Moxibustion

艾灸

R. Bishay

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Concept of moxibustion

Moxibustion is a therapy that utilizes cauterization or heating with ignited flammable material applied to certain areas on the body.

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Material of moxibustion

The most common material in moxibustion is moxa wool which is made of *dry Mugwort leaves* that are purified and formed into fine and soft fibers.

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The best is moxibustion and second is needles, and then is herbs

– Huang Di Nei Jing (Yellow emperor's inner classic)

灸

(moxibustion)

艾葉 (ai ye)

(FOLIUM ARTEMISIAE ARGYI)

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History of Moxibustion and it's concept;

- Acupuncture and moxibustion in Chinese handwriting 針灸
- (針= needle; 灸: 久=long; 火=fire)。
- Originate from nature fire that warms stone(砭石) herb burning which has history even older than acupuncture(especially in north of china);

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艾

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Moxa

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艾絨

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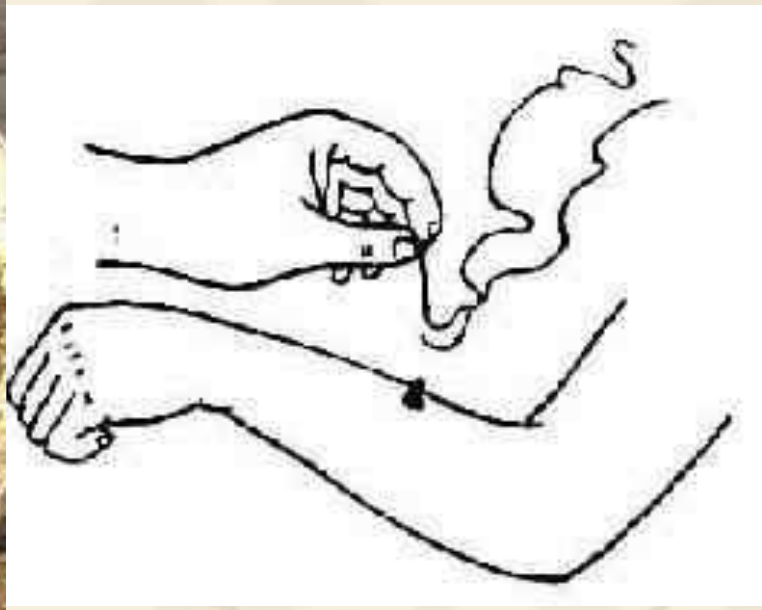

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Actions of moxibustion

- Warming channels and dispersing coldness
- Supporting yang to rescue collapse
- Removing blood stasis and stagnation
- Disease prevention and health maintenance

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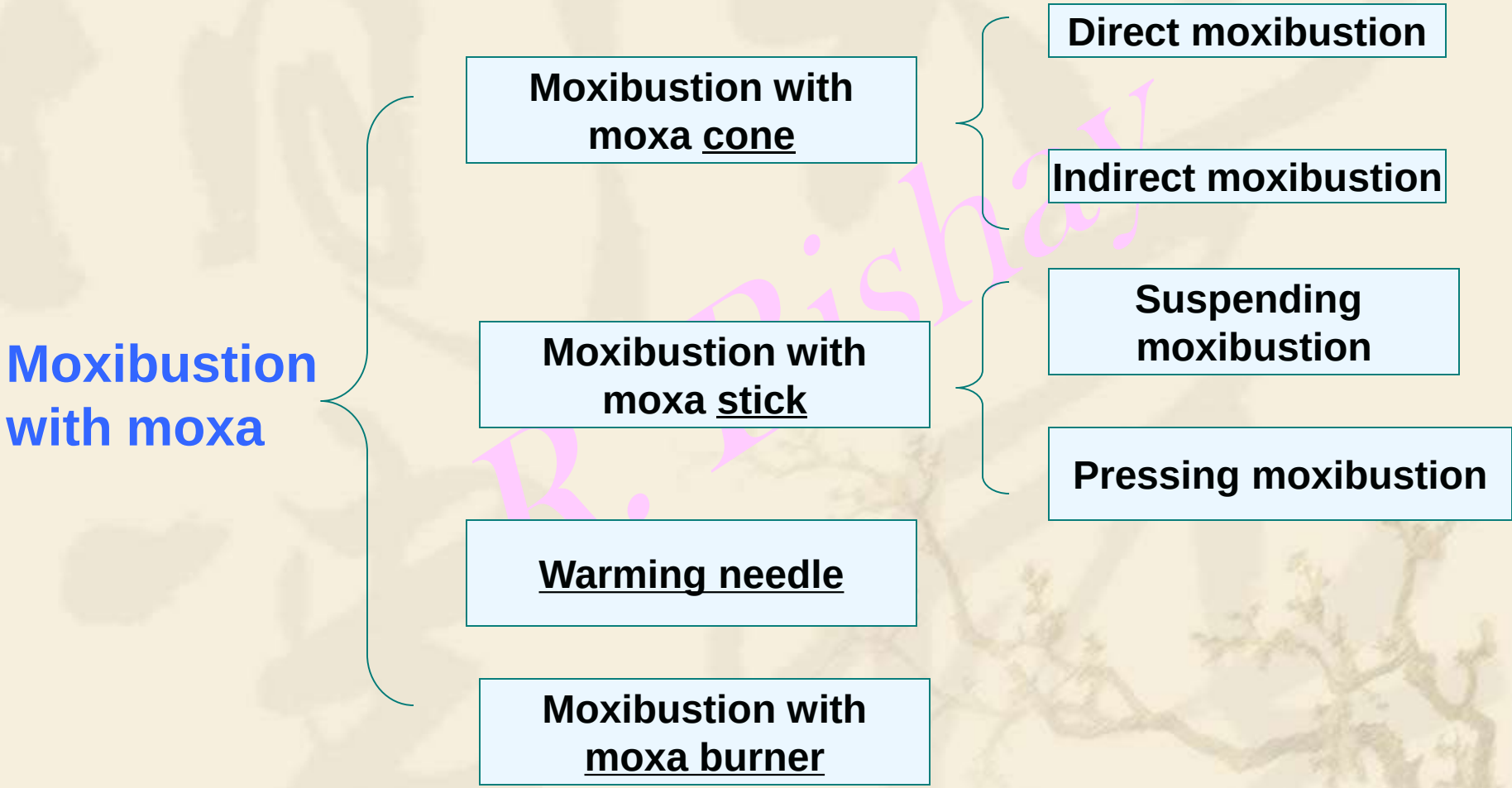
Classification of moxibustion



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Moxibustion with moxa cone

This is a method that uses the moxa cone on a selected area of the body.

The moxa cone is formed by shaping a small amount of moxa wool tightly into a cone. The size of a moxa cone varies depending on the conditions to be treated.

A small sized cone is the shape of a wheat grain. A middle one is a half of the kernel of Chinese date, and a big one is of half of an olive.

The burning of one moxa cone is counted as one "zhuang"(壯).

i.e. one post = one vital qi = one tree hugging

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Direct moxibustion

It is a method using an ignited moxa cone on the skin directly. It can be further divided into scarring moxibustion and non-scarring moxibustion for inducing different degrees of heat stimulation.

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Direct moxibustion（直接灸）

A moxa cone placed directly on the skin and ignited is called direct moxibustion.

Non-scarring moxibustion

- Remove the cone and place another one when the patient feels hot or pain .
- No scar left on the skin.

Scarring moxibustion

- Ignite the cone until it completely burns out.
- It will leave scar on the skin.

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Ginger-isolated moxibustion

Indirect moxibustion

This method is indicated for <u>all kinds of deficient cold patterns</u> especially for diseases such as vomiting, abdominal pain, diarrhea, spermatorrhea, impotence, premature ejaculation, infertility, dysmenorrhea and Bi-syndrome of a wind-cold-damp pattern.

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Indirect moxibustion

Garlic-isolated moxibustion

This method is mainly used to treat pulmonary tuberculosis (foci), palpable abdominal masses and encapsulated abscesses.

Nodules of infections

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Salt-isolated moxibustion

Indirect moxibustion

This method is usually used on the umbilicus. Fill the umbilicus with pure, dry edible salt until level. Place a moxa cone on the salt and ignite the cone. Replace it with a new one when the patient feels burning pain. 5 to 9 cones are usually needed for each treatment.

Indications: acute abdominal pain of the cold type, vomiting, diarrhea, dysentery, and stroke of the flaccid pattern.

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Indirect moxibustion

Fu Zi-isolated moxibustion

- **Moxa with Fu Zi** is a traditional Chinese medicine technique that co mbines the use of moxa (mugwort) and Fu Zi (Aconite) for various th erapeutic purposes.
- **Moxa** is burned on or near acupuncture points to warm and move Qi (energy), treating conditions like cold and dampness.
- **Fu Zi** is known for its pungent dispersing properties, which can help clear cold and dampness, warm the heart and kidneys, and promote water metabolism.
- When used together, they can enhance the effects of moxibustion, making it effective for treating various health conditions, including cold limbs, abdominal pain, and digestive issues.
  This combination is often employed in traditional practices to address a range of health concerns, emphasizing the synergistic effects of both herbs.

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Moxibustion with moxa stick

A moxa stick is prepared by wrapping moxa wool with a piece of Cortex Mori paper and shaping it into a cylinder.

Ignited one end of the moxa stick and point it at the point or the diseased area.

This method is divided into <u>suspending moxibustion and pressing method.</u>

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Warming moxibustion

Suspending moxibustion

An ignited moxa stick is pointed 2 to 3 cm away from the point or diseased area until the patient feels warmth but no scorching.

Each point can usually be **heated for 10 to 15 minutes** until the skin becomes reddish.

It is usually used to treat the **chronic diseases and deficient diseases**.

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Bird-pecking moxibustion

An ignited moxa stick is pointed at the point, moving the ignited end **upwards and downwards as if pecking like a bird**.

It is usually used to treat the **acute diseases and diseases of excess pattern.**

Suspending moxibustion

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Circling moxibustion

Suspending moxibustion

An ignited moxa stick is pointed at the point keeping a certain distance and moving the ignited end **left and right or in a circular motion**.

it is usually used to **treat the pain and numbness in arthritis**.

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Pressing moxibustion

Place a piece of cloth or several layers of paper on the selected point, and then press the ignited end of the moxa stick onto the cloth or paper tightly until it is extinguished. ***Ignited and press it again.***

This method is indicated for use in Bi-syndrome of a wind-cold-damp pattern, atrophy and disease of a deficiency-cold pattern.

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Warming needle

This is a combined method using acupuncture and moxibustion. It is used to treat diseases that need both needle retention and moxibustion.

During the retaining of the needle with needling sensation, affix a 2 cm long section of moxa stick to the handle of the needle or place a little moxa wool onto the needle tail and ignite it.

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Smokeless moxa

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Laser moxa

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Precautions of moxibustion

- Sequence of moxibustion
- Reinforcing and reducing method of moxibustion
- Contraindications of moxibustion
- Management of moxibustion

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Sequence of moxibustion

First on the yang channel and then on the yin channel;

First on the upper part and then on the lower part;

First on an point or area with fewer moxa cones and then an area with more moxa cones;

First a smaller moxa cone and then a bigger one.

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Reinforcing and reducing method of moxibustion

It was recorded in Zhen Jiu Da Cheng (Great Compendium of Acupuncture and Moxibustion).

In order to reinforce with moxibusiton, press the point when the fire of moxibustion is almost out;

In order to *reduce* with moxibustion, *blow the fire* of the moxibustion quickly to *open the point*.

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Reinforcing and reducing method of moxibustion

If the moxa sore-opening closes easily, the disease qi is unable to exit

- **For repletion evils, moxa sores create an opening through which the evil qi can be expelled.**

- **This is like opening the pores to expel wind evils from the exterior. Sweating affects the most superficial layers, but moxa sores open into the channel system. So this method can expel evils from deeper in the body.**

- **Moxibustion is also used on an affected site such as an abscess. In that case, it directly lets the evil qi exit.**

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Contraindications of moxibustion

Avoid using moxibustion with the

1- pattern of excess heat or

2- Fever due to yin deficiency. *But it can be used earlier during high fever associated with acute mastitis;*

3- Avoid using scarring moxibustion on the face,

4- Scarring moxibustion on mammary papilla and

5- Scarring moxibustion on places with large vessels;

6- Avoid using moxibustion on the abdomen and lumbo-sacral area of pregnant women.

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Moxibustion & safety

- **- Too much moxibustion, especially on the upper body can cause agitation and restlessness: heat agitates the spirit which resides in the heart.**

- **- If a patient has heat, dryness, or yin vacuity, improper use of moxibustion can make it worse. That is why some doctors prohibit moxibustion in these cases.**

  - **– However, other doctors believe that, when the proper techniques are used, these prohibitions are unnecessary. If care is taken to descend and circulate heat or to radiate it out of the body, moxibustion will not cause harm**

  - **Combined with a diet that provides the raw materials to increase yin, moxibustion can help the body nourish yin.**

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Moxibustion & safety

- Have on hand the proper equipment for extinguishing the moxa.
- Always have a plan for extinguishing the moxa before it is lit.
- Make sure all materials are completely extinguished

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Moxibustion & safety

Smoke:

- **Inhaling any kind of smoke, including moxa smoke, is harmful.**
- **Moxa rolls containing other medicinals such as Xiong Huang (Realgar) are especially harmful.**
- **Xiong Huang contains arsenic sulphide.**
- **Other medicinals may also be unsafe.**

- **Have adequate ventilation.**
- **May be use an air purifier or a smoke-eater.**

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Moxibustion & safety

Preventing fire

- **Always have a fire extinguisher nearby.**

Smoke alarms should never be disconnected.

- **Do not leave a patient who is receiving moxibustion unattended**

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Management after moxibustion

1- If a small, unbroken blister appears due to excessive or prolonged moxibustion, it usually does not need to be treated. The liquid in the blister can be absorbed by the body.

2- If the blister is large, NEVER to be broken to release the liquid inside (recent changes in the code of safety) and the area needs to be disinfected with sterile gauze with topical antibiotic.

3- For patient receiving a scarring moxibustion, hard physical labor should be avoided for up to one month. The ulcerated area should be kept clean and free from infection.

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Practical considerations when making moxa sores

- **Proper written *informed consent*.**
- **Be sure your *malpractice insurance* covers it.**
- **Others could *incorrectly attribute moxa sores to abuse*, so educate the family.**

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Practical considerations when making moxa sores

- ***Do not*** **make moxa sores on people with compromised immune systems, diabetics**
- **people who cannot keep the region clean**
- **people who form keloid scars**
- **the face or areas that would disfigure the patient**
- **The soles of the feet: walking would be painful.**

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Practical considerations when making moxa sores

If you are new to this, first *practice on yourself*.

Try Zu San Li (ST 36), Qi Hai (Ren 6), or Guan Yuan (Ren 4).

This builds technical skills

This helps you understand what the patient experiences.

You receive immediate feedback, helping refine your technique.

Moxa sores often show up some hours after treatment.
If you try to make them appear during treatment, you will over-do it.

Use more small cones, not few large cones.
The clinical results will be the same but the patient will suffer less.

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Burns

- Do not use moxibustion on the extremities of patients with diabetes as they may have less sensation due to neuropathy and also have a harder time recovering from infections.

- Be sure the patient knows to report their sensations during treatment. Frequently glance at the patent's face or notice if their body is tense.

- Often touch and look at the skin around the site to monitor skin temperature.
- Remember, blisters often do not show up for some hours after treatment.

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Burns

- Don’t let hot ash drop on the patient.
- Frequently remove ash from moxa sticks or incense.
- For warm-needle, place a skin shield at the base.
- Always have a plan for extinguishing the moxa before it is lit and have the proper equipment nearby.
- Make sure all materials are completely extinguished before you leave the treatment room.
- Be careful that nothing burning is thrown in the trash. One ember can burn down a clinic.

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How its Made

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