needling standard is oblique, superiorly 0.2–0.3 cun.

## Energetics

Dui means exchange and duan means end. Together, the idea is that one eats food through the mouth and then exchanges the food for jing-essence and power of qi.

Another meaning is that the governing vessel channel transfers yang qi at this point to GV28, wherein yang qi changes into jing (essence), which then transfers to the conception vessel.

## Functions & Indications

GV27 clears heat, benefits the mouth and lips, and calms the spirit.

This point is indicated for the treatment of lip disorders. Indications include vomiting saliva, toothache, canker sores (aphthous stomatitis), halitosis (i.e. bad breath, stomatodysodia), drooling, excess talking due to heart fire, and overeating (usually caused by liver qi stagnation or liver fire).

## GV28 (Yinjiao, Gum Convergence)



### Location

GV28 is located inside the mouth, in the superior labial frenulum of the mouth, at the junction of the gum and upper lip. The superior labial frenulum is a band of fibrous tissue on the midline connecting the upper lip and gum.

Standard insertion is oblique, superiorly 0.1–0.3 cun.

## Fire and Water

This is the last acupoint on the governing vessel. This point helps the governing vessel yang qi to transfer to the conception vessel, providing jing (essence) of yin. This is the transfer of yang to yin, from qi to jing. As a result, this point assists in the yang fire power of the heart to transfer to kidney water jing. This is a way that the heart and kidney communicate (fire and water). As a result, this point helps treat mental disorders. The kidney jing is able to sedate, regulate, and control fire.

GV28 helps jing water to nourish the fire of the heart. Especially for the elderly, the fire energy of the heart may not have the ability to active the kidney water. This reciprocal power helps treat impotence, frequency of urination, and infertility. This point has a two way relationship. The fire benefits the water and the reverse is also true, the water benefits the fire.

## Functions & Indications

GV28 is the meeting point of the governing vessel with the conception vessel and stomach channels. This point harmonizes the governing vessel and conception vessels, thereby harmonizing yin and yang. GV28 clears heat and benefits the gums and nose.

Indications include mental disorders, gum disorders (including swelling and pain), ulcers of the oral cavity, rhinitis, rhinorrhea, nasal polyps, acute wrist sprain, stiffness of the neck with the inability to turn the head, eczema, and psoriasis. This point helps to harmonize fire and water. GV28 helps moisture rise properly to reduce dryness of the skin. Overall, this point is responsible for the fire to descend properly and the water to rise properly.



# Research Section

## **Governing Vessels Acupoints in Research**

The following section reviews several pieces of research. Each study includes the use of governing vessel acupoints. The following is a list of articles covered in the research section:

**[MRIs Predict Acupuncture Migraine Treatment Success](#)**

**[Acupuncture Surpasses Drugs For Asthma](#)**

**[Acupuncture And Herbs Found Effective For Pneumonia Relief](#)**

**[Acupuncture Found Effective For Lumbar Disc Herniations](#)**

## **COVID-19**

This is a special section on COVID-19 research. (For additional research, visit the HealthCMi newsroom at the website for more research publications.)

## MRIs Predict Acupuncture Migraine Treatment Success



Acupuncture is effective for the treatment of migraines. Researchers from Harvard Medical School, Xidian University, and Capital Medical University find acupuncture effective for the reduction of migraine attacks. They discovered that a patient’s pre-treatment brain structure is predictive of the success rate achieved by acupuncture for the reduction or elimination of migraines. [1] Using MRIs and machine learning, specific patterns in brain gray matter prior to treatment were correlated with improved response rates to treatment.

Patients received three acupuncture treatments per week for a total of four weeks. Each acupuncture treatment lasted for a total of thirty minutes. The acupuncture points applied to all patients were the following:

- **GV20 (Baihui)**
- **GV24 (Shenting)**
- **GB13 (Benshen)**
- **GB8 (Shuaigu)**
- **GB20 (Fengchi)**

Patients receiving acupuncture were treated with sterile, filiform, single-use Hwato brand acupuncture needles (0.25 × 25 mm). The treatment group was compared with a sham acupuncture group to provide proper controls for the clinical trial. A Healthcare Medicine Institute (HealthCMI) review of the acupuncture needle choice underscores that the needles were 100% metal without any silicone coating. HealthCMI microscopy confirms that the acupuncture needles used in the study were made in the all-metal traditional filiform needle design with the pine leaf tip shape.

The investigators used a Siemens 3T MRI system. Data processing was achieved with a human neuroimaging system employing Statistical Parametric Mapping, which is a spatial process used for analysis of fMRIs. Voxel-based morphometry was used to determine differences in gray matter.

A total of 41 patients in the true acupuncture treatment group were included in the analysis. Responders were defined as having at least a 50% reduction in the number of days with a migraine. After four weeks of acupuncture treatment, 19 patients were responders. The researchers determined that all patients had similar pre-treatment baseline gray matter volumes in the cuneus, parietal, and frontal gyri. However, responders had pre-treatment similarities (longitudinal increases) in the left cuneus. Based on the findings, the researchers conclude that MRIs are potentially useful predictors of acupuncture patient outcome rates.

This highlights a way to predict acupuncture’s effectiveness as a treatment method for the resolution or management of migraines, which afflict over 1 billion people every year. It is estimated that migraines are the number one cause of disability in patients ages 15–49. [2] Notably, after four weeks of acupuncture treatment, responders had significantly fewer days with migraines. There were 19 responders and 22 non-responders.

The researchers note that treatment personalization is an “important trend” in medicine. They suggest that MRIs may contribute to determining patient outcomes. The data-driven machine learning process used in the investigation had an 83% accuracy rate in determining responders from non-responders. They indicate that the MRI screening method may help to improve the cost-effectiveness of access to care.

A HealthCMi acupuncture continuing education analysis of the study finds several limitations. Although a careful biomedical screening for patients with migraines was used, there lacked any traditional Chinese medicine differential diagnostics regarding either patient intake or treatment. This may have contributed to a significant underestimation of the success rate of acupuncture therapy.

Prof. Jeffrey Pang, L.Ac. (HealthCMi author & Five Branches University department chair of internal medicine) notes that traditional Chinese medicine pattern differentiation (bian zheng) and biomedical disease differentiation (bian bing) are both important and relevant to treatment parameters. Bian zheng is based on Chinese medicine principles (e.g., zang-fu syndromes, 8 parameters, 6 stages, 4 levels, channel diagnostics, san jiao disorders, and qi, blood, & fluid disorders). Bian bing refers to naming a specific disease based on location or other etiology by disease differentiation (e.g., migraine, cluster headache, tension headache, sinus headache, post-traumatic headache).

Only one acupuncture treatment protocol was used, with a fixed set of acupuncture points for all patients. In an actual acupuncture clinic, specific presentations and diagnostic considerations are used to modify primary and secondary acupuncture point selections and needle techniques. This often contributes to improved patient outcome rates. Common acupuncture points indicated for the treatment of headaches were not part of the study protocols, including: LI4 (Hegu), LV3 (Taichong), ST8 (Touwei), TB5 (Waiguan), BL60 (Kunlun), Anmian (NHN-54).

The lack of traditional Chinese medicine diagnostics and a fixed set of acupuncture points are not unusual in acupuncture investigations. This is often an issue of funding, timing, and resources. Multi-arm studies often include additional modalities including micro-acupuncture, electroacupuncture, moxibustion, Chinese medicine dietetics, Tui-na massage, and Chinese herbal medicine.

References:

1. Yang, X.J., Liu, L., Xu, Z.L., Zhang, Y.J., Liu, D.P., Fishers, M., Zhang, L., Sun, J.B., Liu, P., Zeng, X. and Wang, L.P., 2020. Baseline Brain Gray Matter Volume as a Predictor of Acupuncture Outcome in Treating Migraine. *Frontiers in Neurology*, 11, p.111.

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*Beijing Hospital of Traditional Chinese Medicine, Capital Medical University.*

*China Academy of Chinese Medical Sciences.*

2. GBD 2016 Headache Collaborators. Global, regional, and national burden of migraine and tension-type headache, 1990-2016: a systematic analysis for the global burden of disease study 2016. *Lancet Neurol.* (2018) 17:954–976.

## Acupoint Review: GV20, GV24

The research team included two governing vessel acupoints into the migraine treatment standardized protocol: GV20 (Baihui), GV24 (Shenting).

### GV20

GV20 is a sea of marrow point and ancient texts note that all of the yang channels of the hands and legs reach GV20. Since the sea of marrow is the brain and the location of the acupoint is local for head pain, along with GV20 reaching all of the yang channels, this acupoint choice is consistent with the jing luo (channel and collateral) system.

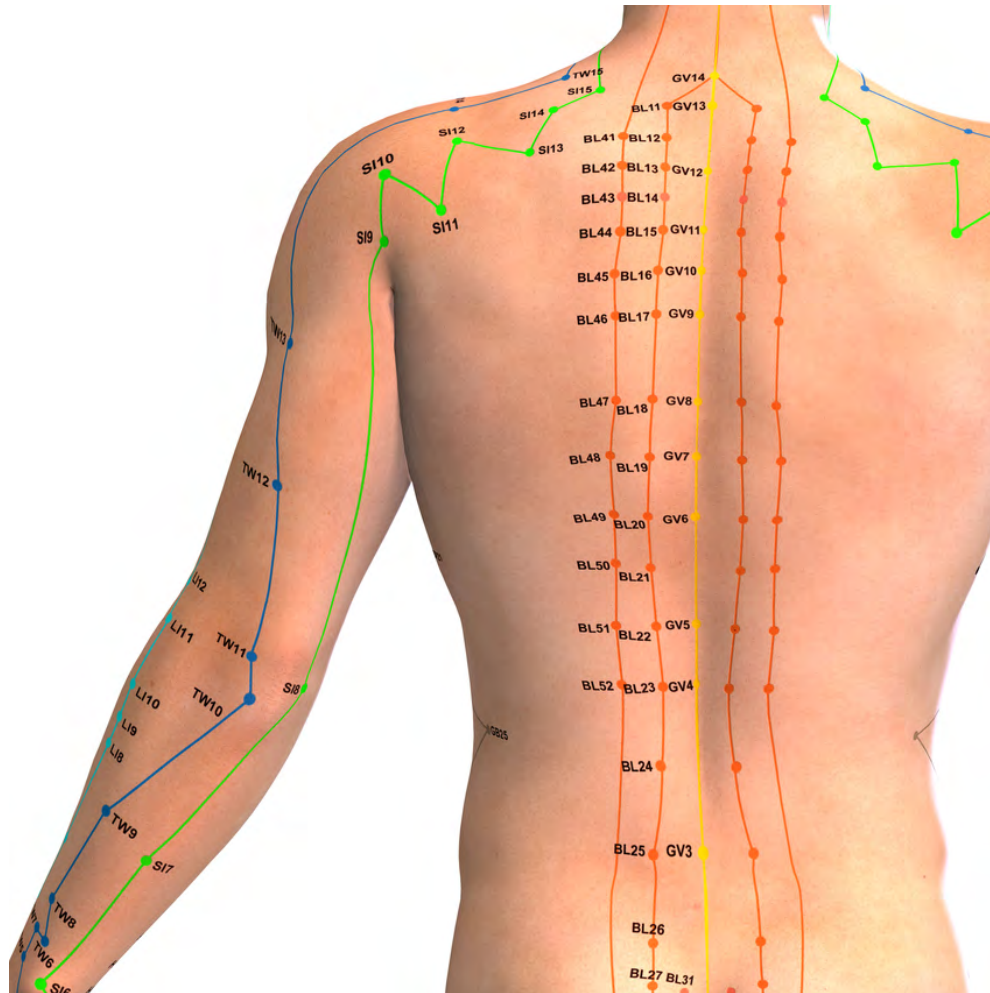
According to functions and indications, GV20 is a good choice because it clears the senses, calms the spirit, extinguishes liver wind, and stabilizes ascendent yang. Traditional indications include headaches, vertigo, dizziness, tinnitus, nasal congestion, coma, shock, stroke, mental disorders including depression, hypertension, prolapsed rectum, emotional swings that are up and down, muscle spasms, and prolapsed uterus.

### GV24

GV24 is the meeting point of the governing vessel with the bladder and stomach channels. GV24 benefits the brain, powerfully calms the shen (spirit), expels external wind, regulates internal wind, and benefits the head, nose, and eyes.

Needling GV24 treats conditions including insomnia, bipolar disorder, dizziness, indecisiveness, mania, fear and fright, depression, headaches, epilepsy, vertigo, rhinitis, rhinorrhea, palpitations, post-stroke syndrome, and forgetfulness. From a clinical perspective, GV24 is commonly used for the treatment of headaches and migraines, often with rapid results.

# Acupuncture Surpasses Drugs For Chronic Asthma Treatment



Acupuncture outperforms drug therapy for the treatment of chronic asthma. Researchers from Xiamen Chinese Medicine Hospital (a Fujian Traditional Chinese Medical University affiliate) compared the efficaciousness of acupuncture with salmeterol xinafoate plus fluticasone propionate drug therapy for the treatment of chronic asthma. Salmeterol xinafoate is a bronchodilator and fluticasone propionate is an inhaled corticosteroid used to control asthma. Drug therapy achieved an 88.9% total effective rate and acupuncture achieved a 93.3% total effective rate. [1]

All patients underwent immune function and pulmonary ventilation function assessments before and after treatments. The immune function indicators used in the study included immunoglobulin G (IgG), IgM, IgE, peripheral T lymphocytes (CD3+), helper T lymphocytes (CD4+), suppressor T lymphocytes (CD8+), and the ratio of CD4+/CD8+. IgG, IgM, and IgE are antibodies produced by the body. High levels of IgE are correlated with severe symptoms. In addition, asthma patients are usually found with lower CD3+ and CD4+ levels and CD4+/CD8+ ratio. The pulmonary ventilation function was measured by peak expiratory flow (PEF), forced expiratory volume in one second (FEV1), and forced vital capacity (FVC). Higher levels of these three parameters are correlated with an improved function of pulmonary ventilation.

For both groups, the values of IgG, IgM, CD3+, CD4+, and the CD4+/CD8+ ratio were higher than those before treatment, while IgE and CD8+ were lower than those before treatment. There was a statistically significant difference before and after treatment and the acupuncture group significantly outperformed the control group. The values of FEV1, PEF, and FVC for both groups were higher than those before treatment. There was a statistically significant difference before and after treatment and the acupuncture group significantly outperformed the control group.

A total of 180 patients from the acupuncture and respiratory departments of Xiamen Chinese Medicine Hospital were evaluated in the study. Participants were randomly divided into an acupuncture treatment group and a drug control group, with 90 patients in each group. Inclusion criteria were as follows. All participants were diagnosed with chronic asthma according to the Guidelines for the Prevention and Treatment of Bronchial Asthma published by the Chinese Medical Society Respiratory Branch. In addition, patients participating in the study were categorized into 1 of 4 tiers:

**Intermittent persistent (level 1):** symptoms <one time per week, short duration, nighttime asthma symptoms  $\leq 2$  times per month, percentage of predicted FEV1 value  $\geq 80\%$  or



PEF  $\geq$ 80% of the personal best value, PEF or the mutation rate of FEV1  $<$ 20%.

**Mild persistent (level 2):** symptoms  $\geq$ one time per week but  $<$ one time per day), may affect physical activities and sleep, nighttime asthma symptoms  $>$ two times per month but  $<$ one time per week, percentage of predicted FEV1 value  $\geq$ 80% or PEF  $\geq$ 80% of the personal best value, PEF or the mutation rate of FEV1  $>$ 20% but  $<$ 30%.

**Moderate persistent (level 3):** symptoms occur daily and affect physical activities and sleep, nighttime asthma symptoms  $\geq$ two times a week, percentage of predicted FEV1 value accounts  $>$ 60% but  $<$ 79% or PEF 60%–79% of the personal best value, PEF or the mutation rate of FEV1  $>$ 30%.

**Severe persistent (level 4):** symptoms occur daily, frequent occurrences, frequent nighttime asthma symptoms, limited physical activities due to asthma, percentage of predicted FEV1 value accounts  $<$ 60% or PEF  $<$ 60% of the personal best value, PEF or the mutation rate of FEV1  $>$ 30%.

The statistical breakdown for each randomized group was as follows. The treatment group had 50 males, 40 females, mean age 40 years, average course of disease 9.2 years. The control group had 47 males, 43 females, mean age 40 years, average course of disease 9.2 years. Both groups were equivalent in all relevant demographics before treatment.

### **Drug and Acupuncture Group Treatments**

For the drug control group, level 1 and 2 patients received one inhalation (50  $\mu$ g of salmeterol xinafoate and 100  $\mu$ g of fluticasone propionate) each time, twice daily (one in the morning and one in the evening). Level 3 and 4 patients received two inhalations each time, twice daily (one in the morning and one in the evening). Each treatment course consisted of 20 days of drug treatment followed by a 2-day break before the next course. All drug group patients received 4 treatment courses in total.

The acupuncture group received manual acupuncture at the following acupoints:

- **GV14 (Dazhui)**
- **BL13 (Feishu)**
- **CV17 (Danzhong)**
- **EX-B1 (Dingchuan)**
- **PC5 (Jianshi)**
- **TB6 (Zhigou)**
- **KD3 (Taixi)**
- **ST36 (Zusanli)**

Treatment commenced with patients in a seated position. After disinfection of the acupoint sites, a 0.30 mm × 40 mm or 0.25 mm × 25 mm needle was inserted into each acupoint. For Dazhui and Zusanli, needles were inserted perpendicularly to a depth of 25–30 mm. For Feishu, the needle was inserted at a 15 degree angle towards the spine, reaching a depth of 15–25 mm. For Dingchuan, the needle was inserted at a 15 degree angle towards the spine, reaching a depth of 15 mm. For Danzhong, the needle was inserted transverseley upward to a depth of 25 mm. For Zhigou and Jianshi, needles were inserted perpendicularly to a depth of 20–30 mm. For Taixi, the needle was inserted perpendicularly to a depth of 25 mm.

Dazhui, Feishu, Taixi, and Zusanli were applied with tonifying manipulation techniques. Danzhong, Dingchuan, Zhigou, and Jianshi were applied with attenuating techniques. The needles were manipulated every 10 minutes during a 30-minute treatment time, for a total of three times. The acupuncture treatment was conducted every two days.

The results indicate that acupuncture is more effective than administration of medications for the treatment of chronic asthma. The

study mentioned in this report demonstrates that acupuncture can improve immune system and pulmonary ventilation function for patients with chronic asthma.

#### Reference:

1. Xie YL, Wan WR, Zhao YL, Xie JJ, Wu QY. Impacts on Asthma at Persistent Stage and Immune Function in the Patients Treated with Acupuncture for Warming Yang and Benefiting Qi [J]. *Chinese Acupuncture*, 2015,35(11):1089-1093.

## Acupoint Review: GV14

The research team included GV14 into the chronic asthma treatment protocol. GV14 is the meeting point of the governing vessel with the six yang channels of the hand and foot. GV14 releases exterior conditions, regulates and opens the yang, quells the wind, clears the brain, and calms the spirit.

GV14 is useful for the treatment of any fire or heat condition, whether excess or deficiency, and is also effective for balancing emotions. Indications for use include neck and shoulder pain and rigidity, seizures, epilepsy, febrile diseases (including tidal & afternoon fevers), fever with chills, paralysis and hemiplegia, mental disorders, coughing, and asthma. GV14 is also applicable for the treatment of eczema, bronchitis, pulmonary tuberculosis, blood diseases, emphysema, heat stroke, malaria, and hepatitis.

GV14 is a sea of qi point. Notably, the governing vessel is the sea of the yang channels and GV14 is the sea of qi point on the sea of yang. This underscores the powerful healing properties of this vital acupuncture point. Texts also include ST9, CV17, GV15, and BL10 as sea of qi points. For excess, sea of qi points are used for chest pain, dyspnea, and flushed complexion. For deficiency, sea of qi points are indicated for the inability to speak. Many texts note that GV14 tonifies both qi and yang and GV14 is one of the most important acupoints for reducing inflammation and fevers.

## Acupuncture And Herbs Found Effective For Pneumonia Relief

Acupuncture plus herbs increases the total effective rate of medications for the treatment of pneumonia. Researchers from Hanzhong Railway Central Hospital combined traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) treatment with drug therapy in a controlled clinical trial. Two groups were compared. The control group received standard drug therapy. The treatment group received acupuncture and herbs in addition to identical drug therapy treatment protocols administered to the control group. The control group had an 88.33% total effective rate. The combined treatment group had a 98.33% total effective rate. The addition of TCM therapy increased the total effective rate by 10% ( $p < 0.05$ ). [1]

The following parameters were used to measure patient outcomes: disappearance time of symptoms and signs, length of hospital stay, white blood cell (WBC) counts, procalcitonin (PCT) levels, hemorheology and immunity indices, and adverse effect rates. WBCs (leukocytes) are immune system cells active in fighting infections. PCT is a peptide precursor that becomes increased in response to bacterial infections. The hemorheology indexes used in the study included fibrinogen, hematocrit, and plasma viscosity levels. CD4+/CD8+ and natural killer (NK) cell activity quantified immunity system parameters in this investigation.

Disappearance time of symptoms and signs was significantly faster and the length of required hospital stays was shorter in the combined treatment group ( $p < 0.01$ ). Both groups had improvements of WBC, PCT, and indexes of hemorheology and immunity, with the acupuncture combined treatment group having significantly greater positive patient outcome rates ( $p < 0.05$ ). The adverse reaction rate in the combined treatment group was 1.67% and 3.34% in the control group. The data indicates that the addition of acupuncture to standard drug therapy

protocols increases the effective rate while simultaneously lowering the adverse effect rate.

Sun et al. employed the following study design. A total of 120 patients were treated and evaluated. Patients were diagnosed with severe pneumonia between February 2014 and February 2017. They were randomly divided into two groups, with 60 patients in each group. Control group patients were given standard drug therapy for controlling infections and correcting fluid and electrolyte imbalances. The treatment group received acupuncture, an herbal formula called Qing Fei Zhu Yu (Heat-Clearing and Stasis-Expelling) decoction, and identical drug therapy protocols.

The statistical breakdown for each randomized group was as follows. The treatment group was comprised of 32 males and 28 females. The average age in the treatment group was 56.79 years. The control group was comprised of 35 males and 25 females. The average age in the treatment group was 56.73 years. There were no significant statistical differences in gender, age, and other demographic data relevant to patient outcome measures for patients admitted to the study.

### **Treatment**

The primary acupoints selected for the treatment of pneumonia were the following:

- LU1 (Zhongfu)
- LI16 (Jugu)
- BL13 (Feishu)
- BL12 (Fengmen)

Additional secondary acupoints were added based on symptom presentation. For high fever, the following acupoints were added:

- GV14 (Dazhui)

- LI11 (Quchi)

For chest pain, the following acupoint was added:

- PC6 (Neiguan)

For abdominal distention, the following acupoint was added:

- ST36 (Zusanli)

After disinfection of the acupoint sites, a 25 mm disposable filiform needle was inserted into each acupoint with a high needle entry speed. After arrival of qi, the Ping Bu Ping Xie (mild tonifying and attenuating) manipulation technique was applied. A 30-minute needle retention time was observed. One acupuncture session was conducted daily, for 7 consecutive days. The Qing Fei Zhu Yu decoction used in the study was comprised of the following ingredients:

|                        |             |
|------------------------|-------------|
| <b>Shui Niu Jiao</b>   | <b>30 g</b> |
| <b>Zhe Bei Mu</b>      | <b>30 g</b> |
| <b>Dan Shen</b>        | <b>20 g</b> |
| <b>Gua Lou Ren</b>     | <b>20 g</b> |
| <b>Sang Bai Pi</b>     | <b>20 g</b> |
| <b>Huang Qin</b>       | <b>15 g</b> |
| <b>Dan Nan Xing</b>    | <b>15 g</b> |
| <b>Chi Shao</b>        | <b>15 g</b> |
| <b>Di Long</b>         | <b>15 g</b> |
| <b>Chuan Bei Mu</b>    | <b>6 g</b>  |
| <b>Shuang Da Huang</b> | <b>6 g</b>  |
| <b>Gan Cao</b>         | <b>6 g</b>  |

The ingredients were decocted in water. The herbal medicine was ingested 2 times per day, 200 ml each time, for 7 days. After treatment, the treatment efficacy for each patient was categorized into 1 of 3 tiers:

*Recovery:* complete absence of symptoms and signs.  
*Effective:* improvement in symptoms and signs.  
*Not effective:* no improvement in symptoms and signs.

## Summary

The data shows that acupuncture plus herbs benefits patients with pneumonia. TCM treatment protocols increase the clinical efficacy of pharmaceutical drug interventions and reduces the adverse effect rate. This study indicates that an integrative approach to patient care increases positive patient outcome rates.

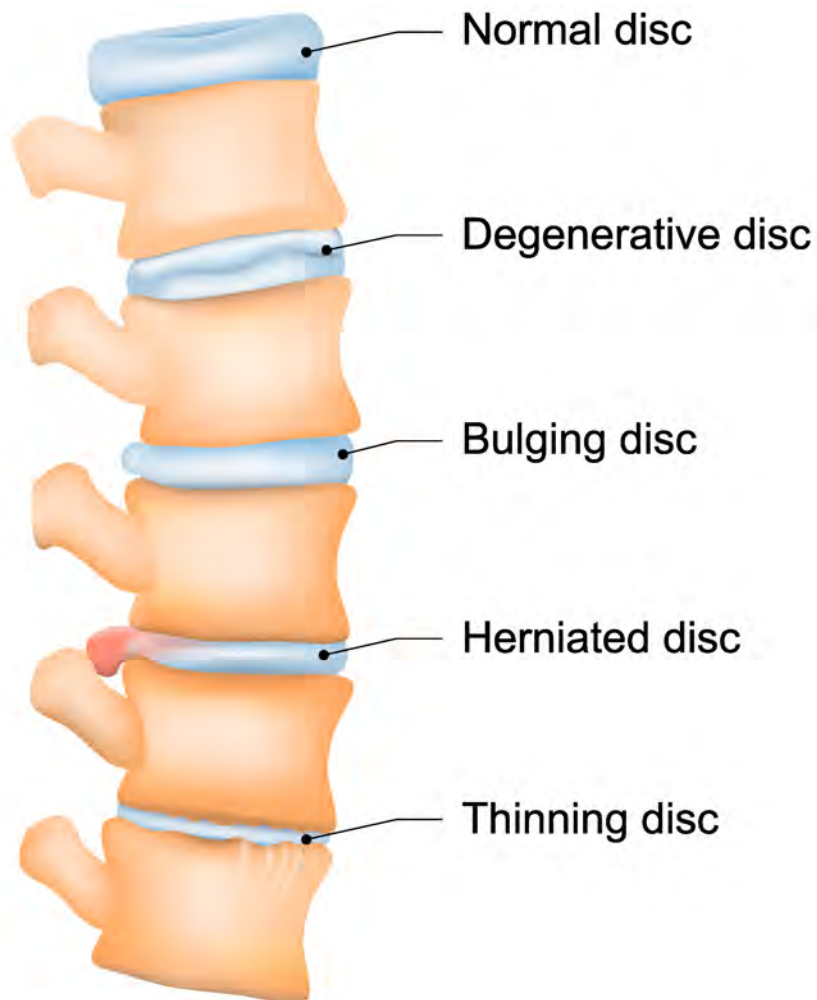
## Reference:

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## Acupoint Review: GV14

The research team included GV14 into the pneumonia treatment protocol. A classic acupuncture combination for high fever (GV14 and LI11) was implemented as a secondary point protocol. This underscores the importance of GV14 for the treatment of febrile diseases.

## Acupuncture Found Effective For Lumbar Disc Herniations



Acupuncture combined with herbal medicine is effective for the treatment of lumbar disc herniations. Beijing Timber Factory Worker's Hospital researchers investigated the effects of warm needle acupuncture and Chinese herbal medicine on patients with lumbar disc herniations. The combined therapy produced a 69.2% total effective rate. Using warm needle acupuncture as a standalone therapy absent the use of herbal medicine produced a 50.7% total effective rate.



All patients included in the study suffered from lumbar disc herniations due to cold dampness. In Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), lumbar disc herniations are categorized into several differential diagnostic patterns including cold dampness, damp heat, qi and blood stasis, and kidney qi deficiency.

The pattern investigated in this study, cold dampness, is characterized by lower back pain, tingling, numbness, range of motion impairments, a sense of heaviness in the lower back, and radiculopathy (pain, weakness, or numbness along the path of the impinged nerve). Cold dampness type herniations are chronic and are exacerbated by exposure to cold, dampness, and excess sitting, lying, or inactivity.

One of the most common types of lumbar disc herniation presentations is lumbar disc herniation with cold damp syndrome (Li & Wang). Common treatment methods include surgery, injections, medications, acupuncture, moxibustion, traction, and electroacupuncture (Sun, Wang & Xu). According to TCM principles, the Du (Governing Vessel), Bladder Foot-Taiyang, and Gallbladder Foot-Shaoyang channels are primarily affected by cold damp type disc herniations. The condition is often alleviated by warmth and therefore standalone moxibustion or warm needle acupuncture using moxibustion or a TDP heat lamp may be used to alleviate cold damp type disc herniations.

The researchers followed standard TCM protocols and included moxibustion in their procedures. Acupuncture points included in the treatment protocol included the following:

- L1–L5 Huatuojiaji (based upon affected vertebral segments)
- BL22 (Sanjiaoshu)
- BL23 (Shenshu)
- BL24 (Qihaihu)
- BL26 (Guanyuanshu)
- M-BW-24 (Yaoyan)

- BL54 (Zhibian)
- GB31 (Fengshi)
- BL40 (Weizhong)
- BL57 (Chengshan)
- BL60 (Kunlun)
- GB39 (Xuanzhong)
- GV3 (Yaoyangguan)
- GV4 (Mingmen)

Each acupuncture session lasted for 45 minutes. Patients received one acupuncture treatment per day for 15 consecutive days, comprising one course of care. In total, 3 courses of care were applied with a 2 day break between each course. Treatments began with patients in a prone position. Acupoints were disinfected with a 75% alcohol solution. Perpendicular insertion of filiform acupuncture needles at a high needle entry speed was used with 28 gauge acupuncture needles. The 28 gauge needle diameter is 0.35 mm and is labeled a #10 gauge in the Japanese system. This stout gauge is commonly applied in mainland China but is less common in the USA.

Manual acupuncture techniques were applied with lifting, thrusting, and rotating techniques to obtain deqi and for the purposes of applying attenuating and reinforcing methods. Once deqi was obtained at each needle, the needles were retained for the duration of the treatment session. Deqi was determined as a measure of the patient's experience of soreness, numbness, or an electric sensation produced by the needle. Practitioner observations of needle reactions were also used to indicate the arrival of deqi. Moxibustion was added to the Huatuojiagi, BL23 (Shenshu), and BL40 (Weizhong) acupoints. Medicinal moxa pieces of approximately 2 cm were attached to the needle handles and ignited. Thick paper heat shields were placed over the skin for protection. The following herbal formula was decocted for all patients (Wenshen Juanbi Tang):

- Sheng Di Huang, 10 g
- Wu Gong, 5 g
- Lu Rong 5 g
- Jiang Can, 10 g
- Dang Gui, 10 g
- Fu Ling , 10 g
- Fu Zi, 15 g
- Bai Zhu, 20 g
- Qing Feng Teng, 10 g
- Mu Gua, 15 g
- Xi Xin, 10 g
- Niu Xi, 10 g
- Gui Zhi, 10 g
- Yin Yang Huo, 10 g
- Xian Mao, 10 g
- Yi Yi Ren, 15 g
- Sang Ji Sheng, 20 g
- Lu Xian Cao, 10 g

The herbs Tao Ren and Hong Hua were added for patients diagnosed with blood stasis. Note: this herbal formula is only appropriately administered by licensed acupuncturists and is contraindicated for pregnant women. The combined therapy of acupuncture and herbs achieved a 69.2% total effective rate.

Huang et al. achieved superior positive patient outcome rates in their investigation. People's Hospital of Han Nan District researchers (Huang et al.) achieved a 90% total effective rate for the treatment of lumbar disc herniations with acupuncture plus moxibustion. Acupuncture as a standalone therapy produced an 85% total effective rate. A significant reduction or elimination of lower back pain and radiculopathy was achieved plus motor functional improvements were confirmed with diagnostics. The primary acupuncture points employed in the investigation were the following:

Huatuojiaji (lower back region)

Shenshu (BL23)

Mingmen (GV4)

Yaoyangguan (GV3)

Huantiao (GB30)

Rotating and thrusting were applied for 2–3 minutes to Shenshu (BL23), Mingmen (DU4), and Yaoyangguan (DU3) to elicit the arrival of deqi. Stimulation of Huatuojiaji acupoints was maintained until the arrival of deqi. For L4–L5 disc herniations, Yanglingquan (GB34) was added. For L5–S1 disc herniations, Weizhong (BL40) was added. Moxa was added to the needles of Shenshu (BL23), Mingmen (DU4), and Yaoyangguan (DU3) with 2 cm moxa pieces. Treatment was administered once per day for 6 days followed by a 1 day break from treatment. Next, an additional six days of acupuncture plus moxibustion was applied. A 90% total effective rate was achieved using acupuncture plus moxibustion. An 85% total effective rate was achieved using acupuncture as a standalone procedure.

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## Acupoint Review: GV3, GV4

The research teams included GV3 and GV4 across two independent studies for the treatment of lumbar disc herniations.

### GV3

GV3 dispels wind-dampness. GV3 benefits the lower back, knees, and legs, regulates kidney qi, and supports mingmen fire at GV4. GV3 eliminates cold-dampness, warms the blood, and warms the jing-essence.

Indications for use include spermatorrhea, nocturnal emission, impotence, irregular mensuration, lumbosacral pain, and lower limb paralysis, numbness, stiffness, and atrophy.

### GV4

This point nourishes yuan-source qi, strengthens the kidneys, and benefits the lumbar vertebrae. Indications for use include lower back pain, stiffness of the spine, spermatorrhea, infertility, nocturnal emissions, impotence, hemorrhoids, anhidrosis due kidney yang deficiency, leukorrhea, and diarrhea due to kidney and spleen qi and yang deficiency.

This point can also be used to treat kidney yin deficiency heat, including headaches due to rising yang.

## COVID-19 Research

Herbal medicine is effective for alleviating symptoms associated with COVID-19, according to modern research. Results indicate that an integrative medicine model of patient care is superior to biomedical monotherapy.

Two herbal formulas have repeatedly been showing up across multiple investigations with excellent patient outcomes: Lianhua Qingwen, Qing Fei Bai Du San. Due to importation and regulatory limitations, the latter is not as effective in the USA as it is in many other nations. In the USA, there are restrictions on importation of the ingredient Ma Huang and the herb Xi Xin is not legal for use. As a result, modified herbal preparations of Qing Fei Bai Du San for sale in the USA lack the strength available in other nations.

### Safety & Ethics

There are direct safety and ethical considerations in addition to legal concerns. Scope of practice laws prohibit acupuncturists from using banned substances, even if research demonstrates benefits. In addition, Ma Huang and Xi Xin must be used with care in areas where these herbs are legally allowed because of potential adverse effects. Laws continually change and these herbs may become available for legal use in your area and then become banned once again. Great resources for checking on legal status of herbs are reputable herbal medicine suppliers in addition to government agencies.

Today's focus is on an investigation showing that Chinese herbal medicine is effective for the alleviation of symptoms caused by COVID-19 in patients that have developed moderate cases of pneumonia. Furen Hospital Affiliated to Wuhan University of Science and Technology researchers conducted a clinical trial on 54 COVID-19 cases. The results show that Lianhua Qingwen markedly relieved the intensity of fever, cough, and fatigue. In addition, Lianhua Qingwen reduced the overall duration the symptoms. [1]

Historically, Lianhua Qingwen was commonly used for the treatment of influenza. In 2003, during the severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) outbreak, Lianhua Qingwen was used to combat this respiratory illness caused by a strain of SARS-associated coronavirus.

By 2017, research specified the role of Lianhua Qingwen in exerting anti-viral and anti-inflammatory activity against SARS-CoV-2). [2] The herbal formula Lianhua Qingwen contains the following ingredients:

- **Jin Yin Hua (Flos Lonicerae)**
- **Lian Qiao (Fructus Forsythiae)**
- **Ma Huang (Herba Ephedrae)**
- **Xing Ren (Semen Armeniacae Amarae)**
- **Shi Gao (Gypsum Fibrosum)**
- **Ban Lan Gen (Radix Isatidis)**
- **Mian Ma Guan Zhong (Rhizoma Guanzhong)**
- **Yu Xing Cao (Herba Houttuyniae)**
- **Guang Huo Xiang (Herba Pogostemonis)**
- **Da Huang (Radix et Rhizoma Rhei)**
- **Hong Jing Tian (Rhodiola)**
- **Bo He (Herba Menthae)**
- **Gan Cao (Radix Glycyrrhizae)**

The recent Furen Hospital Affiliated to Wuhan University of Science and Technology clinical trial of 54 COVID-19 cases used guidelines based on official documentation: *Diagnosis and Treatment Protocol for Novel Coronavirus Pneumonia* (released by the National Health Commission & State Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine, 3-3-2020). [3] According to the guidelines, all patients admitted to the study were moderate cases, presenting with fever, respiratory symptoms, and radiologic signs of pneumonia.

Age range of the patients was from 25 to 95 years. Average age was  $60.1 \pm 16.98$  years. Among all patients, 29 were males and 25 were females. Average body temperature was  $37.93 \pm 0.93$  degrees Celcius, median was 38.05 degrees Celcius.

Prior to being confirmed with COVID-19 with pneumonia, the highest temperature presented in all patients was  $38.54 \pm 0.60$  degrees Celcius. Average heart rate was  $87.9 \pm 11.80$ /min., median was 85.5/min. Highest heart rate was 112/min. Average respiratory rate was  $21.1 \pm 3.78$ /min., median was 20/min. Highest respiratory rate was 30/min. Twenty-one patients had high blood pressure. Seven had coronary heart disease. Ten had diabetes. Ten had a history of cerebral infarction.

Laboratory tests showed 31 cases had a normal WBC (white blood cell) count, 9 cases had decreased WBC count, and 8 cases had an increased WBC count. Twenty-five patients had a normal ANC (Absolute Neutrophil Count), 23 patients had increased ANC. Fourteen cases had a normal lymphocyte count, and 34 cases had a decreased lymphocyte count.

C-reactive protein (CRP) was elevated in all patients admitted to the study. CRP, produced in the liver, elevates when inflammation is present. An elevated CRP is often present when there is infection, inflammatory intestinal disorders, or autoimmune diseases. A CRP test is usually administered when there is fever and respiratory symptoms.

In this investigation, the average duration of taking Lianhua Qingwen was  $8.0 \pm 4.10$  days, median was seven days. The shortest duration was one day and the longest was 16 days. Patients were given Lianhua Qingwen (Yiling Pharmaceutical Co. Ltd.), three times per day. In addition, regular treatments were administered, including intravenous injections of immunoglobulin (2.5 g/day), ganciclovir (0.4g/day), levofloxacin (0.4g/day), and methylprednisolone (40 mg/day).



Three days after taking Lianhua Qingwen in the integrative treatment protocol, 47.5% of the patients no longer had fever, 35.1% of the patients no longer experienced fatigue, and 20% stopped coughing. Five days later, the three figures increased to 62.5%, 59.5%, and 50.0% respectively. By the seventh day, the figures reached 80.0%, 75.7%, and 76.7%. As for other symptoms, none of the patients had labored breathing after seven days. Approximately 90% of the patients recovered from chest distress and crackles.

The aforementioned investigation demonstrates an effective integrative medicine protocol. The following investigation demonstrates that the absence of Chinese herbal medicine from a COVID-19 treatment protocol is to the detriment of patient health.

An independent investigation conducted at Huarunwugang Hospital Affiliated to Wuhan University of Science and Technology used two groups of patients. From January 1 to January 27, 2020, a total of 63 patients were admitted to the two-arm study. Thirty-eight received regular drug treatment (same as in the aforementioned trial). The rest were given regular drug treatment plus Lianhua Qingwen. Patient baselines had no statistical differences before treatment. Similar measurement parameters were used as in the aforementioned investigation. Patients in the integrative treatment group had significantly superior patient outcomes, demonstrating that the addition of Chinese herbal medicine is effective in the fight against COVID-19. [4]

## **Mian Ma Guan Zhong**

A clinical highlight is the inclusion of the herb Mian Ma Guan Zhong in Lianhua Qingwen. This variety of fern is listed in the Chinese materia medica in the expel parasites category. It is bitter, cold, and enters the liver and spleen channels. Filmarone is one ingredient of this herb, which is potentially toxic when consumed with a fatty meal. Normal advisory is to consume this herb on an empty stomach, at least one hour before or after a meal.

Guan Zhong (Mian Ma Guan Zhong) contains filicin. Both filmarone and filicin are anthelmintic (destroys parasitic worms). An important medicine, it is often avoided for use during pregnancy or lactation. Guan Zhong is especially powerful against tapeworms, roundworms, and hookworms.

Guan Zhong drains heat and fire toxicity. As a result, it is used for the treatment of wind-heat, damp-heat sores, and epidemic toxins (including viruses). Indications for use include treatment of patients for heat-toxin diseases with fire blazing including measles, encephalitis, and pneumonia. Guan Zhong cools the blood and stops bleeding, especially uterine bleeding. Modern common usage includes formulas containing this herb to prevent influenza.

## Hong Jing Tian

Lianhua Qingwen contains Hong Jing Tian. Licensed acupuncturists may find the inclusion of Hong Jing Tian (紅景天) within Lianhua Qingwen Capsules particularly interesting. This herb grows at altitudes of 3,500–5,000 meters. The greatest number of species of Hong Jing Tian grow in Tibet.

Tibetan monks use this herb and it is valued for improving concentration, physical endurance, memory, and absorbing oxygen. This herb is highly regarded for its ability to abate altitude sickness, reduce stress, and benefit shen-spirit. Many varieties also grow in Yunan, Sichuan, Heilongjiang, and other provinces. This is a clear heat and toxin category herb that is cold, sweet, bitter, and astringent. It enters the heart, liver, kidney, lung, and spleen channels.

Hong Jing Tian has several important functions. It tonifies spleen qi, clears lung heat, nourishes lung yin, and is especially useful for the treatment of coughing due to lung heat (including hemoptysis). In TCM clinics, it is used for the treatment of weakness after illness, hematemesis, bronchitis, and coughing due to pneumonia. This herb is

an adaptogen and is valued for its ability to restore vital energy. Hong Jing Tian invigorates blood and transforms stasis and is used topically for burns and traumatic injuries. This herb promotes contractions and is used for the treatment of leukorrhea.

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[3] [shliangshi.com/newsshow\\_825.html](http://shliangshi.com/newsshow_825.html)

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