

1 **CUPPING THERAPY IN EQUINE MEDICINE**

2 **(VENTOSATHERAPY IN EQUINE MEDICINE)**

3 **1- JÁCOME, F. M. 2- DOS SANTOS, J. H. M. 3- SOUZA, L. Q.**

4 1-Student of the 7th semester of Veterinary Medicine at the Federal Rural University of Rio de  
5 Janeiro - UFRRJ.

6 Student of the 5th semester of Veterinary Medicine at the Federal University of Piauí –  
7 Ufpi.

8 Student of the 8th semester of Veterinary Medicine at the Federal University of  
9 Recôncavo da Bahia - UFRB.

10 Contact addresses: [ojjac@hotmail.com](mailto:ojjac@hotmail.com) / [j.moraes.santos2016@gmail.com](mailto:j.moraes.santos2016@gmail.com) /  
11 [larisouza.q@hotmail.com](mailto:larisouza.q@hotmail.com)

12 **SUMMARY**

13 Cupping therapy is an ancient technique that was incorporated and perfected in ancient China,  
14 but there are records of this activity in other parts of the world, such as in Ancient Egypt. This  
15 technique consists in the release of the connective tissue assisting in the release of the fascias,  
16 increasing the blood circulation and oxygenation for a better sliding of the  
17 aponeurosis, relaxing the affected musculature. This therapy is contraindicated in cases of  
18 open wounds, abrasions, sunburns and contusions. Adverse effects can be  
19 attributed to the health status of the animal and species variations.

20 **KEYWORDS:** Physiatry. Equine. Suction cup.

21 **ABSTRACT**

22 Cupping is an ancient technique that was incorporated and improved in Ancient China,  
23 however there is a record of this activity in other parts of the world, such as Ancient Egypt.  
24 This technique consists of the release of connective tissue, assisting in the release of fasciae,  
25 increasing blood circulation and oxygenation for a better sliding of the aponeuroses, relaxing

26 the affected muscles. This therapy is contraindicated in cases of open wounds, abrasions,  
27 sunburn and bruises. Adverse effects can be attributed to the animal's state of health and  
28 variations in species.

29 KEYWORD: Physiatry. Equine. Suction cup.

## 30 INTRODUCTION

31 Cupping is a technique used in equine physiotherapy that has as the objective of blood  
32 regularization of blood circulation, helping in the treatment of several pathologies  
33 chronic and acute with associated pain processes. The technique assists in the process of  
34 dissolution of trigger points located in the fascia region as a result of involuntary muscle  
35 contraction. This technique consists of the release of connective tissue assisting in the  
36 release of the fascia, increasing blood circulation and oxygenation for better  
37 sliding of the aponeuroses relaxing the affected musculature (Hopwood VAL et.al, 2001).  
38 The suction cup therapy can be applied in two different ways, one being fixed and the other  
39 mobile, having light and strong variations of suction pressure. When applied in a light way,  
40 they cause the effect of releasing stagnation and toning the blood by increasing circulation;  
41 in the strong form of suction pressure, are normally used on patients with more  
42 muscle tone, for the purpose of moving the circulation (Hopwood VAL et.al,  
43 2001).

## 44 CUPPING THERAPY IN CHINESE MEDICINE

45 Cupping therapy is an ancient technique that was incorporated and perfected in Ancient China,  
46 but there are records of this activity in other parts of the world, such as in Ancient Egypt  
47 (OLIVEIRA et al., 2018). This modality, as previously mentioned, promotes

48 body and mental relaxation of patients through the arrival of blood to the site of  
49 application (AMARO et al, 2015). However, in order to understand Cupping in the view of  
50 Chinese Medicine, it is necessary to review some concepts, such as body energy and blood.  
51 First, it is of utmost importance to understand body energy according to the  
52 Chinese treatments. Also called Qi, this is the energy that moves not only the  
53 body, but everything that exists in the universe, and it is the reason for life. Therefore, Qi must be  
54 balanced and flowing correctly throughout the body (XIE et al., 2012).  
55 In addition to Qi, one must set aside the Western concept of blood as we know it. From  
56 according to the ancient Chinese, blood, or Xue, "is a red liquid containing Qi and  
57 circulating in the vessels" (XIE et al., 2012). With this, Xue is understood not only as a  
58 carrier of cells, electrolytes, oxygen, and other substances, but also as a  
59 energy carrier for the entire body, through vessels. Blood being the very  
60 personification of Qi in the body.  
61 Bringing these concepts to cupping therapy, this technique acts in a way to seek the  
62 rebalance of Qi and Xue in that place or in specific places, as when applied to  
63 acupoints. In this way, the technique acts by removing the stagnation of these body components  
64 opening channels and facilitating the flow of energy through them. Another benefit of  
65 Cupping in the Chinese view is the elimination of external pathogenic factors, such as cold  
66 heat, humidity, and wind (COELHO et al., 2019).

#### 67 APPLICABILITY IN HORSES

68 Recently, complementary therapies involving acupuncture and traditional Chinese medicine  
69 have been widely used in equine veterinary medicine (PRESTON, 2012).  
70 However, there are few published studies on Cupping therapy in the area.

71 There are reports of the use of this technique, also known as "hijama" in Arab culture, with the  
72 "wet suction therapy" to evaluate the effect on venous and arterial blood parameters  
73 (SHAWAF et. al, 2018), which is when before the application of the suction cups a  
74 small superficial incision is made in the animal's skin (Fig 1). In this study, the application was made  
75 in four areas, chosen according to the meridians according to 75 TCM: two behind the  
76 scapulae and two on the hip, at the border of the sacral vertebrae; the suction cups were left on these  
77 areas for ten minutes for the accumulation of blood, being replaced after that time and  
78 the procedure was repeated three times. Serum cortisol levels were also assessed,  
79 were also evaluated, and these were significantly reduced. No complications were observed during the  
80 eight weeks of therapy. There are also reports in horses of the use of traditional Cupping  
81 (KIM et al., 2016) and in treatments for spinal pain (XIE et al., 1996).

82 Figure 1: Wet suction cup therapy in horses.



90 Source: Yellow horse.

91 There are three most commonly used methods in suction therapy: fire suction cup, which is  
92 a traditional method, where a cotton pad with ethanol is placed in an inverted glass suction cup,

93 causing the flame to consume the oxygen from within, and will be pressed into the skin causing vacuum  
94 immediately; vacuum suction cups, with special PVC cups equipped with an air valve;  
95 and the sliding suction cup, which is more difficult on furry animals and consists of applying a  
96 lubricating oil to the skin in order to create vacuum to massage the area (PELLEGRINI et al., 2018).  
97 Wet Cupping can be used to relieve pain, improve metabolism and  
98 blood circulation in the animal's body, as well as aiding in the treatment of conditions such as  
99 flu, heat stroke, asthma, bronchitis, musculoskeletal injuries, muscle pain/spasms  
100 back pain, respiratory and reproductive disorders (KIM et al., 2011; PELLEGRINI et  
101 al., 2018).

102 As it can be an uncomfortable process for the animal, there are times when sedation is  
103 necessary (SHAWAF, et al., 2018). The hair of the animals can interfere with the application of the  
104 suction cups, and therefore, it is necessary to groom the areas where they will be applied (PRESTON,  
105 2012). In addition, the correct antiseptics of the area is extremely important, because when  
106 doing the wet cupping technique it is possible to lead to secondary infections and irritation of the  
107 skin when the application site is dirty (SHAWAF et al., 2018). After the technique, it is  
108 recommended to walk slowly with the animal for 1-2 hours twice a day. In case there is no  
109 successful on the first application, the treatment should be repeated after 7-15 days (XIE et  
110 al., 1996). In horses with fine hair, vegetable oil should be applied to the area  
111 where the vacuum will be stimulated. In dark-haired and dark-skinned animals it is not easy to  
112 observe the degree of hyperemia in the aspirated skin (PELLEGRINI et al., 2018).  
113 This therapy is contraindicated in cases of open wounds, abrasions, sunburns and  
114 contusions. Adverse effects can be attributed to the health status of the animal and variations  
115 of species (MASHLOOL & AOWADA, 2016).

116 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

117 It was noticeable that there was a scarcity of literature addressing cupping therapy in equines, so  
118 the area needs the development of more studies. Finally, it is possible to conclude by highlighting the  
119 importance of integrating alternative therapies in the treatment of several equine pathologies.  
120 Among them, therapy with suction cups, being used as an adjuvant for  
121 improvement mainly of pain.

122 REFERENCES

- 123 Hopwood VAL, Lovesey M, Mokone S. Acupuncture and Techniques Related to Physical Therapy.  
124 Ed. São Paulo: Manole, 2001).
- 125 OLIVEIRA, MAR; SILVA, A.; PEREIRA, L. CUPPING–REVIEW OF  
126 LITERATURE. São Lourenço: Revista Saúde em Foco, 2018. p. 151-154.
- 127 AMARO, Priscilla Ercília Queiroz Cupping therapy in the treatment of acne vulgaris. 2015. 24  
128 Leaves. Monograph (Biomedicina) - Catholic University of Brasilia, Brasília, 2015.
- 129 XIE, H.; PREAST, V. Traditional Chinese Medicine: Basic Principles. 1. Ed. São Paulo:  
130 MedVet Publishing House, 2012.
- 131 COELHO, Náyra Lima; DE SOUSA, Jeane Tavares; WATANABE, Luiz Aurelio Rodrigues.  
132 The use of traditional Chinese medicine in stress reduction. Scire Salutis, v. 9, no. 1,  
133 p. 20-29, 2019.
- 134 PRESTON, L. Natural Healing for Cats, Dogs, Horses, and Other Animals: 150 Alternative  
135 Therapies Available to Owners and Caregivers. Skyhorse Publishing Inc., 2012.
- 136 Mashloul, Z.T. and Aowada, M.A. Effect of cupping treatment on some biochemical variables  
137 of thi-qar province. Int. J. Res. Appl. Nat. Soc. Sci., 4: 93-104. 2016.
- 138 Youngung Kim, Hyoungsun Cho, Dam Kim, Ki chang Lee, Min su Kim, Nam so Kim.

- 139 Applying of modified Korean traditional cupping therapy on four horses, 2016.
- 140 Kim, J.I., Lee, M.S., Lee, D.H., Boddy, K. and Ernst, E. Cupping for treating pain: A  
141 systematic review. Evid. Based Complement. Altern. Med., 2011.
- 142 D. Z. Pellegrini, T. A. Muller, J. H. Fontequé, L. P. de Souza, A. F. by Souza and J. G. F.  
143 Joaquim. Methods and applications of equine acupuncture: A review. Equine vet. Educ., 2018.
- 144 PRESENTATION
- 145 SOUZA, L. Q. Student of the 8th semester of Veterinary Medicine at the Federal University of  
146 Recôncavo da Bahia - UFRB.
- 147 JÁCOME, F. M. Student of the 7th semester of Veterinary Medicine at the Federal University  
148 Rural Rio de Janeiro - UFRRJ.
- 149 DOS SANTOS, J. H. M. Student of the 5th semester of Veterinary Medicine at the University  
150 Federal Government of Piauí - UFPI.