

*The Use of Yi Jin Jing to Treat Illness: A Summary of
Three Studies*

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Yi Jin Jing (Yìjīnjīng) is a set of qigong exercises that has been used to treat a variety of illnesses. It has been a part of traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) for nearly 2000 years. This paper summarizes three studies on the medical use of Yi Jin Jing. The present paper is part of a series on the economics of qigong. Other studies in this series are listed at the end of this bibliography.

YI JIN JING

Yi jin jing (Yìjīnjīng), also spelled yijinjing, is a set of qigong exercises that are intended to improve health. The exercises are a tool of traditional Chinese medicine (TCM). These exercises go by other names as well. One of the most frequent alternative names is tendon-muscle strengthening exercises. The oldest description of the exercises is almost 2,000 years old (Chinese Health Qigong Association, 2009).

There are 12 exercises in this qigong set. The individual exercises have been called by different names, depending on who is the lecturer or instructor. The names used by the Chinese Health Qigong Association are:

1. Wei Tuo Presenting the Pestle 1
2. Wei Tuo Presenting the Pestle 2
3. Wei Tuo Presenting the Pestle 3

4. Plucking Stars on Each Side
5. Pulling Nine Cows by Their Tails
6. Showing Talons and Spreading Wings
7. Nine Ghosts Drawing Sabers
8. Sinking the Three Bodily Zones
9. Black Dragon Displaying Its Claws
10. Tiger Springing on Its Prey
11. Bowing Down in Salutation
12. Swinging the Tail

The present article summarizes the results of some medical studies on the use of this qigong set to treat or alleviate certain physical maladies.

METHODOLOGY

Many articles, books, dissertations and other papers have been published on qigong and tai chi over the years. The present paper summarizes the findings of three medical studies on yi jin jing that have been published and posted to the PubMed database.

FINDINGS

Study 1

As men get older, there is an increased probability that they will have prostate problems. These problems can be both physical and psychological, and can have an adverse effect on the quality of life. Western medical treatments include surgery and drugs, which can be expensive and have adverse side effects, while not necessarily improving the patient's condition.

Yi Jin Jing and Tai Chi (tài jí quán) are two tools in the toolbox of traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) practitioners that have been used to treat prostate and other health problems. The application of these two TCM tools to prostate problems has not been studied much in the literature. The purpose of this study was to determine the effectiveness of these two TCM tools in the treatment of prostatic hyperplasia and related lower urinary tract symptoms.

Liu et al. (2016) merely reported on what they were going to do. They did not report the results of the study because the article was published before their study was completed.

The authors planned to conduct a randomized controlled trial consisting of 150 men between the ages of 60 and 70 in Shanghai, China. Of this sample, 50 would be randomly assigned to the control group, 50 to the yi jin jing group, and 50 to the tai chi group. They were to exercise 30 minutes a day, 5 days a week for 6 months. The researchers planned to examine changes of signs and symptoms in BPH and their lower urinary tract that occurred between the start and end of the exercise regimen, and also three months after the end of the six-month regimen. They also planned to study the effects of the circulating levels of estrogen and androgen.

The authors stated that this study was to be the first comparative clinical trial to evaluate the relative effectiveness of yi jin jing and tai chi on the prostate health of older men. The trial was to be completed by December, 2016. An internet search was unable to find the results of this study, which might lead one to conclude that the study was not completed.

Although they did not report the results on their study in this article (because it had not yet been started), they did cite the results of other research that found both tai chi and yi jin jing to be effective in the treatment of various diseases. To summarize that part of their literature review:

Tai chi had beneficial results for:

- Fibromyalgia
- Type 2 diabetes
- Stroke
- Knee osteoarthritis
- Parkinson's disease
- Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease
- BPH

The practice of yi jin jing had beneficial results for:

- Health and physical fitness
- Enhanced dynamic nervous response speed

- Decreased Quetelet index and improved lung capacity
- Improved body serum superoxide dismutase activity and decreased serum malondialdehyde (MDA) levels
- Delaying the decline of intelligence by improving thinking agility, action time and short-term memory
- Improvement of psychological adjustment capability and depression

Although they did not report the results of their planned study, they did report the results of a similar study conducted a few years later. Those results are given below.

Study 2

This study had a sample size of 30 older men, divided into two groups of 15 (Liu et al, 2020). One group was the control group; the other group practiced yi jin jing for 6 months. The study found that the yi jin jing group had a significant decrease in international prostate symptom score and also a significant increase in maximal urinary flow rate compared to the control group. Their testosterone level also increased and the estrogen/testosterone ratio decreased. The conclusion was that performing the yi jin jing exercises was a promising way to reduce the risk of benign prastatic hyperplasia-urinary tract symptoms in older men.

Study 3

Although the Zhang et al. (2020) article is a very interesting read for anyone who is interested in health qigong, it is only tangentially related to yi jin jing. One thing the study revealed is that there is much less research into yi jin jing than other sets of health qigong. The authors analyzed 886 clinical studies conducted in 14 countries. Most of the databases they examined were Chinese. However, they did look at two U.S. databases as well. The top 15 diseases examined in those studies were:

- diabetes,
- chronic obstructive pulmonary disease,
- hypertension,
- stroke,

- cervical spondylosis,
- lumbar disc herniation,
- insomnia,
- knee osteoarthritis,
- low back pain,
- osteoporosis,
- coronary heart disease,
- breast cancer,
- peri arthritis of shoulder,
- depression, and
- metabolic syndrome.

The most frequently studied qigong set was ba duan jin. The relative frequency of the various qigong studies is listed in Table 1.

Table 1
Frequency of the Various Qigong Sets

	n	%
Ba Duan Jin (bā duàn jīn)	492	55.5
Health Qigong	107	12.1
Dao Yin Shu (dǎo yīn)	85	9.6
Wu Qin Xi (wǔ qín xī)	67	7.6
Yi Jin Jing (Yì jīn jīng)	66	7.4
Other	69	7.8
Total	886	100.0

Yi jin jing ranked fifth among the studies in terms of frequency studies. One of the most interesting findings was that beneficial results from practicing qigong were found in 97 percent of the studies.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

The Yi Jin Jing exercises are easy to learn. The Chinese Health Qigong Association (2009) has published a book and DVD that explain and shows how the exercises should be performed. As of this writing, the Chinese Health Qigong Association has published books and DVDs on 9 suggested sets of qigong exercises. Those publications are listed in the reference section.

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Academia Letters, April 2021

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Citation: McGee, R. (2021). The Use of Yi Jin Jing to Treat Illness: A Summary of Three Studies. *Academia Letters*, Article 547. <https://doi.org/10.20935/AL547>.

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