

[Hu Li Za Zhi](#). 2007 Aug;54(4):10-5.

[Acupressure in the care of the elderly]

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Acupressure is a longstanding treatment in traditional Chinese medicine, and involves the stimulation of certain acupoints by pressing with the fingers or moving limbs or joints slowly to promote health or offer comfort. Acupressure treatment, which conforms to the same principles as acupuncture, is characterized by the pressing of acupuncture points and sense of chi. Chi is regarded as the universal life energy and the vital potential that is inborn in each person and which maintains that person until death. Sleep disturbance, pain and agitation are common health problems in gerontological nursing. Both pharmacological and non-pharmacological forms of treatment have been applied to deal with the problems. Studies have revealed, however, that the benefits that the elderly derive from drug use might not outweigh the adverse effects of such treatment. Non-pharmacological forms of treatment, like acupressure, though, not only caused no side effects, but also relieved the symptoms. Also, nurses, nurse's aides, or elderly people who have received training in acupressure can administer this non-pharmacological treatment independently. Therefore, this paper addresses common health problems in the elderly, such as sleep disturbance, pain, and agitation, the principles and maneuvers of acupressure, and application of acupressure in the elderly.

Publication Types:

- [English Abstract](#)

PMID: 17654422 [PubMed - indexed for MEDLINE]