

good point

BLADDER 23

SHENSHU – KIDNEY SHU, KIDNEYS CORRESPONDENCE

What's good about it?

Bl 23 has amazing potency as the back shu point for the kidneys, going directly to the organ and the potential of inherited constitution. My favourite line of points starts with

Du 4 between the second and third lumbar vertebrae, working out towards Bl 23, and then Bl 52. An elegant and powerful treatment that nourishes the kidneys and water element; tapping into the reserves of jing first, ensuring the Gate of Life/Destiny is open, then reinvigorating kidney energy with Bl 23 to flow through that gate, and finally balancing zhi to ensure momentum; each point runs beautifully into the next.

When would you choose it?

Whenever nourishing kidney energy is paramount. Back pain, fertility, menstrual issues, asthma, and hay fever all respond well. Emotionally, I would choose it for supporting a water element, or any other CF, that presented with issues around the future, fulfilling their destiny, fear or drive.

How would you use it?

I almost exclusively tonify this point, as most patients have some degree of kidney deficiency. Yet books suggest kidney stones or infections can be expelled with reduction needle technique.

Would you combine it with anything else?

In addition to the above combination, I combine Bl 23 and Bl 52 with Bl 14 and Bl 43 (or less often Bl 15 and Bl 44), to balance fire and water, especially if the patient's element is fire or water. This warms up a cold or 'frozen' water emotionally or when regarding matters of the heart. Depression, heartbreak or fear of the future with an inability to see how they have resources to survive alone builds a torrent of water that literally extinguishes their fire. Warming and nourishing qi of the chest whilst strengthening the kidneys restores equilibrium. Cooling water conversely dampens excess fire, calming anxiety, restlessness, hot flushes, and insomnia.

What happened one memorable time you used your good point?

A patient was due to move to Sri Lanka and despite feeling it was right, she was growing increasingly anxious. I treated her as a water element and used the points along the second and third lumbar vertebrae to strongly nourish the kidneys and balance her expressions of drive and fear. Afterwards she felt relaxed, the panic disappeared. She said her outlook had been transformed and it gave her courage to move. She is now enjoying the sunshine, sarees, and scuba diving!

sore point

BLADDER 66

ZUTONGGU – FOOT CONNECTING VALLEY, PENETRATING VALLEY

OK, what's your problem with this point?

My problem is based partly on location and partly on personal experience of having it needled. Although not a painful point per se, it's on the outside edge of the foot, which is inherently cringe inducing, plus it's at the bottom of the little toe; double cringe!

Tell us about it...

Being a water point on a water channel, it has double potency for nourishing and strengthening water. In winter it links into water at its stillest, coldest, deepest time, as the seasonal horary point. I use it more often as a horary between 3–5pm; it has a visible difference on water CFs that arrive feeling exhausted or anxious about not having enough within them to get through a situation; the water almost energetically fills up the deficient bladder, giving the patient more reserves, more energy. They leave like a different person, invigorated and awake, yet calm and contented.

So what do you expect?

I expect only good things from Bl 66 in terms of function but I suppose I expect my patients to feel the same way as I do when my practitioner suggests it, an automatic curling of the toes. This apprehension has permeated into my own practice, yet many patients remark it wasn't as bad as expected!

Are you sure you are doing it right?

I did avoid needling it early on in practice, unless a patient presented with cystitis and it was totally unavoidable! I think my location and needling is fine. It is more a matter of psyching myself up to use it more often, particularly when treating water patients, to help me get over my anxiety.

What would it take to make this one of your good points?

In theory this is already one of my good points as I know the influence of Bl 66, especially when treating constitutionally. I am also heartened by patient feedback; knowing it makes a huge difference encourages me to settle my own energy and truly utilise the magnificent power of water.

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