



## “CAT” Case Study

By Dr. Kim Mitchell

**Signalment:** 16-year-old, Female Spayed, Domestic Short hair

**Owners' complaint:** Long standing history of constipation likely due to tail amputation and damage to the nerves.

**History:** Cat has a chronic history of constipation. Owners have had cat on Royal Canin Fiber Response food as well as administering lactulose and Miralax daily to help keep the gastrointestinal tract moving.

After years on the diet and medical management, the cat has developed a decreased stool production every few months that required de-obstipation. De-obstipation required an emergency veterinary visit, radiographs, sedation, and enemas to remove all the stool from her colon. She would also get fluids under the skin along with Cerenia (anti-nausea injection) to prevent her from vomiting during the de-obstipation process.

### Physical Examination

Upon physical examination the cat was bright, alert, and responsive. Her body condition score was 7/9 and pain score was 1/5. She has mild ocular discharge from her right eye, which also contains a small cyst on the medical aspect. She has mild tartar on her teeth. Due to her body condition score internal organs could not be felt on abdominal palpation.

In February 2020, the cat came in for constipation and required multiple enemas to remove all stool from her colon. Just 10 days after she was still having difficulty passing stool. A repeat radiograph revealed some stool build up in the colon but not enough to require an enema. At this visit, the benefits of **acupuncture** were discussed and the owner elected to try it. The purpose of the acupuncture was to help alleviate the cat's constipation issues.

The idea behind trying acupuncture was to start moving the Qi (the circulating life force whose existence and properties are the basis of much Chinese philosophy and medicine) that had been stagnate for years from both the surgery as well as the decreased movement of the intestinal tract. If Qi becomes stagnate or is re-directed, disease occurs.

The basis of Chinese medicine is to identify how and where the energy (Qi) is blocked or incorrectly flowing. For this reason; a Chinese medicine examination requires investigating how the patient acts not just at home, but in public, and in the veterinary office. It is important to know everything that the patient consumes, their regular activity, as well as phobias and preferences. An initial Chinese medicine examination is unique and quite different from a traditional medical exam. In Chinese medicine, we look at the patient holistically. The exam includes looking at the tongue, pulses, dryness or moisture to the skin/ coat, discharge from parts of the body as well as the temperature in various areas of the body.





### TCV Examination Diagnosis and Treatment

The patient is a mental constitution. She does not mind being examined or pet at home but when she is bothered too much, she will hiss signaling that she does not want to be bothered. She had a good appetite, drinks and urinates well but only has a bowel movement every 2-3 days. On examination, she had good skin, temperature was normal other than her ears which were slightly warm. Her tongue was pink, and pulses are deep. Cat's trigger points were around her hips, pelvis, and hindlimbs in general which for her first few examinations made it difficult to assess her pulses.

Ultimately Cat's root problem is a Yin deficiency with large intestinal stagnation and bony bi syndrome. Once a diagnosis is determined, an acupuncture treatment plan can be developed. For Cat, her owners main concern was the constipation. My goal was to treat the large intestine stagnation.

For her first treatment, we attempted a dry needle technique which Cat did not allow. Since she did not allow any needles to be placed, we started her aquapuncture. Aquapuncture is performed using vitamin B-12 and sterile saline. One or a combination of these are used to inject just under the skin across acupuncture points. The liquid is slowly absorbed into the body while allowing a longer state of pressure to a main area of concern. For Cat, we performed aquapuncture to a single acupuncture location for the gastrointestinal tract ST-36 (stomach 36). By just performing aquapuncture to this area, the owners noticed an increase in Cat's bowel movements and greater comfortability.

Due to COVID 19, Cat's owners did not bring her back in after her initial aquapuncture treatment. She did well for about 3 months until she eventually returned to the hospital for constipation. Although she needed an enema at this time, she also received her first treatment of acupuncture. This time, Cat allowed for 10 needles to be placed.

Every acupuncture treatment requires one needle on the top of the head called GV-20 and one on the lower back called Bai-hui. Both points are considered introduction/ permission points. Since Cat allowed GV-20 and Bai-hui placement, additional points along the back were placed: BL-27 for the large intestine, BL-20/21 for stomach and spleen which are key organs for digestion and movement of Qi. She also received a single point at her hip called GB-29 which helps with hip pain. After sitting for about 15 minutes, the needles were removed. Aquapuncture was performed again using B-12 at ST-36. She was then set up to return 1 month later for her next treatment.

Since her appointment in May 2020, Cat has been seen every month for her acupuncture and aquapuncture treatments. Her monthly treatments have allowed her to have regular bowel movements roughly every 2 days. She has become more willing to have her needles placed as well. After just a few months of treatments; she now allows for 20-25 needles to be placed as well as having aquapuncture performed in about 4-8 locations. Cat's energy level has improved some, but she is still having some signs of arthritis in her hips. Recently we have extended our treatments to include cold laser therapy for hip pain. The cold laser is used to help reduce inflammation and help healthy cells regenerate faster.