

COINING: AN ANCIENT TREATMENT WIDELY PRACTICED AMONG ASIANS

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ABSTRACT

Coining is a technique used in treating many illnesses since ancient times. It is a form of dermabrasion therapy still widely practiced in China and South East Asia. This ancient treatment method is employed to rid the body of "heatiness" or "negative energies". Coining is associated with serious complications, and has been confused with child abuse by physicians unfamiliar to Asian cultures. Despite the availability of more simple and effective treatment for fever, coining is still widely practiced among Asians.

Keywords: Coining, fever, traditional medicine, abuse.

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CASE REPORT

A 10-year-old Chinese boy presented with five days history of fever, productive cough, running nose and severe backache. He was treated with oral paracetamol 1000 mg twice daily, oral diphenhydramine 28 mg three times daily and oral chlorpheniramine 4 mg three times daily but without any improvement. His temperature was 39.5°C and throat was injected with inflamed tonsils. During auscultation of the lungs, there were multiple areas of ecchymoses at his back, distributed in linear fashion (Figure 1).



Figure 1: Large areas of ecchymoses as a result of coining

There were no petechial haemorrhages in between the areas of ecchymoses, in the oral mucosa or elsewhere. He has no history of blood dyscrasias, no ear, nose or throat bleed, and no significant drug history. Blood pressure was 120/70, pulse rate 90 beats per minute, regular with strong volume. Tourniquet test was negative. The lungs were clear, and there was neither splenomegaly nor hepatomegaly. Vision was 6/6 bilaterally without any retinal haemorrhages. The boy underwent traditional treatment of "coining" prior to presentation. He was diagnosed of bacterial tonsillitis and his illness resolved after three days with oral amoxicillin 500 mg four times daily.

DISCUSSION

Understanding the socio-cultural dimension of a patient's health beliefs will enhance relationship of trust and proper