

A Picture Speaks....Trigeminal Neuralgia, Acupuncture, and Thermography

By Deah Kinion, Licensed Acupuncturist (L. Ac.) and Certified Clinical Thermographer (CCT), Nov. 2013

A picture speaks a thousand words... so the saying goes. Thermography takes some spectacular pictures. A 48 year-old man came to see me with Trigeminal Neuralgia (TN) and headaches, recently aggravated by stress. I treated "Greg" in 2011 for this condition, and he had been in remission for two years. A life situation contributed to his recent stress and hence a flare-up of TN symptoms.

TN is intermittent and severe nerve pain caused by the 5th cranial nerve which innervates to the face sensations of temperature, pressure, and function of chewing. I have treated some people with this who could not brush their teeth, or drink water due to the acute pain. This piercing, stabbing pain can be also aggravated by smiling or speaking.

The cause is inflammation, or pressure on the Trigeminal nerve, the largest cranial nerve, which originates in the brain. Medication or even surgery are attempts to control this severe hyperactive nerve pain. Acupuncture can be a successful treatment option. Greg agreed to allow images to be taken, with Thermography, during his acupuncture treatment. He relaxed in a recliner chair while thin, sterile needles were placed into specific acupuncture points. Two of these needles are seen in the images. The chosen Chinese acupuncture points are named: *Cheekbone Opening, Lower Hinge, Wind Pool, Adjoining Valleys, and Great Thoroughfare*. These traditional points collectively are known to circulate energy, help relax the sinews, alleviate pain, and transform Wind, Heat, and Cold. Acupuncture is a component of Traditional Chinese Medicine.

Images were taken at five minute intervals using an infrared camera during a 30 minute period. Thermography is a highly sensitive, non-invasive imaging procedure. With digital technology, the temperature data collected by the camera creates an image representing physiology. It can register dysfunction, via abnormal heat patterns. Red and dark orange are registered as heat, while blue and green cooler temps. Hotter colors indicate inflammation, or hyperactivity, while cooler colors represent reduced inflammation, or hypoactivity. Acupuncture reduces inflammation and pain. You don't have to take my or Greg's word for it, let the pictures do the speaking.

<http://www.healthcmi.com/Acupuncture-Continuing-Education-News/513-acupuncturefacialnervepaintn>

<http://www.acupuncture.com/Conditions/trigemineurc.htm>

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2797593/>

