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Foreword

East treatment is coming into recognition due to evolving techniques and researches that proves that eastern medical therapy is reputable. Western medical treatments are finding ways to merge with eastern medical treatments in ways that were unthinkable last time.

For those who refuses western medical treatments or western medical treatments offer no hope, they turn to eastern medical treatments in hopes of cure. Besides, eastern medical treatments offer effective treatment with less or no side effects. This book shall reveal one of the best kept traditional Chinese treatment methods unknown to many, known as Gua Sha.

Boost Your Health With Gua Sha

Learn What Gua Sha Can Do For You And Your Body

Chapter 1:

Introduction

Synopsis

Asia is popular with traditional medication practice. One of them is Gua Sha. It is commonly used by folks that chose not to seek treatment with doctors and prefer to treat themselves with alternative treatment.



The Basics

It is considered to be more of a “folk therapy”. Folks do not mean to be used in any pejorative sense but to emphasis on people who are able to do for themselves in the comfort of their homes or in monasteries.

It is a traditional treatment similar to massage and acupuncture that helps getting rid of common ailments. However, Gua Sha is less known in the west comparatively.

With the advancement of internet, research and even a movie made in USA highlighting Gua Sha called ‘The Treatment’ are helping to lift Gua Sha from obscurity and promote its beneficial effects. Gua Sha is a simple yet effective treatment.



Chapter 2:

History of Gua Sha

Synopsis

Gua sha in Chinese means to scrape away fever or translated more loosely, to rub away illness by allowing the illness to break out from the body as red-sandy-looking entity through skin.



How It Began

The main essence of Gua Sha is to scrape body parts and release blocked energy (Qi) and cure ailments. It is an ancient medical treatment that has been around for over two thousand years.

This scraping technique might not originate from China but 200 BC Chinese scriptures describe a scraping method to scrape complaints or diseases from body.

Besides China, Gua Sha can be found extensively in the Southeast Asia countries such as Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia. This technique is known in Vietnam as 'Cao Gio' while in Laos, it is known as 'Khoud Lam'. In Cambodia, it goes by the name 'Kos Khyol' and in Indonesia, it becomes 'Kerik'.

For minor ailments, a family member will use gua sha therapy to apply treatment. However, there is a Gua Sha therapist available in most villages in rural China and other South East Asia countries for more thorough treatment. Scraping does not only apply to treatment but as prevention. The head, arms, legs and chest can be treated everyday to prevent complaints.

Most of the countries mentioned above used copper coin as the main instrument to scrap. However, other material is used. Since it is a folk therapy, the folks will scrape with whatever things available. In China, Chinese porcelain spoons are used and this practice is still going on. The rounded shape of the spoon and the smooth porcelain surface makes it a good scraping tool.

One of the famous variations of Gua Sha, 'Kerik' from Indonesia used copper coin. The skin is rubbed with warm oil and copper coin (known as kerik or kerok) is used to scrape.

This is often used as treatment for colds, fevers, muscle ache and others. The scraping method using coin is not only available in Indonesia though, other countries such as Cambodia, Laos and Thailand used copper coin often but with different oils. Vietnam and Cambodia used oils containing menthol or camphor which can cause complications such as burn marks

There are misconceptions due to Gua Sha in the 1970s when immigrants from Asia settled in US. Many parents were charged and convicted for child abuse due to red marks caused by Gua Sha. This resulted in many families separating as children were put into foster care.

Chapter 3:

Basics of Gua Sha

Synopsis

Gua Sha is an accompaniment technique used to heal or prevent ailments in addition to acupuncture and Chinese massage treatments. Gua means rubbing or friction. Sha means the red appearance of blood congestion at the surface of the body.



A Little More In Depth

This technique involves cutaneous stimulation and palpation where pressure is applied on the skin in repeated strokes by specific tools. This raised the appearance of small red petechiae known as 'sha' which will fade in 2-4 days. 'Sha' can be used as diagnostic and prognostic indicators.

Gua Sha is considered an adaptogenic technique. By balancing Qi, it can cool a person suffering from heat, warm a person who is chilled, give nourishment to patient who is deprived, and clear excess.

Gua Sha will be considered by experts if there is pain or discomfort or upper respiratory ailments or digestive problems. If the palpation indicates 'Sha', Gua Sha will be used.

After treatment is given, patient is instructed to cover the area and avoid wind and exposure to sun or any sudden changes in temperature. It is recommended for patient to rest on the day of treatment and do light stretching but not heavy workout.

Chapter 4:

Tools of Gua Sha

Synopsis

Gua Sha is an Eastern medical treatment to remove blood stagnation from body parts. This can be accomplished with a smooth flat tool such as porcelain soup spoons.



What Is Used

Besides Chinese porcelain spoons, polished slices horn is also a material that is used frequently as it is easy to work with and easily available especially in rural China. The practitioners used a section of the horn and scrape the back, neck, buttocks and limbs.

Oil can be used in combination as lubricant to decrease the pain of scraping.

Other tools used include wood, bamboo or lids of jars. As the technique evolved, special Gua Sha tools are developed into jade. Jade are mostly available to practitioners or those who are able to afford it. Jade is a stone that is associated with healing powers by the Chinese. It also has the power to conducts energy 'chi' well.

Vietnamese also used a boiled egg with a coin inserted in the middle of the yolk as a Gua Sha tool. The egg is wrapped in a piece of cloth and rubbed over the affected area such as forehead for fever. After rubbing, the coin will appear black when removed from the egg.



Chapter 5:

How To Perform Gua Sha

Synopsis

Gua Sha can be performed using a traditional specialized tool such as Gua Sha board, Gua Sha slide or other Gua Sha tools.



The Method

The practitioner will applied treatment by gently scraping or rubbing the skin over a problem area as a deep massage in a downward movement. The actions performed on the skin will provide immediate relief from various ailments and is particularly good in pain and cold relief.

There is another technique used to cure fatigue from heavy work using a piece of ginger root soaked in rice wine to rub the spine in a downward movement from head to tail.

The main point of Gua Sha is repeated pressured strokes over lubricated skin with a smooth edge of Gua Sha tools.

The smooth edge of Gua Sha tool is placed against the skin surface that can be oiled first. Then it was pressed down firmly and moved in a downward motion along the muscles. These are term 'tribo-effleurage' or friction stroking. Gua Sha can be scraped along the acupuncture meridians or the surface of skin with each stroke length being 4-6 inches long.

The scraping caused extravasation of blood from peripheral capillaries called petechiae and this resulted in ecchymosis which is sub-cutaneous bruising. The blemish marks may take 2-4 days to fade.

However, Sha blemish does not caused bruising. Bruising is caused by capillary rupture while Sha blemish will fade from petechiae to echymosis. This is because Sha resolves faster compared to bruising.

There are a few variations of Sha color due to severity of individual's blood stasis which may be related to nature, severity and type of their disease. It can appear as a dark blue-black mark, shades of red or light pink. It may look painful but it is not.



Chapter 6:

Application of Gua Sha

Synopsis

Gua Sha is normally used to treat common diseases by people who chose not to go to health practitioners and prefer alternative remedy.



What It Can Be Used For

Although it is an Eastern traditional medication therapy, Gua Sha can be applied in modern days as research proves the effectiveness of Gua Sha.

It can be used to:

1. Reduce fever
2. Treat heat stroke / sun stroke
3. Treat common cold or influenza
4. Treat fatigue
5. Cure cough, asthma and bronchitis
6. Relieve muscle tension and tendon injuries
7. Improve blood circulation
8. Cure headache
9. Treat stiffness, pain and immobility
10. Resolves digestive disorders
11. Assist in food poisoning
12. Cure urinary and gynecological disorders.

Besides health benefits, there are increasing practice among beauty salons that incorporates Gua Sha as facial to retain youthful look and increase skin radiance. Facial Gua Sha is normally combined with facial cleanser and scalp massage.

Consistent strokes are applied using a specially designed Gua Sha board along specific channels and acupuncture points on the skin of the face.

This reduces blood vessel obstruction, stimulate blood circulation and promote metabolic process of the facial skin. It also helps in combating dark skin, pigmentation and dark circles for long term.

Going regularly for Gua Sha may promote new skin cells growth and renew complexion. It can effectively reduce clogged pores, control acne and pimples and reduce acne scars that many suffered from.

Besides tightening the skin and reducing fine lines, it can improve skin conditions for makeup and help reduce eye bags giving a youthful appearance. Gua Sha facial therapy can combat fatigue and insomnia as well.

Besides ironing out fine lines, removing eye bags, tightening face, reduce fatigue and insomnia.



Chapter 7:

Benefits of Gua Sha

Synopsis

The benefits of Gua Sha are numerous. It is the belief that when 'Sha' is raised, the pathogenic blood stagnation is removed. This enabled the promotion of normal blood circulation to the muscles, tissues and organs directly beneath the surface treated. The patient treated may experience immediate shift in their conditions such as relief in stiffness, pain and mobility.



What you Can get Out Of It

Normal metabolic processes are restored through fluids and nutrients supplied to tissues and metabolic wastes removed.

Gua Sha works by moving the stuck Qi and blood, release it externally by mimicking sweating and moving the fluid. As Gua Sha mimics sweating, it can also resolve fever.

Main benefits of Gua Sha

1. Promotes movement of Qi
2. Improves blood circulation
3. Restore normal metabolic process
4. Ease chronic and acute pain.



Chapter 8:

Who Is Gua Sha Not Suitable For

Synopsis

Gua Sha is a known safe medical therapy but it is still under medicine field where it cannot be used recklessly. It is best to have the knowledge of when to use Gua Sha and the expected result from the treatment besides having good technique as well.



Some Cautions

As Gua Sha improves blood circulation, it can increase heart, lung, liver and kidney burden among people who is suffering from severe cardiovascular and cerebrovascular disease or liver and kidney failure. This might aggravate the patient's condition and could be life-threatening.

Pregnant women should avoid Gua Sha as Gua Sha may cause them to faint or miscarry. People who are drunk, starving or tired might faint if they undergo Gua Sha.

On surfaces that have boil, swelling, ulcer, sore, rash or unexplained mass, it is advisable to avoid Gua Sha. Gua Sha can lead to infection and worsen the skin condition as scraping reopen the wounds and infection may spread.

If patient suffered from acute sprain, trauma pain or fracture, scraping will increase the bleeding and worsens the wound.

People with contact dermatitis should not use Gua Sha as it might spread the disease to others.

Patients suffering from advanced diabetes, severe anemia, leukemia, aplastic anemia and thrombocytopenia have bleeding tendencies as scraping marks arising from subcutaneous hemorrhage cannot be easily resolved.

Body parts such as eyes, lips, tongue, ears, nostrils, nipples and navel are prohibited to undergo Gua Sha as scraping will do damage the sensitive areas of the skin.

Wrapping Up

Gua Sha has been proven as one of the beneficial adjunct therapy in treating diseases and alleviating symptoms that used to be cure through eating medicine.

As Gua Sha evolves more, it is slowly becoming more recognizable as a treatment that is not based on lore. It is best that practitioners learn from the east and the west in order to get the best of both world and came up with better medical treatment alternatives and improve the medical world.

Think of eastern medical therapy as a partner that can contribute towards a better health. So if you think that you might want to try alternative treatments for something that has been ailing you, why not give Gua Sha a try.

