

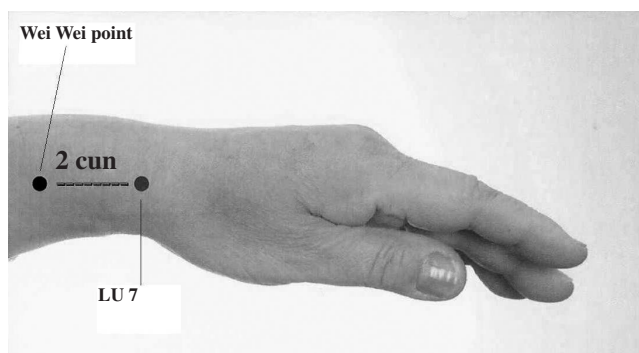
petites, good moods and sleep, smooth defecations, reduced body weight and fat, and slimmed waistlines from laser acupuncture. We suggest that laser acupuncture in the hands of a skilled physician can be a useful tool in controlling simple obesity.

Wen-Long Hu, MD, MS

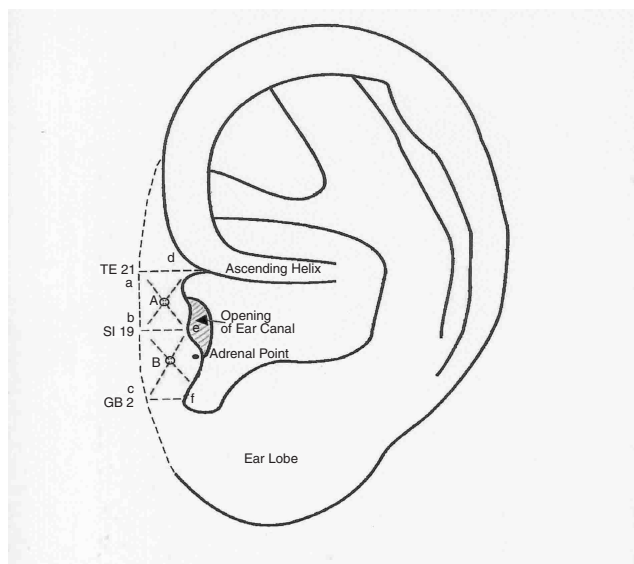
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**I**N MY APPROACH TO treating obesity using acupuncture, I consider: (1) the removal of Phlegm, (2) balancing and harmonizing metabolism, (3) treating addictive behaviors, (4) removing excess fluids (fluid retention), (5) encouraging/instructing the patient in proper dietetics/nutrition and regular exercise, and (6) applying auricular acupuncture. For the removal of Phlegm, the following points are indicated: ST 40x2 for generalized Phlegm accumulation, and ST 8x2 for removal of localized Phlegm. To balance and harmonize metabolism, the following acupuncture points are indicated: TE 5x2, BL 22x2, BL 39x2, CV 22, CV 23. To treat addictive behaviors, the following points are indicated: PC 6x2, WEI-WEI (Figure 1) x2. To remove excess fluids, the following points may be used: LU 9x2, BL 13x2, SP 9x2, BL 20x2, KI 10x2, BL 23x2. For the treatment of adult obesity, the following auricular microsystem acupuncture points are indicated: Shenmen, mouth points, thyroid points, antihunger points, antiaddiction points (Figure 2), and others.



**FIG. 1.** Addiction acupoints, including Wei Wei point on the Lung Meridian



**FIG. 2.** Addiction acupoints. A indicates addiction point; B, antihunger point.

In my clinical practice, I usually use classical acupuncture points initially and then auricular acupuncture for patient self-manipulation (maintenance). I typically follow up once a week for 4 weeks to gauge the response and if it is positive, I will then go to biweekly treatments for 4 months. If the patient is then having a positive response, again I will go to a once-a-month treatment for maintenance purposes. The key to treating obesity is effectively using motivation, diet, exercise, and acupuncture.

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**C**HINESE MEDICINE ATTRIBUTES OVERWEIGHT TO Phlegm and Damp, secondary to Spleen deficiency, Qi and Blood stagnation, and sometimes, Kidney deficiency. A logical approach involves points to circulate energy such as LV 3, LI 4, tonify the Spleen/Stomach (SP 3,5, ST 36, BL 20, 21, and CV 12), resolve Phlegm (ST 40), and tonify the Kidney (KI 3, BL 23). For herbs, Spleen/Stomach tonics like Liu Jun Zi Tang (Six Gentleman Pills, Prosperous Farmer),<sup>1</sup> and Bao He Wan (Quiet digestion)<sup>2</sup> are always

useful, while specific weight loss formulas like Wu Long Pian (Black Dragon)<sup>3</sup> can be used in specific circumstances. This approach should be grounded in a comprehensive program that includes nutritional counseling, a daily exercise program, and stress reduction.

## REFERENCES

1. Prosperous Farmer, K'an Herbs: [www.kanherb.com](http://www.kanherb.com).
2. Quiet Digestion, Health Concerns: [www.healthconcerns.com](http://www.healthconcerns.com).
3. Black Dragon, Blue Poppy herbs: [www.bluepoppy.com](http://www.bluepoppy.com).

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**I**TREAT OBESITY IN MY acupuncture practice and after trying various body point schemes, I have found that auricular acupuncture works best for this condition. I use (on a regular basis) Shenmen, Stomach point, Endocrine point, Zero point, and the "Hunger" point on both ears. I perform 10 sessions at a 2-3-day interval and after that, I continue once a week for another 5-7 sessions. Although there are usually no dramatic changes in the BMI, one thing appears to be common to all patients: they lose their appetite and the satiety sensation is reached much easier.

The average weight reduction for the first month is around 4 kg (9-10 lb), although the best responder lost nearly 8.5 kg (almost 19 lb).

What I consider to be important is the fact that auricular acupuncture seems to somehow alter the alimentary habits of the patient, and, combined with diet and exercise, may be of real help in treating obesity

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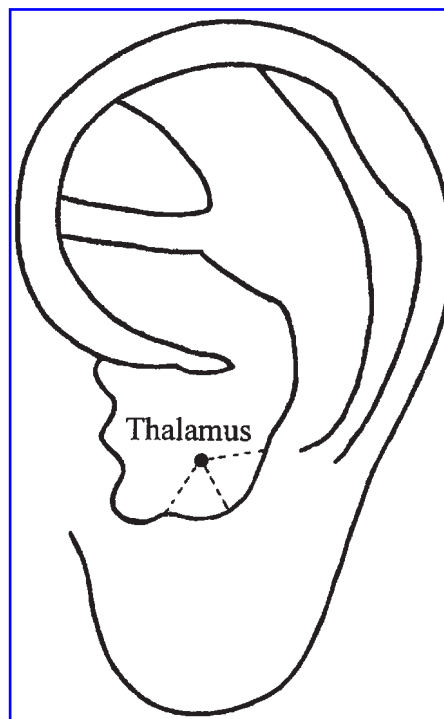
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**O**BESITY IS USUALLY CAUSED BY consuming more calories than the body expends in energy. Diet control is an important approach in preventing and treating obesity. Besides choosing food that contains lower calories, the amount of food intake is critical. Ear acupoint magnet therapy is a simple method that may control appetite and food cravings.<sup>1</sup>

A 54-year-old woman presented weighing 255 lbs and wishing to reduce her body weight. At the beginning, she chose an 1800-calorie diet and then reduced it to 1500 calories a day. She lost 34 lbs within 6 months. After this, she lowered her caloric intake to 1200 calories a day. But, she reported that her appetite was a problem all the time and she thought about food all day long. She started eating more and lost her previous control. Her weight loss was at a standstill and she had a tendency to again gain weight. In order to control this undesired appetite, the patient asked for help utilizing acupuncture. A magnet disk with 2500 gauze was applied on each ear on the Thalamus point (refers to Hypothalamus in Chinese auricular acupuncture)<sup>2</sup> with adhesive tape (Figure). The magnets remained on her ear 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Her appetite was controlled immediately. She was able to consume only 1200 calories a day easily and lost another 12 lbs within 4 weeks.

In Western medicine, the hypothalamus is important for ingestion. It is the "hunger center" and "satiety center." Research has shown that lesion of the area in the lateral hypothalamus, in which electrical stimulation can induce eating behavior, causes refusal of food; whereas lesion of the area in certain ventromedial region of the hypothalamus, in which electrical stimulation inhibits eating behavior, elicits excessive eating and obesity.<sup>3</sup>

Hypothalamic neurotransmitters and neuropeptides are involved in the energy balance. For instance, microinjection of noradrenalin into the hypothalamus dramatically increases food intake; direct injection of serotonin into the hypothalamus suppresses food intake; and, drugs that release



**FIG.** Acupuncture point on ear for adjusting appetite