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The Understanding of Covid-19 Infections in Chinese Medicine

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the world is enormous, which has been continuously changing the structure of the global political policy, economy, and people's living style. Unfortunately, the sudden outbreak did not give us, as human beings, enough time to be prepared. As a result, many questions remain unclear: What is coronavirus? Where did the coronavirus come from? How long would the pandemic last? Is the disease self-limiting? What shall we do?

Undoubtedly, it takes time to answer these questions in practice and in the study. As Chinese medical doctors, how we deal with these questions directly influences how we approach prevention and treatment. Therefore, it is crucial to establish the foundation of the differential treatments in Chinese Medicine (CM).

By Zan Yu Chen and Yu Gu

What Is Coronavirus?

The CM diagnosis, aetiology and characterisation of disease are not purely based on microcosm studies. Therefore, the morphology of coronavirus under the transmission electron microscope (TEM) and its RNA sequence may have relevance for the CM study. With limited information on Covid-19 from the conventional medicine route, the authors attempt to understand and explain coronavirus from the traditional CM aspects.

i). The Character of Cold-Damp

The coronavirus is generated by Qi, which is the same as the generation of the universe. Studying the associated natural environment, where the virus has drawn energy from and thrived to cause a pandemic, provides a better understanding of the virus' nature. Wuhan city is in the east of Jianhan Plain, Yangzi River and its largest branch - Han River, both run across the city. Territorial waters extend to one-fourth of the whole area of Wuhan city. Dampness is the environmental character in the place where the Covid-19 outbreak initially struck. So far, Covid-19 affected regions in China are predominantly located in waterside areas, such as Zhe Jiang, Guang Xi and Guang Dong provinces, indicating a certain degree of correlation between coronavirus and environmental dampness.

The main symptoms of Covid-19, according to the articles published in The Lancet, are high temperature and lethargy dry cough accompanied by nasal congestion and running nose and sometimes diarrhoea. Severe cases may develop shortness of breath and even acute respiratory distress syndromes (ARDS), Septic Shock, incorrigible metabolic acidosis, and coagulation disorders. Severe Covid-19 pneumonia may present as mild low temperature or even without fever rather than high temperature. Patients who have a low-grade fever and tiredness without pneumonia normally recover in a week. Deaths are more among the elderly and people with chronic illnesses. Qi is injured by the lingering pathogenic factor of dampness, causing the low-grade fever presented in the clinical observation in conventional medicine. Nasal congestion, running nose and diarrhoea are closely related to the pathogens of Cold-Damp, however, the tongue pictures and pulse diagnoses were not largely provided. Reports from Chinese Medicine indicated that 80% of new coronavirus patients have thick and greasy tongue coating which suggests dampness. Most tongue images sent by the frontline doctors showed a dark-coloured stagnated tongue body with slimy or thick greasy and dirty coating on top. Although it is hard to tell which stage those patients are in, the basic pathology of dampness is evident.

ii) The Character of Latent Dryness

Wuhan had a warm winter in 2019. The average temperature in December that year was between 12 and 18 Celsius, an 8-degree increase compared to December 2018. It was not cold enough in the winter solstice. Instead, the abnormal climate of persistent fog, heavy dews and rain had lingered for months which formed the foundation of the pandemic. The scholars who studied The Five Elements and Six Pathogenic Factors commented: 'with a low temperature in spring 2017, and noticeable dry hot weather in autumn and winter formed the pathogenic factor of latent dryness.' Although the climate was slightly better in 2018 and 2019, the latent pathogens nurtured the soil to the new coronavirus pandemic. There is a saying in The Yellow Emperor's Inner Classic - Cifa Acupuncture in epidemiology: 'it takes three years to form a pandemic if the weather has remarkably abnormal changes in different seasons.' In recent years, the warm winters have resulted in Jing being unable to be stored properly for the long term. In addition, in modern society, people stay up late during the night, which depletes yin. Given both internal and external reasons, the threat from latent dryness is amplified. This had been proved further from the signs and symptoms of Covid-19 patients in Wuhan. An article in The Lancet reported that the common symptoms of the new coronavirus infection are fever (98%) and coughing (76%) within 41 patients. Only 28% of patients had a chesty cough, whereas many of them had a dry cough. Some first-hand reports mentioned dry cough without any phlegm or mucus which shows the remarkable character of the lungs being injured by dryness.

The progression of Covid-19 could come on quickly and develop severe breathlessness, hemoptysis, inability to sustain spontaneous ventilation and even leading to life-threatening conditions. Recently, autopsy findings from a Covid-19 patient reported that the lungs were filled with white mucus. It is the sign of the Lung being impaired by the latent dryness, resulting in the injury of the essence in the Kidney and Heart yang – non-resolvable turbidity and phlegm being harmful to the orifices.

iii) Cold-Damp-Dryness Toxins Causing the Pandemic

A massive coronavirus outbreak struck Hanjiang Plain, the waterside area with warm winter for years. The building up of latent dryness created the stagnation of Cold-Damp-Dryness toxins, thereby contributing to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Dryness and Dampness have the fundamental difference, whereas the same as the pairs of Water and Fire, Yin, and Yang. It sounds unlikely that the combination of dryness and dampness becomes a disease pathogen; however, this is not rare in clinical practice. Both are under the category of Toxins (Du) in CM, which has been discussed by ancient scholars. In the Qing Dynasty, Zhou Xuehai described that Dryness and Dampness shared a common character and caused the same condition(s) in Essay of Study Medicine (Du Yi Sui Bi). He commented on the striking resemblance between Dryness and Dampness in feature and transformation between each other. Impaired Yin can cause Dryness. Similarly, overwhelmed damp stagnation obstructs the transformation of body fluids (Jin Ye) and the generation of Yin leading to Dryness. The Dryness symptoms of dry mouth with dry cough in Covid patients manifest the failure of body fluids transformation. This Dryness may be caused by either Yin Deficiency or stagnation of Dampness. Essay of Study Medicine also stated that: in extreme conditions, each pathogenic factor of Wind, Cold, Heat, Damp, Dry and Fire could transform into Fire; when over-congested, each factor could transform into Dampness; generation of Dryness is often seen in the extreme congestion of Dampness. Why? Over-accumulated turbidity could raise and obstruct the channels and orifices, thus transforming into Fire. Congestion stops the free flow of body fluids, thus stagnation, then interior dampness arises. Long term stagnation stops the refreshment and recreation, hence the formation of Dryness. Therefore, all the Six Qi have a normal transformation, except Dryness which is created by the abnormal transformation. Predecessors believed that Dryness does not cause illness directly. Instead, it induces abnormal changes in the body hence illness. Undoubtedly, this is a deep and thorough relevant discussion and analysis.

Detailed Analysis of Febrile Diseases - Dryness Theory states: Dryness, which is in the category of Cold, is less cold than Cold. Dryness caused conditions often manifested as coldness instead of dryness. Generally, every one of the Six Qi has normal transformation, except Dryness, as the only one produced by others Qi's abnormal transformation, causes illness only. There are similar opinions in Su Wen. Febrile diseases have been discussed in detail in the first three chapters of Dryness Theory, including Summer-Heat, Damp-Heat which are under the categories of Latent Heat and Damp-Heat. In autumn, the comorbidity of internal dampness and external cold-dryness complicates the conditions. Hence the inappropriate treatment for dampness may introduce complications of dryness in dampness. There are differentiations of damp-heat and cold-damp, wind-heat and dry-heat, cold-transformed dryness, and heat-transformed heat. When treating the comorbidity, it is essential to distinguish the heat, dampness, and dryness firstly, then differentiate between cold and heat. It is worth mentioning that the autumn dryness mentioned in the Dryness Theory refers to the Pathogenic Factor of Dryness rather than the impaired yin by latent dryness. Hence, the treatment should be focused on both dryness and dampness. However, the comorbidity of dryness and dampness is commonly seen. Therefore, a thorough understanding of the pathology and thoughtful treatment strategies are necessary during clinical practice.

The new coronavirus is the toxin formed from the stagnation of Cold, Damp and Dryness. The clinical manifestations are different due to the patient's constitution and underlying conditions. Patients who have underlying yin deficiency with empty heat could quickly develop a high temperature, hemoptysis, constipation, tight chest with pain etc. Whereas patients with constitutional damp-cold are more likely to develop a low-grade temperature, loose bowel, nauseous and vomiting, coughing with sticky jelly-like sputum, fatigue, and shortness of breath etc. Due to the complication of internal dryness combined with external cold and as well as the stagnation of dampness with a mixture of cold and heat, the prevention and treatment of Covid-19 can be challenging with conventional medicine.

2. Where Does Coronavirus Target?

In The Lancet, Chen Nanshan reported that 74 patients (75%) developed pneumonia in both lungs and 25 patients (25%) had pneumonia in one lung, out of a total of 99

patients. Radiology indicated pulmonary shadow and ground-glass opacity in 14 cases, and even pulmonary consolidation in certain severe cases. Pleural effusion is rarely seen in Covid patients. Certainly, the Lungs are the main organs where coronavirus targets at.

Lung governs Qi all over the body according to CM theory. When the pathogenic factor of Wind-Heat strikes the exterior from the nose and mouth, Lung is the first organ to be attacked which matches the common symptoms of coronavirus infection. However, words were spread on social media from some frontline doctors that some Covid-19 patients may have never had symptoms of acute respiratory disease, the others may still show Covid-19 positive after full recovery with a normal result from CT scan examination. This information uncertified by the authority triggered profound concern and panic. The cunning characteristics of covid-19 and the concealment from public health surveillance could cause long term existence and continuous mutation of the coronavirus, leading to the coexistence of the virus with the human more devastating damage to the world, and even to the political and economic crisis.

Supposing the health authority accepts the basic analysis that the Cold-Damp-Dryness toxins jointly trigger coronavirus, it will be easier to understand that it is not sufficient to only rely on monitoring upper respiratory tract infection indicators, including temperature and cough, which needs to be improved.

The characteristic of the new coronavirus is the combination of Cold-Damp-Dryness, accompanied by the symptoms of digestive and urinary systems, to which we should pay more attention. When the external pathogenic factor of cold strikes, it injures yang and affects the Foot Great-Yang Bladder channels. The symptoms of the early stage Covid-19 infection include aversion to cold, headaches body pain, lower back pain and dysuria. When damp strikes, which directly attacks the digestive system, it causes low appetite, nauseousness, and bloated feeling after eating. However, such symptoms are not necessarily recognized or alerted as related to Covid-19 infection, especially when not accompanied by fever or chill. Under such circumstances, a faecal examination could be considered. Although simple gastrointestinal discomfort has no specificity, it is more specific if combined with basic tongue and pulse diagnosis, which is also one of the characteristics of Chinese medicine. Turbidity on tongue coating can further narrow the scope of detection. Some coronavirus tests turn positive after being negative three or four times. It may not be due to the inaccuracy of the test kit but an error in the sampling site.

The information obtained from modern medical research on the spread of coronavirus is also helpful to our understanding of Chinese medicine. According to research conducted by the Wuhan Institute of Virology, the coronavirus, like the SARS virus in 2003, also enters human cells by recognizing the ACE2 protein. ACE2 is the key to how the new coronavirus invades the human body and has the same decisive role as a combination lock and a door handle. Therefore, by exploring the expression rate of ACE2 in different tissues and organs of the human body, we can understand the possible coronavirus distribution in the viscera and meridians that initially invades the human body. Interestingly, the gastrointestinal, liver and gallbladder, kidneys and bladder systems are the main high-expressing organs of ACE2. On the contrary, the expression rate in the lungs is rather low. This explains the possible reason for the long incubation period of the coronavirus. It also reminds us that we cannot ignore the basic pathogenesis of dampness, which affects gasification and water-liquid metabolism. It is undoubtedly beneficial for our clinical adjustment of Chinese medicine.

Judging from several articles in The Lancet, the digestive system has a low proportion of symptoms and does not seem to support the characteristics of dampness. The article "Clinical Features of Coronavirus Pneumonia in Traditional Chinese Medicine and Preliminary Study on Syndrome Differentiation and Treatment" in the "Journal of Traditional Chinese Medicine" mentioned the front-line clinical findings in treating coronavirus:

1) Usually accompanied by fevers. Although the main symptom of patients is fever, most of them show low temperature, mostly not accompanied by an aversion to cold, no severe heat or irritable heat, and some cases have no fever;
2) Dry cough, less phlegm and irritable throat;
3) Significant fatigue and tiredness;
4) Often accompanied by gastrointestinal symptoms with poor appetite, and even some gastrointestinal symptoms such as nausea and loose stools;
5) Dry mouth, bitter mouth, no desire to drink;
6) Dark tongue or slightly red at the tip and sides, 80 % patients with thick and greasy tongue coating.

The above clinical findings pointed out the damp toxin epidemic nature of the coronavirus. Although we have not seen more detailed original data and statistics, the importance of damp toxins in the aetiology and pathogenesis of the disease cannot be ignored. The organs that can be affected include the lung, stomach, kidney, and liver.

3. How to Prevent Coronavirus Infections Using Chinese Medicine

Since the outbreak of the Covid-19 epidemic, the prevention methods of traditional Chinese medicine may have been circulated the most in various media, and TCM critics have used some to attack Chinese Medicine. Someone once said that the most outstanding contribution of modern medicine to mankind is to invent a perfect public health system, with which I agree. Once figuring out how the disease spreads, I was very confident in the mobilization and execution capabilities of the modern medical system and government agencies.

However, this viewpoint is not unique to modern medicine. The anti-epidemic theory of Chinese medicine is also very thorough. Due to the different understanding of the disease nature, in addition to cutting off the transmission and controlling the source of the infection, "avoiding the epidemic" in ancient times, improving the environmental aura and reconciling the internal aura can be recognized to be more thorough and broader-spectrum prevention method. Hereby I summarise the above as harmonization of the external Six Qi, and the internal combination of the Five Zangs.

i) External Harmony of Six Qi - Climatic Factors

If we live in a filthy, chaotic, and damp environment, it will often become a breeding ground for epidemics. General tidying up and reasonable placement of utensils are also very important. For example, there are specific requirements in housing construction in the UK for the distance and for the partition between kitchen and bathroom. The frightening aerosol on the Internet and keeping sewers unobstructed, as experts repeatedly warned, is also something that is easily overlooked. The ancients of Chinese medicine paid great attention to the environment. Although the extensive and profound Feng Shui geomancy was stigmatized by some shameless descendants and Scientologists, its basic ideas and concepts are ubiquitous in Chinese civilization. Here I would like to briefly introduce a few simple and easy ways to avoid filth in Chinese medicine.

Atractylodes Burning Smoke

Cang Zhu (Atractylodes) has a strong smell that can dry dampness and strengthen the spleen. Tao Hongjing said: "Eliminate evil Qi to defeat the miasma". Medical sage Zhang Zhongjing said: "To repel all evil qi, burn smoke using Atractylodes and trotter nails". People often use Atractylodes to burn smoke to ward off evil qi as well as use Atractylodes, Angelica, Wormwood, and Calamus to burn smoke to repel filth and to protect the living environment. During the Guangxu period of the Qing Dynasty, the palace used Atractylodes, Liquorice, Asarum, and Frankincense to burn smoke to avoid the plague.

The ancient methods have been passed down through generations and documented modern society should not think that our ancestors passed on false words, neither should we only believe in alcohol and ignore the antibacterial and antiviral functions of Atractylodes essential oil. There is much pharmacological research in this area that can be further studied. Atractylodes transforms dampness and turbidity, refreshes the mind and open orifices, and the smell is completely acceptable. Therefore, it is worth giving it a try. The combination of Chinese and Western approaches, namely soaking Atractylodes in alcohol and spraying in the air, has the effect of eliminating dampness and filth.

Burning Moxa Sticks

Argy Wormwood Leaf can be described as the originator of avoiding filth. Mencius reported: "Seven years of the disease, treating with moxa for three years". Li Shizhen quoted Wang Anshi's "Words": Wormwood leaf can heal illness, the longer you use it, the better. Hence the words follow "heal". Regardless of the field, it grows everywhere. It has warm nature. Burning it can dispel cold and dampness, avoid filth and remove lousy air. Wormwood leaf is easy to obtain, and it can be either purchased or picked. Since I practice acupuncture and moxibustion, moxa can be used daily in my clinic. I never feel it smells unpleasant. Some patients even purchase it and burn it for fragrant purposes.

The Application of Sesame Oil in the Nose

Sesame oil nose drops have been introduced over the internet to prevent the new coronavirus infection which soon attracted authorities to refute the rumours. I was speechless since both Chinese medicine and folk prescription have been referred to as pseudoscience. Moreover, even though science is flourishing, many drugs are generated from this so-called pseudoscience. For example, the nasal application of sesame oil has been introduced in ancient books. The chapter on Prevention of Pandemic in Chuanya Internal and External Therapies of Folk Medicine pointed out: "Apply sesame oil in the nostrils before home visiting patient who has a contagious disease to prevent infection. Wipe off the oil with tissue paper or induce a sneeze to dispel it afterwards." Of course, not all references in ancient literature are necessarily useful or scientifically sound. However, it makes sense according to CM theory. Sesame oil nourishes the kidney and tonifies the essence. Both white and black sesame have squared stems with knots. It benefits the spleen and lungs, moisturizes the dryness in the lung, soothes the intestines. It settles and calms Shen Zhi, also tastes well, hence worth promoting.

In clinical practice, in addition to oral prescriptions of herbal formulas, often I prescribe patients especially young children with the nasal application of sesame oil to treat the epistaxis caused by Lung Dryness and nostril congestion with epistaxis, dried blood and mucus caused by Exterior-Cold attack etc. Nasal application of sesame oil could effectively prevent rupture of the nasal mucus well as the new coronavirus infections. Of course, this method cannot replace the facial mask and personal protective equipment. Sesame oil is moisturizing and fragrant, it would benefit people who live in a dry environment and/or with Yin deficiency constitution.

ii) Internal Harmony of Five Zangs

There is a well-known saying from The Yellow Emperor's Inner Classic: adequate Upright Qi is the best protection from pathogenic Qi attacks. However, rarely do people believe in it and follow it. Meditation, Ba Gua and Taiji etc. are very effective. Tailored food dietary and individualized Chinese herbal medicine are the unique characteristics of Chinese medicine for the maintenance of health to achieve longevity which is also an important part of Chinese traditional culture. Based on the current climate, I will give some advice and suggestions according to my clinical experience.

The prescription for damp conditions:

Yi Yi Ren 30g, Chi Xiao Dou 30g,
Sheng Jiang 5 pieces, Chen Pi 5g

Yi Yi Ren is sweet and slightly cold. Using Sheng Jiang and Chen Pi can balance out the cold nature of Yi Yi Ren. Yi Yi Ren strengthens the Spleen and Stomach, leaches out the dampness, and tonifies the Lung. It enters the Qi level and Blood level, treats Lung or Intestinal abscess, Pulmonary dysfunction (Fei Wei), and Intestine Heat. Ji Sheng Fang suggests drinking a mixture of Yi Yi Ren decoction and rice wine to treat Hemoptysis from Lung abscess. Secrets of Outside Taiwan recommended Yi Yi Ren to treat acute laryngeal carbuncles and swelling. There are more uses of Yi Yi Ren in recent years as food dietary to clear damp toxicity due to the good taste and texture in congee.

Chi Xiao Dou has a sour and sweet taste with a neutral property. Shennong's Materia Medica said that Chi Xiao Dou can drain the water and dampness to relieve oedema, disperse blood stasis and pus as well as reduce carbuncles and swelling. In The Compendium of Materia Medica, Li Shizhen recommended preventing pandemics by spraying the Gua Di Powder into the nasals. Critics of Chinese medicine criticized some horrendous contents in Shennong's Materia Medica. For example, records of Ren Zhong Huang, Ma Bo (only grows with horse urine), etc. have been ridiculed and scourged. They do not know there are over 10,000 outstanding collections of prescriptions that their ancestors may have well benefited from for their whole lives. It is absurd to forget the roots and criticize the classics without thinking twice.

This prescription is simple and easy to prepare, with good taste. It strengthens Spleen and Stomach, leaches out the dampness, and clears toxicity. The formula balances Yin-Yang and harmonizes Five Zangs It is suitable for people with a damp constitution and beneficial for the prevention of Covid-19.

The prescription for qi deficiencies:

Bai Luo Bo 100g, Hu Luo Bo 100g,
Sheng Jiang 5 pieces, Da Zao 12 pieces

Bai Luo Bo and Hu Luo Bo have pungent and sweet tastes. It reduces food stagnation and harmonizes the Stomach, induces qi to descend and reduces phlegm. Bai Luo Bo can strengthen without causing congestion and regulate without over-consuming qi, hence it was recommended by Tang Ben Cao to recuperate from obesity. Prescriptions for Universal Relief (Puji Fang) said Bai Luo Bo treats Hymoptesis caused by pulmonary dysfunction, Dysentery, and low appetite etc. thereby it is often called "small Ginseng" unofficially. Ginger and Chinese Dates tonify qi, balance and harmonize Ying and Wei. This prescription would benefit the group of people the most who have excessive sweat, lethargy and wheezing due to qi weakness if they take it for long-term.

The prescription for physical excessiveness

He Ye 20g, Hong Cha 3g, Chen Pi 5g,
Sheng Jiang 5 pieces

Zun Rong Ren refers to people with physical excessiveness such as obesity and overweight. The fat accumulated in the internal organs and under the skin may induce boils and sores, bad breathing, constipation, and yellow urines etc. Lotus growing out of the mud but not being sullied retains dignity and purity after being bathed in water. The outstanding characteristic of the lotus is the qi transformation on magic from the decay. He Ye is bitter with the neutral property. It drains water and relieves oedema, controls the Water passages and the excretion of fluids, separates, and regulates fluids, promotes qi circulation. Ben Shi Fang recommended He Ye to treat all sorts of boils and swellings. Sheng Hui Fang commented that He Ye could treat injuries of sprains and strains, as well as blood stagnation obstructed Heart. Qing Zhen Tang uses He Ye, Sheng Ma and Chang Zhu to treat headaches caused by either external wind-heat attacks or internal phlegm-heat generated wind. In the formula, He Ye drains the water, promotes qi circulation, disperses the congestion and stagnation. Red tea, Chen Pi and Sheng Jiang working together as assistants strengthen the stomach, reduce the food stagnation, and harmonize the Five Zang.

4. Chinese Medicine Treatment

Since the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, Chinese medicine has actively participated in the clinical treatment in conjunction with conventional medicine to defend against the new coronavirus. The clinical efficacy of Chinese medicine once again presents the power of ancient wisdom to the world. Every regional official CM institution has recommended their tailored treatment plans with good effects which reflect the CM character: all treatments should adapt to the local environment and be based on the differentiation of syndromes. Meanwhile, this also indicates the complexity of the Covid-19 disease.

The National Health Commission of the People's Republic of China and the National Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine (NATCM) have co-published diagnosis and treatment plans for the new coronavirus pneumonia. Qing Fei Pai Du Decoction was recommended in the 6th trial edition.

Qing Fei Pai Du Decoction

Indications: For mild, moderate, and severe conditions. It could also be modified to suit individual patients with a critical illness of Covid-19.

Prescription: Ma Huang 9g, Gan Cao (Zhi) 6g, Xing Ren 9g, Sheng Shi Gao 15-30g (decoct first), Gui Zhi 9g, Ze Xie 9g, Zhu Ling 9g, Bai Zhu 9g, Fu Ling15g, Cai Hu 16g, Huang Qin 6g, Jiang Ban Xia 9g, Ginger (raw), Zi Yuan 9g, Kuan Dong Hua 9g, She Gan 9g, Xi Xin 6g, Shan Yao 12g, Zhi Shi 6g, Chen Pi 6g, Huo Xiang 9g.

Preparation and Administration of Decoctions: Decoction from dry herbs. One administration daily with two dosages, and each should be taken warm (40 minutes after a meal) in the morning and evening. A course of treatment contains three administrations.

If possible, have a half bowl of rice soup after each dosage, and one bowl if the patient has a deficiency of body fluids with a dry mouth. Note: Shi Gao should be in a small dosage if a patient does not have a temperature; otherwise, its dosage could be increased when a high fever occurs. Continue the formula for the second course if the symptoms are improved but not fully recovered. If a patient has a specific condition or other underlying condition(s), the formula should be modified and tailored accordingly for the second course. Keep taking the formula until the symptoms are eased off.

Qing Fei Pai Du Decoction is designed for all varieties of conditions that Covid-19 may cause, so that it is suitable for a wide range of Covid-19 patients. The formula consists of Ma Xing Shi Gan Decoction, Wu Ling Powder, Xiao Cai Hu Decoction, She Gan Ma Huang Decoction, Ju Zhi Jiang Decoction. The treatment principles expel cold and drain water retention, resolve phlegm, and regulate qi, disperse the stagnation of fire, lift Shao Yang, expel Tai Yang, cleanse Yang Ming. Although the formula treats all three Yang channels, the emphasis is on Tai Yang and Shao Yang channels. Additionally, Huo Xiang aromatically transforms turbidity and Shan Yao strengthens the Spleen and tonifies the Kidney. This comprehensive formula also has a clear instruction that it should be used according to the individual patient's condition.

However, Qing Fei Pai Du Decoction should be used with caution. Firstly, overall, the formula is slightly over dry and over expelling, although Shi Gao, Huang Qin, Zhu Ling, Ze Xie and Shan Yao are used. Hence for those conditions with dominant residual dryness presenting as dry throat, bitter mouth, dry cough without sputum, shortness of breath, herbs such as Ginseng, Bai Zhu, Bai He and Di Huang etc. are necessary supplements for the decoction.

Secondly, the formula showed a lack of focus on dampness. Abundant herbs expel cold and drain water retention in the formula but inadequate herbs to resolve dampness and transform turbidity, although nine grams of Huo Xiang is used. Dampness obstructed the qi mechanism, causing low fever, tiredness, and lethargy. Using herbs with warm, dry, and draining properties could impair Yin and assist Fire generation, especially for people whose tongue coating is thick, greasy with or without yellow colour.

Lastly, regarding the tonifying herbs in the formula, Bai Zhu and Shan Yao are used instead of Dang Shen. Arguably, the astringent property from Shan Yao may trap the external pathogens in the body; hence Bian Dou, Huang Jing and Bai He etc. might be more suitable.

Moreover, some people commented that the formula is rather big without emphasis and focus on the treatment principles. Indeed, regardless of the formula size, the organization, priority, and harmony between the herbs are more essential for a prescription.

There are more recommendations for the prescriptions. Two formulas are introduced below for inspiration.

i). Damp-Cold Obstructing Lungs

Signs & Symptoms (S&S): fever, lethargy, achy all over the body, cough and expectoration, tight and suffocated feeling in the chest, low appetite, nausea, vomiting, sticky stools with difficulty to empty, pale swollen tongue body with teeth marks or light red tongue body, thick white greasy or white greasy tongue coating, soggy (Ru) or slippery pulse.

Recommended prescription: Ma Huang (raw) 6g, Shi Gao (raw) 15g, Xing Ren 9g, Qiang Huo 15g, Ting Li Zi 15g, Guan Zhong 9g, Di Long 15g, Xu Chang Qing 15g, Huo Xiang 15g, Pei Lan 9g, Cang Zhu 15g, Yun Ling 45g, Bai Zhu (raw) 30g, Jiao San Xiang 9g each, Huo Po 15g, Bing Lang (charred) 9g, Cao Guo (processed) 9g, Ginger (raw) 15g.

Method of Administration: one administration daily, 600ml decoction in total from dry herbs. Three times a day in the morning, lunchtime, and evening. Take with an empty stomach.

For patients who have Cold-damp obstructing Lung with mild fever, Lu Gen, and Da Dou Huang Juan etc. are better choices than Shi Gao and Ting Li Zi. When patients developed high fever with constipation, Ma Huang and Qiang Huo should be used with caution.

ii). Damp-Heat in Lungs

S&S: low fever or no temperature, slight aversion to cold, tiredness, muzzy head and heaviness in head and body, achy and sore muscles, dry cough with little phlegm, sore throat, dry mouth without a desire to drink, or accompanied with tight chest and fullness in the stomach, no sweat or hyperhidrosis (incomplete perspiration), or nausea and poor appetite, loose or sticky bowel with difficulty to defecation, a light red tongue body, with either a white/thick/greasy, or yellow/thin tongue coating, soggy or slippery and rapid pulse.

Recommended prescriptions: Bing Lang 10g, Cao Guo 10g, Hou Po 10g, Zhi Mu 10g, Huang Qin 10g, Chai Hu 10g, Chi Shao 10g, Lian Qiao 15g, Qing Hao 10g (decocted later), Cang Zhu 10g, Da Qing Ye 10g, Gan Cao (raw) 5g.

Method of administration: one administration daily, 400ml decoction, twice a day in the morning and evening.

Da Yuan Yin could expel filth and transform turbidity. Bing Lang, Hou Po and Cao Guo are acrid with a strong aroma which enables them strong power to expel exterior pathogens. Meanwhile, Zhi Mu, Shao Yao, Huang Qin, and Gan Cao can nourish Yin, harmonize blood, cleanse heat, and strengthen the middle. Hence, Wu Youke used this formula to treat patients who chill with fever. However, adding in bitter with cold character herbs such as Chai Hu, Lian Qiao, Qing Hao and Da Qing Ye may not be suitable for patients who are averse to cold slightly with mild fever or no temperature.

5. Damp Associated Covid-19 in the UK

The United Kingdom is a sea-girt island. Generally, the climate in the UK is wet and rainy throughout the year, especially wet, cold, and windy in winter. Hence Damp is the main character of the Covid-19 in the UK. According to the author's clinical experience in the past two years, the most common initial symptoms of Covid-19 are tiredness, achy all over the body, aversion to wind and cold etc. caused by the combination of Damp, Wind and Cold attacking. When the infection progressed, patients developed fever, even high temperature, diarrhoea, vomiting, cough and wheezing, shortness of breath, which are aligned with the characters of Wind-Cold-Damp strikes in TCM. A few cases of Heat Harassing combined with Yin Injury patterns manifest as sore throat, high temperature, irritation with polydipsia, skin rash etc. had been recorded. Generally, those patients have yin deficiency constitution with underlying conditions, and their clinical manifestations indicated the characteristics of Damp or Damp-Heat - thick and greasy tongue coating, heaviness all over the body etc.

Damp pathogenic factor presents in every stage of Covid-19 patients in the UK, hence resolving dampness is the key for the treatment. Five common treatment principles have been summarised according to the author's clinical practice.

i). Expel Dampness and Transform Turbidity with Aromatic Herbs

It is commonly seen within healthy young people that external pathogenic factors invade the exterior, with normal upright qi. The main symptoms are dominated by high fever accompanied by an aversion to cold. Some patients have a strong chilled feeling and lethargy, which indicate that the pathogens strangled the upright qi.

Sample case: 26-year-old female whose body temperature was 38.2°C, with headache, chill and shivering, nausea, and diarrhoea.

TCM diagnosis: Cold-Damp attacking Shao Yang
Prescription: Chai Hu 4, Huo Xiang 2, Lu Gen 1, Zi Su Geng 3, Chen Pi 2, Dang Shen 4, Ban Xia 2, Fu Ling 4, Ginger (raw) 4, Hou Po 2, Zhi Qiao 2, Bai Dou Kou 3, Cao Dou Kou 2, Si Gua Luo 2

Annotation: the alternative chill and fever is the typical symptom of Cold invading the Shao Yang pattern. Nausea and diarrhoea accompanied by thick and greasy tongue coating are the signs of Damp attacks. In the formula, aromatic herbs such as Huo Xiang, Su Geng, Cao Dou Kou, and Bai Dou Kou etc. could expel the exterior and disperse Dampness. Besides, Chai Hu and Sheng Jiang release the exterior and expel pathogens, thereby achieving the best result. Moreover, considering the cold-damp and residual dryness as the character of coronavirus, it is better to avoid the overuse of pungent and warm herbs to induce perspiration and release the exterior, although the symptoms of fever and aversion to cold were present. The treatment should focus on expelling and dispersing Dampness using aromatic herbs. Once Dampness is resolved, the management of expelling Cold would be much easier.



ii). Resolve Dampness and Turbidity by Activating the Qi Flow in the Middle Burner Using Aromatic Herbs

This is the most seen condition. Patients either have a damp constitution and weak upright qi or have prolonged chronic conditions. With inappropriate treatments, multiple internal organs are affected, leading to impaired qi and blood. Symptoms often involve extreme tiredness, fever, dry cough, progressing chronic illness with repetitive recuperation and retrogression cycle, eventually leading to deterioration. In this case, the emphasis of treatment should be the underlying internal illness rather than releasing the exterior only.

Case example: a 40-year-old female had a fever and dry cough for 8 days, with a combination of extreme fatigue.

TCM diagnosis: Obstruction of Damp and Turbidity.
Prescription: Zhu Ru 2, Lu Gen 2, Dang Shen 4, Ban Xia 4, Bai Zhu 2, Cang Zhu 2, Zhi Qiao 4, Hou Po 2, Fu Ling 2, Gan Cao 2, Chen Pi 4, Sheng Jiang 2, Zi Yuan 2, Su Geng 2.

Annotation: the patient has constitutional qi and blood deficiency. She had anxiety and fear after the coronavirus infection. Anti-inflammation and antivirus medication caused excessive perspiration, which subsequently impaired yin and triggered poor appetite due to the damaged Spleen and Stomach function, thereby gradually weakening upright qi and thriving pathogens. Because the external pathogens already penetrated through and became internalised, the treatment should be focused internally rather than purely releasing the exterior.

In the formula, heavy dosages of Dang Shen, Ban Xia, Bai Zhu, Fu Ling, and Gan Cao etc. have been used to strengthen the upright qi. Aromatic herbs such as Su Geng, Cang Zhu, Hou Po and Chen Pi resolve dampness. Moreover, Zhu Ru, Zi Yuan etc. ease off the symptoms. Overall, the treatment principle was dominated only by resolving internal dampness without detoxification herbs but achieved a remarkable treatment effect that the patient's fever retreated after taking just one administration. This demonstrates the charm of Chinese Medicine with differentiation and individualised treatment.



iii). Transform Turbidity/Resolve Dampness and Break Up Blood Stagnation, Expel the Exterior by Strengthening and Supporting the Qi

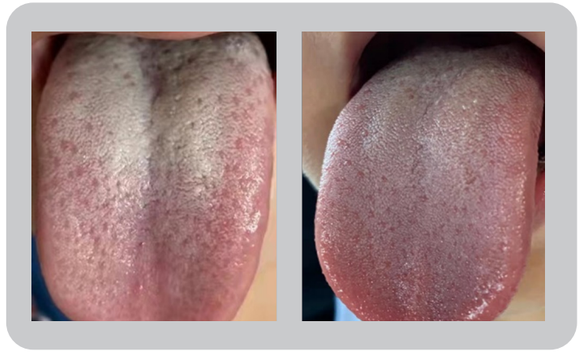
Cold-damp is the signature character of coronavirus which easily impairs the Yang energy of the Heart and Kidney, causing severe Heart Vessel Obstruction by Cold. When patients have constitutional Yang Deficiency or have an inappropriate treatment of using excessive cold and cool herbs, the condition could be changed or deteriorated, developing into severe cases. In such cases, patients often develop Chest Bi manifesting as stabbing chest pain, palpitation with fear, shortness of breath and lassitude, and even despair, accompanied with instability in blood oxygen level, and so on.

Case example: 39-year-old female had a dry cough, fatigue, and fever (39°C - 40°C) for 10 days. She had only used external cooling methods and western medication for the management of fever and was bedridden.

TCM diagnosis: Stagnation of dampness/toxins and inanimation.

Prescription: Dang Shen 4, Hou Po 4, Fu Ling 4, Cao Dou Kou 2, Si Gua Luo 3, Lu Gen 2, Zhu Ru 2, Lian Fang 2, Jing Jie 2, Fang Feng 2, Chai Hu 2, Huang Qin 1, Gan Jiang 3, Zao Jiao Ci 1, Sang Ji Sheng 4







Annotation: this patient had shortness of breath and chest pain, and she was lethargic and fearful. The tongue images indicate the Blood Stasis and Obstruction of Dampness and Toxins. If only remove blood stagnation and activated yang, the combination of dampness, toxins and yin deficiency may transform and result in the threatening condition of Heat Sinking in the Pericardian. Therefore, resolving damp and transforming turbidity should still be one of the main treatment principles. Lian Fang and Zao Jiao Ci are used for stubborn dampness. Si Gua Luo and Sang Ji Sheng communicate and harmonize the Kidney and Heart Vessels. In this case, resolving and transforming the excess dampness and turbidity is essential; however, it is different from the transportation and transformation function of Middle Burner.

iv). Drain the Dampness and Moisten the Dryness, Strengthen the Earth to Benefit the Metal

Some patients have residual pathogen of Dryness and internal Fire induced by constitutional yin deficiency or dominant environmental and seasonal heat, manifesting as high fever, sore throat, red eyes, toothache, constipation, and bad breath etc. This condition is not as common as others; however, it can develop and progress quickly, hence attention is required if necessary.

Example case: a 10-year-old male had a sore throat, cough with small amounts of yellow sputum, body fever, sore and dry eyes, reduced sense of smell, hard and dry stools with lower abdominal pain.

TCM diagnosis: Stagnation of Damp and Heat

Prescription: Zhi Shi 3, Huo Po 3, Xuan Shen 2, Sheng Di Huang 2, Hu Zhang 1, Jing Jie 1, Fang Feng 1, Niu Bang Zi 2, Bai He 2, Bai Bu 2, Da Huang 1

Annotation: when a patient with internal constitutional heat has an invasion of damp toxicity, the combination of damp and heat impairs qi/blood and injures Zang/Fu. It is essential to cleanse damp-heat toxicity, unblock the obstructed intestine and obtain the normal function of Fu qi, thereby, the progress of the disease can be interrupted effectively. This patient had no complete obstruction in the intestines, therefore, the downwards-draining method is not necessary. However, in the formula, Da Huang and Hu Zhang drain Damp-Heat. Bai He and Bai Bu moist the Metal and strengthen the Lungs. Hou Po and Su Geng resolve dampness and regulate qi. Together, the formula purges effectively without depleting body fluids and consuming qi.

v). Strengthen the Spleen and Tonify the Kidney, Dispel Dampness and Transform Turbidity

This method is suitable for patients who are vulnerable to infections and evil pathogens penetrating internally due to a weak constitution with qi and blood deficiency. The common symptoms include low fever or feverish feeling and aversion to cold with normal body temperature, accompanied with cough, shortness of breath, ineffective cough due to lack of strength, poor digestion with abnormal spleen function of transporting and transformation, abdominal distention, and pain. The condition deteriorates fast, hence extra care and attention are necessary.

Example case: 85-year-old female suffered from severe dry cough, fatigue, poor appetite for 3 weeks.

TCM diagnosis: Dampness and Turbidity obstructed Triple Burner

Prescription: Hou Po 4, Zhi Shi 4, Dang Shen 4, Bai Zhu 4, Cang Zhu 2, Su Geng 2, Ze Xie 3, Gui Zhi 2, Sheng Jiang 2, Bai Bu 2, Zi Yuan 2, Chen Pi 2, Lai Fu Zi 2, Xiang Fu 2, Bai Qian 1, Chuan Duan 3, Sang Ji Sheng 3

Annotation: elderly and vulnerable patients have an invasion of external pathogens, weak upright qi fails to provide defense, thereby the pathogens penetrate through and sink internally resulting in excessive dampness which obstructed clear yang and weakened life force. If tonifying the original yang intensively, using formulas such as Si Ni Decoction may cause interaction and combination of damp and heat obstruction and the deterioration of the condition. On the other hand, using an excessive dosage of acrid and aromatic herbs to resolve dampness has the disadvantage of over expelling and breaking up the qi, which could exhaust upright qi. In the formula, Sang Ji Sheng and Chuan Duan strengthen the Kidney, promote urination, and drain dampness; Gui Zhi, Dang Shen and Sheng Jiang support the Heart and Spleen yang. The whole formula harmonizes the Upper and Lower Burner and supports the Triple Burner, securing the newly generated sustainable energy. Under such conditions, other damp-draining and damp-resolving herbs can work properly as individuals and cooperators.

Activating the flow of qi to eliminate the dampness is the foundation of this treatment method. Prevention of change and of deterioration is another key for the treatment, especially the transformation of heat and dryness should be avoided. Moreover, exclusive use of excessive cold and hot herbs and strengthening the functions of Lungs, Spleen and Kidney are necessary.

6. Long Covid-19 Treatment

The varieties of signs and symptoms and complications of Long Covid-19 make the treatment extremely challenging.

i). Impaired Functions of the Lung Qi and Spleen

Most Covid-19 patients retain respiratory symptoms. Autopsies reported severe damage in the lungs, such as congested and edematous lungs and primarily diffuse consolidation with patchy areas of firm discolouration. After the main symptoms of fever and breathing difficulties are gone, and the PCR result for SARS-CoV-2 by nasopharyngeal swab is negative, most patients during the recovery have symptoms of dry cough associated with postural changes, chest pain, the difficulty of deep inhale, fatigue, lethargy, depression, and poor appetite etc. Those symptoms indicate the pathologies of lung qi and lung yin damage, dysfunction of spleen and low energy production.

Recommended prescription: modified Yi Gong Powder and Qing Zao Jiu Fei Decoction

Dang Shen, Bai Zhu, Fu Ling, Ban Xia, Bai He, Shu Di Huang, Sang Ye, Mu Xiang, Sheng Mai Ya, and Shen Qu etc.

To strengthen Spleen and tonify Qi, Si Jun Zi Decoction is used with a heavy dosage of Dang Shen and Bai Zhu etc. Add in Sang Ye, Bai He and Bai Bu if severe dry cough is present. Herbs with warm and dry properties should be avoided to prevent injury of yin. Medication that can induce perspiration should not be used excessively for patients who have a low fever and aches for the prevention of qi and yin depletion. Otherwise, the condition may progress worse and deteriorate.

ii). Damp-Phlegm Obstructing and Depleting Heart Yang

Due to different levels of respiratory damage in coronavirus patients, the primarily diffused consolidation with patchy areas of firm discolouration has been one of the radiological diagnostic standards for Covid-19. This severe water retention is under the category of Phlegm - Fluid Retention in TCM, especially closely related to Thoracic Fluid Retention and Pleural Fluid Retention. Phlegm - Fluid Retention obstructing Zang Fu and channels, hinder qi transformation, particularly harmful for Heart and Spleen Yang which is a key factor that should be addressed and conquered during the recovery. Some patients may develop a condition of depletion of Heart Yang manifesting as palpitation accompanied with an aversion to cold, panicking with chest pain. The tongue picture presents a light coloured, enlarged swollen tongue body with wet, slippery, and greasy tongue coating.

Recommendation of prescription: modified Ling Gui Zhu Gan decoction plus Si Ni decoction.

Gui Zhi, Fu Ling, Gan Jiang, Gan Cao, Bai Zhu, Ban Xia, Sang Ji Sheng, Gua Lou Pi, Bei Mu and Chen Pi etc.

Gui Zhi and Gan Cao strengthen Heart Yang, Gan Cao, and Gan Jiang protest yang energy in the Middle Burner, whilst Fu Ling and Bai Zhu drain water and dampness. Ban Xia, Gua Lou and Bei Mu etc. resolve the phlegm. Yin Yang Huo, Sang Ji Sheng etc. Liver and Kidney strengthening herbs could be used together to reduce tiredness, improve sleep quality, and stabilize the emotion etc. if necessary.

Herbs with too much warm and dry properties should be used with caution. The author has seen other practitioners using Fu Zi, Xi Xin etc., which are not only unable to help reduce damp-phlegm but also deteriorate the conditions. Furthermore, it is necessary to identify the type and level of damp phlegm according to the analysis of tongue pictures and detailed consultation, thereby

getting an accurate prescription accordingly.

iii). Residual Stagnation of Heat, Unfulfilled Upright Qi

After high fever eases off, the symptoms of hot feeling, irritation, thirst with dry mouth, fatigue and sweat, and even regular coughing at a particular time remain for some Covid-19 patients. The reason for that is the Upright Qi is impaired and residual Heat still lingers. Those patients particularly need appropriate treatment and special care to cleanse the residual pathogens thoroughly. Patients relapse after excessive eating, working or invasion of the exterior, hence the saying of "Thirty per cent of treatment and seventy per cent of care nursing will get someone back to the health" in Chinese culture.

The tongue picture shows an enlarged red tongue, with spikes sometimes, thin, greasy tongue coating all over.

Recommended prescription: modification of Xiao Chai Hu Decoction and Ping Wei San

Chai Hu, Huang Qin, Lu Gen, Dang Shen, Cang Zhu, Gan Cao and Mai Ya etc.

Xiao Chai Hu Decoction harmonizes the exterior and interior. It is particularly suitable for patterns of weak upright qi with residual heat. The formula can be tailored, and the dosage of individual herbs can be modified to suit the patient's condition(s). For example, increase the dosage of Dang Shen and Ban Xia for internal weakness conditions. Whereas the dosage of Cang Zhu, Huo Xiang and Bai Dou Kou etc. can be enhanced for a Damp condition.

Example case: a 42-year-old female who had her first consultation in April 2020. She had suffered from high fever (maximum 40°C), dry cough, chest pain for six weeks Subsequently, she was diagnosed with Covid-19 infection in A&E with normal blood oxygen saturation, hence she did self-isolation at home. A week later, the body temperature and other symptoms of dry cough, fatigue, and aches all over the body were better after medication for symptomatic treatment. However, in the last five weeks, she had fatigue, poor appetite, cough triggered by excessive talking accompanied by chest pain and little mucus, breathlessness and wheezing on exertion, depression and fear, irregular loose bowel once every two to three days.

The tongue body is enlarged and dark with a thick edge, without teeth marks. There is a ditch on the top part of the tongue body. The tongue coating is thin, white, and slightly greasy.

Prescription: Dang Shen 6, Bai Zhu 6, Ban Xia 2, Chen Pi 2, Bai Bu 2, Lian Fang 2, Zhi Qiao 4, Mai Ya 2, Zi Su Geng 2, Gan Cao 1, Lu Gen 1, Sheng Jiang 3.

Method of Oral Administration: two weeks of granules. Twice a day, 3g each time, dissolving in hot water.

Feedback: two weeks after the treatment, noticeable improvement in coughing and fatigue. Additional herbal treatment was prescribed for maintenance and consolidating further improvement.

7. Understanding the Side Effects of Covid-19 Vaccination from TCM Aspects

Covid-19 vaccination has been widely given in the whole world. According to the symptoms, the side effects of coronavirus vaccination have been summarised and categorized as below:

i). Impairment in Heart Channel

Associated symptoms include insomnia, chest pain and shortness of breath, numbness etc. The tongue picture indicates Heart Yang Deficiency and Cold-Damp Obstructing.

ii). Injury in Kidney and Bladder

Associated symptoms include lower abdominal pain, menstrual disorders, impotence, frequent urination etc. The tongue picture indicates incapability of Qi transformation in the Lower Jiao, Depletion of Kidney essence.

iii). Damage in the Lung and Skin

Associated symptoms include skin disorders after vaccination.

The side effects of the Covid-19 vaccination have the characters of Cold-Damp Toxicity pathology in TCM according to the symptoms and tongue pictures. Applying the Covid-19 treatment principles to the treatment of vaccination side effects could achieve good effects demonstrating the compatibility of TCM theory.

The impact of the new coronavirus infection on human society is immense and expanding. Thousand-year-old traditional Chinese medicine has once again shown infinite charm in the crisis. The inheritance of tradition and the persistent learning of nature enable us to achieve continuous improvement.

By Zan Yu Chen and Yu Gu

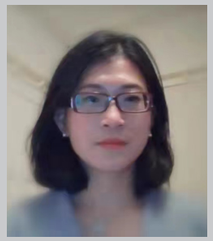
Zan Yu Chen



Zanyu Chen is the president of the Federation of Traditional Chinese Medicine (FTCMP) and the chief editor of the Journey of Chinese Medicine in the UK. He comes from a family with a long history of Chinese medicine. He has more than 30 years of Chinese medicine clinical and teaching experience in China and the UK. He is wholeheartedly devoted to traditional Chinese medicine and passionate about building up the bridge to connect the East and West, the modern and tradition.

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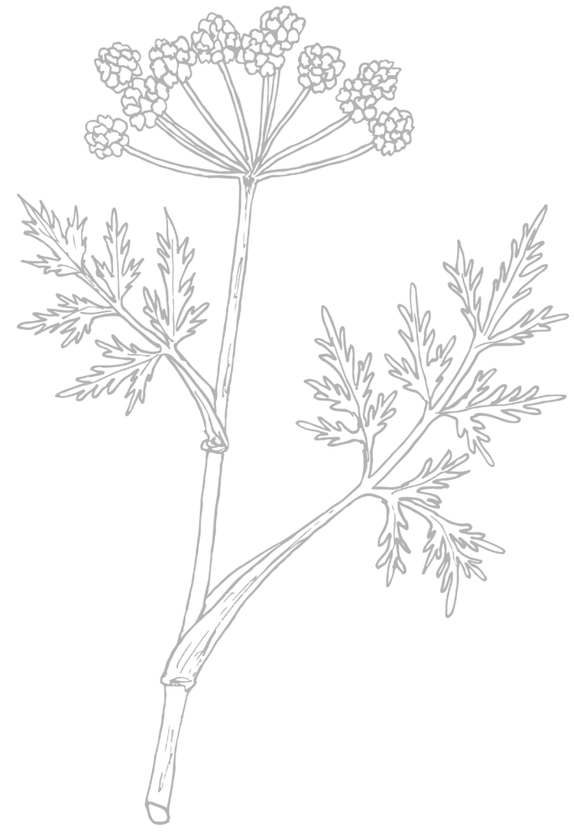
Yu Gu is from a family that has practised traditional Chinese medicine for over a decade. Yu dedicates her career to her special background in both medicine and traditional Chinese medicine. She is passionate about and with a special interest in cancer care, rehabilitation for renal diseases and neurological disorders, ophthalmological conditions. Yu takes a multidisciplinary approach in the clinic including traditional Chinese acupuncture, scalp acupuncture, Five Element acupuncture, as well as Chinese herbal medicine.

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Zan Yu Chen is a Course Leader and Lecturer at Phoenix Academy and specialises in teaching acupuncturists the fundamentals of herbal medicine. Zan Yu uses his vast knowledge to teach students how, and why, specific herbs are used in TCM and explores relevant formulas and modifications using case studies and clinical experience. The herbal medicine courses focus on classical teachings to guide the next generation of practitioners through their herbal journey, focusing on symptoms, syndromes, tongue diagnosis and disease-based teachings.

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Report of TCM Practice in Treatment of COVID-19

In January 2020, when COVID-19 broke out in Wuhan, TCM doctors in the UK were very concerned by the situation in China and paid a lot attention to the features of the fatal epidemic disease. We have been collecting clinical information about coronavirus infection and the FTCMP started to host online academic seminars every week. These seminars reviewed theories and recorded successful experience against pestilences in the history, shared latest professional information and discussed possible Chinese herbal treatment to prevent and cure this completely unfamiliar disease.

By You Jun Wang

According to clinical reports on the manifestations of COVID-19 by doctors from the front line fighting against the deadly contagious disease, suggestions from TCM experts on the differential diagnosis and treatment, and the treatment guides published by national and provincial health authorities [1], we have recognised that COVID-19 should be named as Lung Pestilence of Cold-Dampness or Lung Pestilence of Toxic Dampness. In the onset stage, the main pathological mechanism is that the cold-dampness impairs the Yang Qi and phlegm-dampness blocks the Lung, as well as encroaching the Spleen and Stomach in the mean time. In the developing stage, the turbid cold-damp toxin impacts the Triple Energizers (Sān Jiāo) and possibly transforms into toxic damp-heat. Once it developed to Shaoyin syndrome and the cold badly damaged the Yang Qi of the Heart and Kidney, or if the turbid toxin blocked the Lung completely, the patient is in a critical condition of Collapse Syndrome or Block Syndrome. Due to the influence of climate and geographic circumstance in different areas, it also possibly shows as a damp-heat epidemic or a toxin-damp disease in some areas or season, hence the syndrome differentiation and treatment should be adapted to the specific local condition and the individual body constitution. The pathoanatomical result and latest research shows that COVID-19 not only attacks the lungs and destroys the respiratory system, but also could cause damage of various organs and tissues, such as the cardiovascular system, the neural system, liver, kidneys and skin, etc.[2][3][4][5] This feature is also in line with TCM understanding of exogenous epidemic diseases, where it not only develops from the exterior to the interior, from the top to the bottom, diffuses to the whole Triple Energizers, invades from the Defensive and Qi layer to the Nutrient and Blood layer, but also possibly promptly attacks the internal Zang organs directly.

As we had been widely collecting professional information from different resources and discussing on how to manage COVID-19 with Chinese herbal medicine, we were fully prepared in mind and with herbs in stock when the daily statistic numbers of infection cases and deaths were escalating steeply in the UK in March 2020. Based on the above understanding, we had established a strategy to deal with the pandemic disease, including active prevention, early intervention, barrier herbs to stop deep invasion, focusing on principal disorder (turbid toxic damp) and with individual adaptation. During the lockdown from March to July 2020, we helped many COVID patients and suspicious infections by online consultation and posted herbs. With a satisfying result, all patients recovered quickly without any case developed into severe condition, and there is not report of sequelae after recovery. For the purpose of this discussion with peer practitioners, the following is a brief summary of my understanding on the syndrome differentiation and treatment of COVID-19 with personal clinical experience.

1. Application of Scallion-Ginger-Pepper Decoction

Considering the fact that patients can't get herbal remedies immediately after online consultation, but as the infection develops rapidly, it is not recommended to have no treatment before the herbs is delivered, thus we advise a DIY herbal therapy: the Scallion-Ginger-Pepper Decoction. The remedy is made from daily-use kitchen herbs and is easy to prepare and drink. With the help of this homemade treatment, the early intervention strategy is followed and makes it possible to stop the development of the infection as early as possible. The earlier the turning point is made, the easier the recovery is and the less the chance of serious condition occurs.

For the onset of COVID-19 or a cold or a flu, the Scallion-Ginger-Pepper Decoction is recommended. The applicable symptoms includes fever, headache, chills, blocked nose, runny nose, muscular pain, tiredness, cough, short of breath, poor appetite and nausea.

To prepare the material:

(1) 4 pieces of spring onion or a piece of leek: It is good to keep the hairy roots and wash it. Cut off the green leaves and split the onion stems into halves or cut the leek into quarters longitudinally.

(2) A big piece of ginger, about 30g: wash it and keep the skin, cut it into 5 slices.

(3) Ground black or white pepper

To cook and use: put the processed ginger and spring onion in a pan, add one and half cups of cold water, and bring it to the heat. At boiling, reduce the heat and simmer it for 10 minutes until there is about a cup of decoction. Sprinkle a pinch of ground pepper, stir it and stop cooking. Drink it half an hour after meal. If on empty stomach, add in some sugar or honey for an energy boost and better effect. In order to get the best effect, drink it warmly and then rest in bed with a warm cover. It will work well if a warm sweat is induced, but be very careful to keep warm and not to get cold which could make the condition worse.

Modification: for cough, add one tangerine peel and two table spoons of honey to cook with spring onion and ginger. To drink the soup, sip it now and then, just like having a cup of tea.

This prescription was inspired by the Scallion and Fermented Bean Decoction (葱豉汤Cōng ChǐTàng) in the Pocket Book of Prescriptions for Emergencies (《肘后备急方》Zhǒu Hòu Bèi Jí Fāng) by Ge Hong, Jin Dynasty. It is a convenient and effective therapy made from daily food. Scallion functions to expel exogenous wind-cold from lungs and relieve the exterior syndrome; ginger warms the stomach, disperses cold and promote the function of body fluid; pepper disperses cold and activate the digestion; and sugar or honey provides energy for a better effect of the herbs. In practice, many patients with fever and exterior wind-cold syndrome get a quick relief with the help of this kitchen remedy before starting the personalised herbal treatment. A few patients in America and Europe recovered only by using this homemade remedy.

2. Prescription to dispel exterior cold, warm the Middle and transform dampness

Most COVID-19 cases at the early stage are of the syndrome of "pestilent Cold-Dampness attacking the Lung" and "Cold-Damp with Spleen Deficiency". Generally speaking, the comprehensive use of herbs can produce satisfying results, including herbs to relieve Exterior Cold, resolve phlegm to clear the Lung, unblock the pharynx and disperse the bind, strengthen the Spleen and Stomach, warm the Middle to remove Cold-Damp, aromatic herbs to transform Dampness and diuretic herbs to drain Dampness, etc.

Case 1: a middle aged nurse, male, close contact with COVID patients. On 11th May 2020, he had a consultation online with the complaint of "a fever for one day". The latest temperature is 38.2℃ and other symptoms are chills, headache, chest and back pain, sore throat, muscular pain, fatigue, and occasional dry cough. His tongue is pale in colour, with teeth marks on both edges and covered by white, thick and creamy coating.

Diagnosis and Syndrome Differentiation: onset of Lung Pestilence; diffused turbidity-damp in Triple-Energizer and deficiency of Heart and Spleen Yang.

Prescription: All prescriptions in this report are of condensed granules of herbal extract.

Qiāng Huó (Rhizoma et Radix Notopterygii) 6g
Guì Zhī (Ramulus Cinnamomi) 6g
Jīng Jiè (Herba Schizonepetae) 4g
Zǐ Sū Yè (Folium Perillae) 4g
Chái Hú (Radix Bupleuri) 8g
Niú Bàng Zǐ (Fructus Arctii) 8g
Bái Dòu Kòu (Fructus Ammomi Rotundus) 8g
Chén Pí (Pericarpium Citri Reticulatae) 8g
Xìng Rén (Semen Armeniacae Amarum) 6g
Zǐ Sū Zǐ (Fructus Perillae) 6g
Huò Xiāng (Herba Pogostemonis) 8g
Zé Lán (Herba Lycopi) 6g
Gān Cǎo (Radix Glycyrrhizae) 6g

Usage: Take 6g each time, to make tea with boiling water and drink it after meal, twice daily.

One day later, the fever has gone and he felt relieved from body aches and tiredness. According to feedback, he recovered completely in one week and got a positive result of the COVID-19 antibody test.



Although this is a case of the onset stage, it shows prominent signs of the Heart-Spleen Yang deficiency and internally diffused turbidity-damp, thus apart from pungent-warm herbs for the Exterior syndrome, Yang tonifying herbs and damp-transforming herbs are used to work on the Interior, which ensured a rapid therapeutic effect.

3. Aromatic herbs to dispel turbidity and to move the stagnated

In most cases, the mentioned routine methods should provide good effects, but there also are difficult cases that the pathogenic Turbidity -Damp is too tough and stagnated to be cleared, with a sign of persisting thick creamy coating on the tongue. By my personal experience, considering the feature of the turbid damp of the pestilence pathogen, we can make progress by adopting strong aromatic turbidity-clearing herbs to move the stagnated tough pathogen.

Case 2: a male in his 50s, online consultation arranged by his wife on 30 March 2020. He is generally healthy and active, but got a fever a week ago with a temperature between 38℃ and 39.2℃, extreme fatigue, unable to stand or sit up and even difficult to turn body in bed, short of breath, lost appetite, flatulence of stomach, and poor mind function. NHS ambulance has been called in and diagnosis of COVID-19 was confirmed by the doctor without test, one week of antibiotics and Paracetamol was prescribed.

Tongue image: As he is too weak to put out his tongue, only 1/3 tongue is shown. The colour of the tongue is dull and dark, the fur is thick, turbid and creamy.

Diagnosis and Syndrome Differentiation: Lung Pestilence; Damp-Toxin in Triple–Energizer, Qi stagnation and blood stasis.

Prescription:
Zǐ Sū Yè (Folium Perillae) 8g
Huò Xiāng (Herba Pogostemonis) 6g
Bái Dòu Kòu (Fructus Ammomi Rotundus) 6g
Bàn Xià (Rhizoma Pinelliae) 6g
Xìng Rén (Semen Armeniacae Amarum) 6g
Pí Ba Yè (Folium Eriobotryae) 8g
Táo Rén (Semen Persicae) 6g
Chì Sháo Yào (Radix Paeoniae Rubra) 8g
Zhǐ Ké (Fructus Aurantii) 8g
Yì Yǐ Rén (Semen Coicis) 8g
Bái Máo Gēn (Rhizoma Imperatae) 8g
Gān Cǎo (Radix Glycyrrhizae) 6g

Take 6g to make tea with Scallion-Ginger decoction, twice daily, after meal.

He was instructed to take the Scallion-Ginger-Pepper Soup before the herbal remedy is delivered. His wife fed back the next day that he felt much improved in energy after taking the soup, his body get more mobility and his mood got brighter.

2nd consultation: on the fourth day of taking the herbal medicine, the fever has subsided and temperature stays at 36.9 - 37℃. He is able to sit up but still feels weak with poor appetite and dry mouth. The tongue is still dark and dull and the coating is in impure grayish colour, thick and creamy. A strong aromatic herb Bīng Piàn *(Borneolum Syntheticum) i*s adopted to eliminate the turbid toxic-damp and unblock the Triple-Energizer.

Prescription:
Yīn Chén (Herba Artemisiae Scopariae) 8g
Huò Xiāng (Herba Pogostemonis) 6g
Bái Dòu Kòu (Fructus Ammomi Rotundus) 6g
Bái Zhǐ(Radix Angelicae Dahuricae) 6g
Xìng Rén (Semen Armeniacae Amarum) 6g
Bò Hé (Herba Menthae) 6g
Shān Zhā (Fructus Crataegi) 8g
Chì Sháo Yào (Radix Paeoniae Rubra) 8g
Zhǐ Ké (Fructus Aurantii) 8g
Yì Yǐ Rén (Semen Coicis) 8g
Bái Máo Gēn (Rhizoma Imperatae) 6g
Gān Cǎo (Radix Glycyrrhizae) 6g
Bīng Piàn (Borneolum Syntheticum) 2g

6g each time, to make tea with boiling water, twice daily.

3rd consultation: he is getting better day by day, appetite is coming back, and he is able to get up and walk about indoors in room. The tongue coating changes from grayish to white.

Prescription:
Zǐ Sū Gěng (Caulis Perillae) 8g
Bái Dòu Kòu (Fructus Ammomi Rotundus) 6g
Bīng Piàn (Borneolum Syntheticum) 2g
Zǐ Sū Zǐ (Fructus Perillae) 6g
Xiè Bái (Bulbus Allii Macrostemonis) 6g
Shēng Jiāng (Rhizoma Zingiberis Recens) 8g
Dǎng Shēn (Radix Codonopsis) 8g
Bái Zhú(Rhizoma Atractylodis Macrocephalae) 8g
Shén Qǔ (Massa Medicata Fermentata) 8g
Shān Zhā (Fructus Crataegi) 6g
Dān Shēn (Radix Salviae Miltiorrhizae) 6g
Yì Yǐ Rén (Semen Coicis) 6g

4g twice daily.



4th consultation: After taking the previous herbal preparation, he feels almost recovered and can take an outdoor walk every day. He eats normally and the tongue coating is much cleared as the picture shows. The same prescription is dispensed for one more week.

In this case, Shān Zhā *(Fructus Crataegi)* and Bīng Piàn *(Borneolum Syntheticum)* were added into prescription since the second follow-up in order to eliminate toxic damp-turbidity and move the Qi and blood. Huang Tui-an, a TCM master in the Qing Dynasty, tell us very clearly in his book, "Bīng Piàn is pungent-warm, aromatic, rapid running and active in moving Qi. Although it is used for various conditions, the purpose is nothing more than to unblock the channels and open the orifices." With this understanding, we believe it can be used in small dosage to move the stagnated Qi and shake the firmly bound pathogenic toxin, the damp-turbidity. Shān Zhā is not only a good appetizing herb but also an agent to promote blood circulation and remove turbid toxin, hereby it is often used by ancient practitioners to treat pestilent infection.

4. Purge the bowels and let out the pathogenic turbidity

Although the damp-drying, damp-transforming and damp-draining methods usually work effectively, the deeply and firmly bound pathogen is difficult to be removed, for which the turbid creamy tongue coating is a useful indicator. In this case, we can follow Wu Youke's idea and consider purgative herbs, such as Dà Huáng *(Radix et Rhizoma Rhei)*, which helps to clear the turbidity through the bowels.

Case 3: middle aged female, had first consultation on 5th April 2020. As close contact with COVID suffering family member, no symptoms occur yet, she requests preventive treatment by herbs. Her lips are dark, while the tongue is slightly pale and the fur in the middle is thick, creamy and slightly yellowish.

Syndrome Differentiation: Spleen deficiency and Dampness accumulation, turbidity bound with blood stasis.

Prescription:
Bò Hé (Herba Menthae) 6g
Bái Zhǐ (Radix Angelicae Dahuricae) 4g
Bái Zhú (Rhizoma Atractylodis Macrocephalae) 4g
Fú Líng (Poria) 6g
Jié Gěng (Radix Platycodonis) 6g
Huā Jiāo (Pericarpium Zanthoxyli) 4g
Zhǐ Ké (Fructus Aurantii) 4g
Chì Sháo Yào (Radix Paeoniae Rubra) 4g
Gān Cǎo (Radix Glycyrrhizae) 4g

3g twice daily.

2nd consultation: the tongue is pink and the coating is thick and yellowish, there seems no change made.

Prescription:
Zǐ Sū Gěng (Caulis Perillae) 7g
Bīng Piàn (Borneolum Syntheticum) 1g
Bái Dòu Kòu (Fructus Ammomi Rotundus) 6g
Shén Qǔ (Massa Medicata Fermentata) 6g
Zhǐ Ké (Fructus Aurantii) 6g
Shóu Dà Huáng (Radix et Rhizoma Rhei) 4g
Zé Lán (Herba Lycopi) 8g
Gān Cǎo (Radix Glycyrrhizae) 4g

3g twice daily.

After taking the above prescription for three days, her bowel movement is a bit loose, the creamy tongue coating is cleared and the tongue looks clean and well.



In the prescription, Dà Huáng is added for detoxification and purging the intestines. The combination of Bīng Piàn and Dà Huáng produces a function to ascend the clear Qi and descend the turbid Qi. With the comparison of tongue pictures it is obvious that the turbid tongue coating is much subsided by the treatment, showing a remarkable quick effect. Wu Youke, a TCM expert on pestilent diseases in the Ming Dynasty, attached great importance to the use of purging herb Dà Huáng, while Huang Tuian hold the same opinion by saying that "As the pestilent pathogen invades deeply into the Mo Yuan (膜原, another word for Triple- Energizer) and stagnates in the gastrointestinal system, thus can hardly be removed

without using this herb."

With a review of the historical records about Zhang Zhongjing's era and the painful story of the loss of his family, described in the preface to the great book the Treatise on Cold Damage, that 2/3 members died within a single decade because of epidemic disease and constant war, we believe that the so called Cold Damage is undoubtedly a kind of epidemic disease [6]. The symptoms of a variety of winter infectious viral diseases seen today can be listed under the diseases of the six meridians. While the development and practice on the treatment of the Warm diseases in the Ming and Qing Dynasties enriched and complemented the theory and therapeutics of exogenous febrile diseases and epidemic diseases. Nowadays if we would like to find in Chinese medicine a treatment of an infectious viral disease, whether it is influenza or SARS or COVID-19, the formula and herbs can be found within this classic syndrome differentiation and treatment system.

The recent reported cases of COVID-19 are of different features from those a few months ago. In the future, any new cases in different regions may be of different syndrome again and the individual symptoms and signs also possibly be different in features of cold and heat, dampness and dryness, hereby the prescriptions should always be modified according to the season, geographic circumstances and personal body constitution, but the rules and principles must be the same as what is provided in the classic diagnostic and therapeutic system for exogenous disease.

The ancient masters left us an invaluable medical system with all kinds of doctrines, methods and prescriptions. If we could make good use of it, we would successfully deal with any infection caused by any different viruses and variants in the first phase of the break out, with no need of long-time waiting for new drugs and new vaccines to be found or created. Therefore, Chinese herbal medicine has announced its unique advantages in this field and it will, especially in present time and situation with an unpredictable prospect of the pandemic and the absence of effective drugs, show its great value and contribution.

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By You Jun Wang

You Jun Wang



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Discussing Elements of Chinese Traditional Attire Present in the Culture of Chinese Traditional Medicine

In the culture of traditional Chinese medicine (TCM), the terms used to denominate some parts of the human body alongside certain diseases have their etymologies in traditional Chinese attire of the Pre-Qin and Han eras (before the 3rd century CE). Lexicologically, as the mean of denomination, these terms of attire were either deployed as metonyms directly or had their semantic radicals changed to form new terms. There were two kinds of logic in such denomination; one was to use terms, such as those found in the lace and drape-pendant classes (纓類、市佩類), as metonyms for body parts pertaining to the superficial projections as made by the denoted items of attire, or in extension, diseases pertaining to such parts of the body. The other was to use terms, such as those found in the pouch class (囊類), as metonyms for body parts that featured some sort of similarity in physical forms with the denoted items of attire. The attire-related elements in TCM culture are a reflection of Han people's tradition of imitating heaven and earth (法象天地) and regarding man and nature as one (天人合一).

This paper is funded by the Chinese Academy of Chinese Medical Sciences (zz130503), "Textual research on TCM terms of clothing name Metonymy"

By Yang Liu
Interpreted Yu Liang Wang

As the framework of an orderly transmitted traditional medical system, TCM nomenclature, through creation and development, had largely been prepared by the Han era. Upon inspecting the nomenclature of physiology, pathology, acupuncture & moxibustion, herbology, prescription, as covered by the canonical works in circulation such as the Yellow Emperor's Inner Canon of Medicine 《黃帝內經》, Treatise on Exogenous Febrile Diseases 《傷寒論》, the Divine Agronomist's Canon of Materia Medica 《神農本草經》, the A-B Canon of Acupuncture & Moxibustion 《鍼灸甲乙經》, we see that literature at the time already comprised most of the core and common terms of TCM. Following the tradition of the Han people, the approach taken in generating TCM nomenclature in the Pre-Qin and Han eras was no more than simply "near fetch from the body; far fetch from things" (近取諸身，遠取諸物). Tracing the etymologies of such terms, they often originated from the nomenclature of nature and humanity of that time, embodying profuse cultural substance which, by means of metonymy and extension, was assimilated as TCM culture.

For TCM nomenclature, former scholars had conducted more research on herbological terminology and supplied sufficient interpretation. Such focus could undoubtedly be attributed to the fact that most animals, plants, and minerals were relatable to the lives of the masses, which made for easy sympathy. Conversely, we can infer that, on the one hand, those TCM terms originated from elements far removed from the worldly lives of the masses were difficult to sympathise with, while on the other, they were not favoured by professionals whose intentions were to promote the science of the medicine either. In such persistency, the cultural substances embodied by many current TCM terms have graduated into oblivion with the vicissitudes of time; reaching a kind of state today in which they are taken for granted — not to mention the large number of out-of-circulation TCM terms found in medical literature presented on bamboo slips and silk leaves from the Qin and Han eras unearthed in recent years are even more challenging to comprehend. The quantity is not a few for this type of terms. In this article, the author aims to cursorily correlate, corroborate, and discuss a small portion of the discovery that is related to the elements of the traditional Chinese attire so one may catch a glimpse of ancient people's candid manner of thinking whereby they imitated heaven and earth (法象天地) to access the virtue of the divine (以通神明之德) and parallel the temperaments of all things (以類萬物之情). Though it is worth noting that terms of attire mentioned in medical literature that are directly used for their original meanings — such as the term belt hook (帶鉤) in the 18th issue of the Canon of Issues 《難經》: "when doomed pulse takes place (死心脈來), first comes the curl then the curve (前曲後居), like the handling of a belt hook (如操帶鉤)" , which is not metonymically used and fixed into a TCM term — are not included in the discussion.

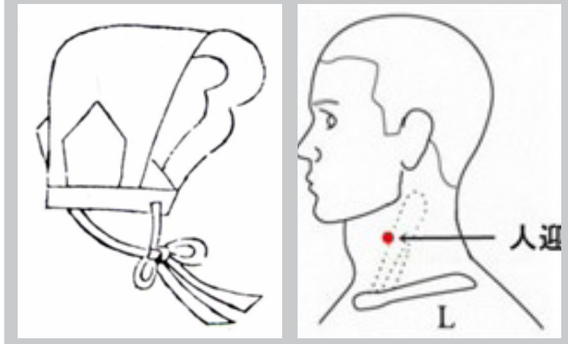
TCM terms with relevance to elements of traditional attire are not presented in quantities by the current medical literature; their systematicness is not readily discernible. Formerly, the glosses of these terms were sporadic. For example, Ms JIANG Yan (姜燕) pointed out (in 2009) that the origin of "癭" (goitre) was "賏" (the archaic character of "嬰"). The joining of two shells "貝" was used to denote the ornament connected at the neck; adding the semantic radical for thread "糸 " formed the character "纓", which was the denotation for crown lace that was tied at the neck and hence goitre, the swelling at the location of the crown lace on the neck, was denoted with the character "癭". Ms JIANG also pointed out that the original character for "督" was "裻", which denoted the back seam of garments. As the Du meridian (督脈) was situated in the same place as the back seam, it was therefore denoted with "裻" turned "督" . Ms JIANG's glosses were very accurate, but they were occasional; intended only for explaining archaic medical texts, they were not yet wittingly gathered into the "attire-related" category for collective research.

The author has gathered and investigated TCM terms related to elements of attire in current medical literature and concludes that there were mainly two types of term-forming approaches. The first approach was to use terms of attire directly as TCM terms; examples of this are " 經" "絡" "帶" (warp, knit, belt, respectively). The second approach was to change the semantic or phonetic radicals of the terms of attire and use them as TCM terms that were closely related in meaning; examples of this are " 嬰 / 纓 - 癭" "裻 - 督" "裋襦 - 袾襦 - 侏儒" (from crown lace to goitre, from back seam to Du meridian, from blouse to dwarf, respectively).

In recent years, there has been a significant increase of new resources from unearthed medical literature, revealing many new instances in which terms of attire are used as TCM terms; most of them are not seen in medical literature in circulation. Even so, their term-forming approaches still agree with the two found in the current medical literature. By generalising these terms' pattern of usage and re-examining current literature, quite a few new findings are made, which indeed is the successful application of the "Dual Verification Practice" as advocated by Mr WANG Guowei (王國維先生). Below the author shall discuss some of these examples by class.

Lace Class

The term-forming mutation of "嬰 / 纓 - 癭" is representative; it is an example of attire-related TCM terms wholly maintained in current medical literature that are still frequently used. We need not be concerned with the primordial character "賏" used to denote a primitive ornament consisting of two strings of shells for the time being; the character "嬰" originally had the same meaning, but when it is used in "嬰脈" (Ying meridian) and "嬰筋" (Ying tendon), as seen in the current and unearthed literature, it is synonymous and interchangeable with the character "纓", which means crown lace, according to Shuowen Jiezi 《說文解字》. The Canon of Miraculous Pivot 《靈樞經》 notes, "Renyin meridian is (a branch of) foot Yangming meridian, which comes before the Crown Lace tendon; that which comes after the Crown Lace tendon is hand Yangming meridian, its name is Futu" (人迎，足陽明也，在嬰筋之前。嬰筋之後，手陽明也，名曰扶突). Anatomically speaking, the so-called Crown Lace tendon "嬰筋" is none other than sternocleidomastoid, whereas the Crown Lace meridian "嬰脈" should more or less be the Renyin meridian (人迎脈), which is the foot Yangming meridian (足陽明脈) travelling to the neck. Both are in the vicinity of crown lace's superficial projection, belonging to the order of body parts. Furthermore, when the character "嬰" was augmented with the semantic radical of illness "疒", it was thus the denotation for the disease pertaining to this part of the body, and the location of the lesion also happened to approximate crown lace's superficial projection.



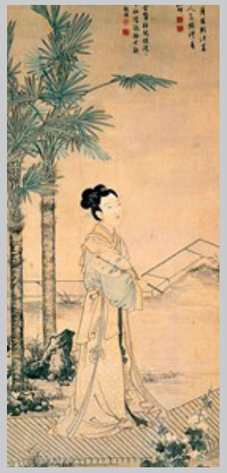
(Crown Tassel picture1) (Ying Jin, Ying Mai Location Chart 1)

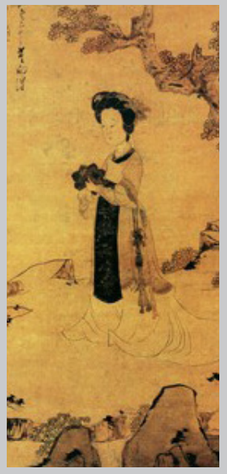
In the above example, we had a glance at ancient people's candid manner of thinking in denominating human body parts, it could almost be called simple and crude: in the spirit of "near fetch from the body; far fetch from things", since this tendon and this meridian so happened to coincide with crown lace's superficial projection, the character "嬰 / 纓" was loaned for their denotations. With continued usage, "嬰 / 纓" became a jargon in TCM and even developed a "downline" where the semantic radical for illness "疒" was added to denote the characterised disease pertaining to this part of the body and altogether fixed as TCM terms. Despite the crudeness, from a different perspective however, it was indeed difficult to find a more suitable reference other than crown lace to denominate this tendon or this meridian at the front of the neck; what else could be used for metonymy if not crown lace?

Nonetheless, the case of "嬰" is not yet fully closed. We find in Tianhui Bamboo Slips of Medicine 《天回醫簡》 a never-before-seen body part name — "纕嬰". According to its description, injuring this part of the body would render "Yin unusable" (陰不用), that is, impotence. So, does this "嬰" have anything to do with crown lace? As

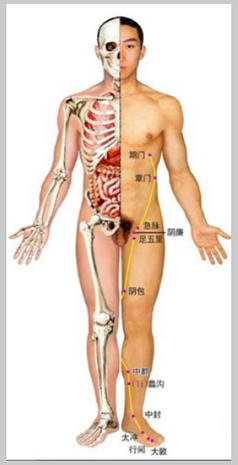
it turns out, it should be pronounced as “襳纓”, which means sachet’s lace. And where is this sachet’s lace located on the body? From observing the illustrations of “Concubine BAN Holding a Fan” (班姬團扇圖) by TANG Yin (唐寅) and “Lady Looking in a Mirror” (對鏡仕女圖) by CHEN Hongshou (陳洪綬) from the Ming dynasty (14th to 17th century CE), we see that it is located off to the side of the waist. The superficial projection of sachet’s lace is comparable to foot Jueyin meridian’s route of travel, which passes through genitalia; demonstrably matching the description in literature.

Apparently, extra care must be taken when interpreting attire-related terms denoted with the character “嬰 / 纓” in medical literature. They cannot be straightly interpreted with the original sense of crown lace, as noted in Shuowen Jiezi《說文解字》. “嬰 / 纓” in such terms may only be denoting “lace”. Therefore, the other character with which it is paired must be heeded.





Left: Concubine Ban Holding Fan. Right: Beautiful Women Looking at Mirror. Below: Foot Jue Yin Travelling Route Chart.

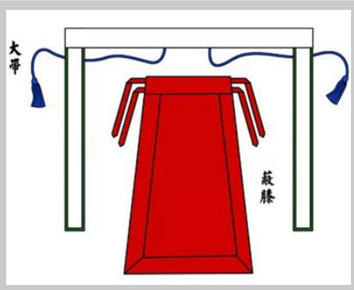


Drape-Pendant Class

The terminus of foot Jueyin meridian’s route of travel (足厥陰脈) is so described in the Book on Meridians《脈書》 discovered at Zhangjia mountain (張家山): “touching the lower abdomen, clamping the sides of ‘饰’ ” (觸少腹，夾饰旁); this is a case in which a term of attire is being used directly to denote body part. Moreover, the character “饰” was not seen before, and it is different to the corresponding characters or terms found in other unearthed documents; the corresponding characters or terms in the Lower Canon of the Book on Meridians of Tianhui Bamboo Slips of Medicine《天回醫簡·脈書下經》, Edition A and Edition B of the Canon of Moxibustion of the Eleven Yin-Yang Meridians《陰陽十一脈灸經·甲本、乙本》, the Canon of Moxibustion of the Eleven Meridians of Arm & Foot《足臂十一脈灸經》 are “佩” “大漬” “大資” “脞” respectively.

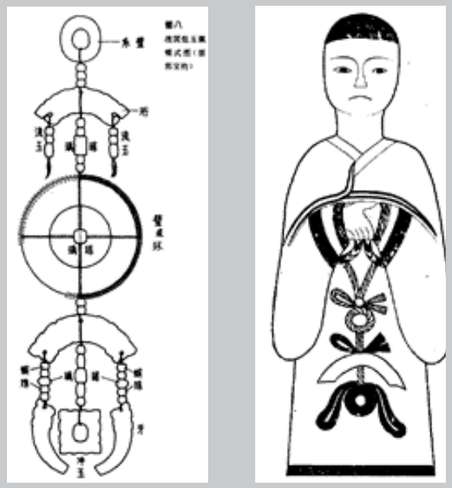
“饰” was also written with characters such as “市” “芾” “紱”, originally denoting a knee-length drape; a piece of clothing that covered the thighs down to the knees, which was an essential component of traditional ceremonial attire usually hung on the leather belt. Here we can draw on the experience we had with the character “嬰” and infer that the position it is deployed for as a metonym is below the waist, at the front, in the centre of the body.

“佩” (pendant) in Pre-Qin literature usually denotes combined jade pendant (組玉佩), which was formed through tying multiple jade pieces together with braided cords. “佩” and “饰” are not phonetic loan characters of each other, however (proof omitted). So, where on the body was the pendant placed? According to Mr SUN Ji’s investigation: “large combined jade pendants of the Zhou era (circa 11th to 3rd century BC) were hung, so they dropped to below the waist, in front of the abdomen, this is where the knee-length drapes ‘市’ were situated; in outward appearance, combined jade pendants and knee-length drapes were superimposed”; “since the Eastern Zhou dynasty, a significant change occurred to the institution of combined jade pendants, from the late Spring & Autumn period (circa 5th century BC), they were no longer placed around the neck but attached to leather belts at the waist”. Mr SUN’s investigation perfectly resolved the query of location.



Knee-Length Drape

Therefore, given it was within the time frame of the late Spring & Autumn and the Warring States, “饰” and “饰” were fully interchangeable for indicating the same body part. As per superficial projection, their actual position should be the entire lower abdominal region below the umbilicus and atop the thighs; this region is also denotable with “大漬” “大資” “脞” (proof omitted). Clamping the two sides of this region, the foot Jueyin meridian (足厥陰脈) travels upward; this fits the descriptions in various books on meridians.

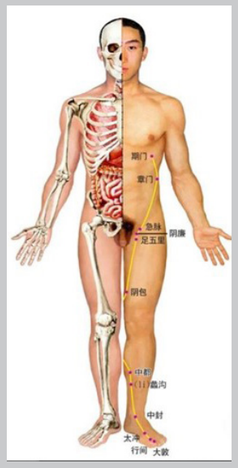


Left: Warring States Chu Jade Pendant Right: Unearthed Female Wooden Figures with Colourful Painting from Chu Tomb of Warring States in Xing Yang, HeNan Province

Pouch Class

The character “囊”, denoting scrotum, that appears in Tianhui Bamboo Slips of Medicine《天回醫簡》 is also seen in the Book on Meridians《脈書》 discovered at Zhangjia mountain (張家山). “囊” originally meant quiver; evidently, it was the shape rather than superficial projection of the quiver that was taken for a semantic extension in this example. The often-used character “睾” nowadays is, in fact, a jumble of “睪” and “皋 / 臯”, which were variant characters of “囊” whose forms, pronunciations and meanings were all interchangeable. However, a shift of meaning occurred later on to the character “睾”; it went from scrotum to testis.

“囊” had many forms, names and uses in ancient times; in TCM culture, we may also come across some pouch-related terms, but they are usually hidden from plain sight. For example, in the “three Yins and three Yangs” (三陰三陽), “厥” of “厥陰” is written with the character “卷” in the Canon of Moxibustion of the Eleven Meridians of Arm & Foot《足臂十一脈灸經》 unearthed at Mawangdui (馬王堆). The two characters are, in fact, close in their archaic pronunciations and interchangeable. The Collection of Rhymes《集韻》 notes: “囊” (quiver) with a bottom is “卷” (囊有底曰卷). Looking at the foot Jueyin meridian (足厥陰脈), we see that it passes through genitalia, and the shape of its passage resembles that of the quiver. For this reason, we cannot help but to speculate whether it was initially “卷陰” and only erroneously written later as “厥陰” due to the similarity in pronunciation. We should note that none of the various books on meridians from the time has “手厥陰脈” (hand Jueyin meridian); the Lower Canon of the Book on Meridians of Tianhui Bamboo Slips of Medicine《天回醫簡·脈書下經》 only has “手心主脈” (hand Xinzhu meridian), which is not referred to as “手厥陰脈” (hand Jueyin meridian). So, foot Jueyin meridian “足厥陰脈” is the one and only “厥陰脈”; that being the case, then what was the premise for the later ages’ strenuous interpretation of “Yin energy is about to be exhausted” (陰氣將盡).



Foot Jue Yin Meridian travelling along the two sides of lower abdomen



Zhong Xing Four Generals



Samples of Sachets

Summary

In general, choosing specific terms of attire to denominate through metonymy or a change of semantic radicals was one of the ways of creating and developing TCM nomenclature in the Pre-Qin and Han eras. The most common logic was to use terms of attire to indicate body parts on which attire's superficial projections were cast, in turn, diseases or pathological products pertaining to those parts of the body. And then, there was the extension of terms of attire to indicate body parts on the basis of similarity in shape. Most of these TCM terms related to elements of attire were made obsolete by the vicissitudes of time and the perishment to the institution of traditional attire; only a tiny portion accompanied surviving medical literature maintained a lively state and was passed down to the present day.

By Yang Liu
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Original Methods of Classical Acupuncture: Deep-Shallow Principle and Method of Needling the Defense Qi

According to important discussions in the Internal Classic and analysis of the essential concepts of the healthy Qi and pathogen Qi, the clear Qi and turbid Qi, the Nutrient Qi and the Defense Qi, this essay summarises the deep-shallow needling principle and provides key points to apply it to the method of needling the Defense. The author also shares the thoughts that we can find theoretical explanations of the concepts of extra points, non-specific effects of acupuncture, sham acupuncture and the effects of non-meridian non-acupoints shallow-needling methods with the laws of the Defense Qi and method of needling the Defense.

By You Jun Wang

The acupuncture therapy of traditional Chinese medicine had matured and got the highest achievement in theory and techniques before Qin Dynasty. The expansion and development of needling methods in later times did not make anything beyond the Internal Classic and the Questioning Classic (nàn jīng 难经). Although modern acupuncture methods are full of innovations with theoretical imagination and modern terms, the real core does not actually deviate from the framework of the classical system. As one part of the explorations of the classical acupuncture methods, this article attempts to introduce the deep-shallow needling principle and the method of needling the Defense Qi by means of finding the meanings of the essential concepts and techniques by the Internal Classic. Such as the healthy Qi and pathogenic Qi, the clear Qi and turbid Qi, the Nutrient Qi and Defense Qi, seasonal influence, personal body constitution, location of Qi, getting Qi (dé qì 得气), and the arrival of Qi (qì zhì 气至), etc.

1. Deep-shallow needling as an important principle of acupuncture

The consideration about the depth of needling is an important matter of acupuncture according to the Internal Classic and makes the deep-shallow needling one of the basic principles of acupuncture, as what is discussed in the Miraculous Pivot:

Talking about the laws of acupuncture, one must know where the 12 meridians start and end, where the collaterals branch from, where the five transport points are located, where the corresponding points (hé xué合穴) of the six Fu organs are, where the entrances and exits of Qi are related to the four seasons, and where the Qi of the five Zang organs flow to, including the longitudinal measure, the lateral measure, the depth, and the superior and inferior reaches. (Chap.2: On Transport Points)

The Plain Questions also indicates, 'As the pathogenic Qi stay floating or sinking, one should needle it shallowly or deeply to the very layer but not over it.'(Chap.50: On Needling Principles) And it is stated in another article, "'To mind the depth" means to know the exterior or interior focus of the pathogenic, and "(to take) the adjacent and the distant as one" means to await Qi in the same depth.' (Chap.54: Annotation of the Needling Classic) It shows that the depth of needling depends on the depth of the pathogenic Qi, and whatever near points or distant points are used, the needling treatment should be on the same layer of the pathogenic Qi.

The location of Qi is emphasised by the Miraculous Pivot, 'when a doctor is doing needling, he knows the location of Qi and pays attention to the doors of it; he knows how to regulate the Qi and where to make reinforcing or reducing effect, and he also knows the meaning of the slow-quick principle and the where to have it done.' (Chap.73: Functions of Organs)

The location of Qi indicates not only the layer of the pathogenic Qi but also the existence of healthy Qi. The pathogenic Qi could be mild or severe and might stay deeply or shallowly in the body, while the healthy Qi flows and functions in different places as being of Yin or Yang, clear or turbid, the Defense or the Nutrient, floating or sinking, therefore the needling treatment must find its target. Needling to the appropriate layer on the correct object is the precondition for regulating the Qi with the reinforcing or reducing method in order to accomplish the treatment purpose. In other words, the depth of needling is a critical issue for a successful acupuncture treatment.

Nor that the appropriate depth is so important, a practitioner must be alert that if the needling is wrongly managed on depth, not only could it fail to get the expected therapeutic effect but also could cause an unwanted consequence. Just as it is warned in the chapter On Needling Principles, 'Needling over the depth could cause internal damages and needling not deep enough could cause external blockage which attracts the pathogenic. Thereby needling not to the appropriate depth could just be mistreatment which might disturb the five Zang organs deeply and cause severe disease later.' The importance and necessity of the deep-shallow principle are thus stressed from the opposite side.

2. To follow the deep-shallow needling principle: knowing the location of Qi

As what is confirmed formerly, to do acupuncture in appropriate depth, we must know the location of Qi and pay attention to the doors of it. Apart from identifying the affected meridian(s) and organ(s), the location of Qi also indicates the layer where the pathogenic lingers and the target for regulating manipulations.

In chapter 'Nine Needles and 12 Source Points' the Miraculous Pivot explains:

Talking about the Qi at vessels, the pathogenic Qi is at the top, the turbid Qi is at the middle, and the clear Qi is at the bottom; therefore needling down to the vessel lets out the pathogenic Qi, and needling into the vessel lets out the turbid Qi, but if had needled it too deeply, the pathogenic Qi would sink inversely and the illness would aggravate. So it is said that each of the skin, the muscles, the sinews and the vessels are of different layer; thereon the illness of each requires appropriate treatment. The needles used are different in shape and each works for appropriate conditions.

This is a fundamental doctrine about the depth of the pathogenic Qi and the healthy Qi. The healthy Qi is divided into turbid Qi and clear Qi referring to the clear heaven Qi from air and the turbid earth Qi from food and drinks. The turbid earth Qi is sub categorised as the turbid Defense Qi and the clear Nutrient Qi. Besides the Qi aspect, the body constituent parts of the form aspect—including the skin, muscles, vessels, sinews and bones—are also different layers where the pathogenic Qi and healthy Qi flows to and confront each other. The laws of the location of both kinds of Qi are summarized as the following.

2.1 Depth of Illness

1.) Illness lies deeply or shallowly

The Miraculous Pivot says, 'The variations of illness are countless as it floats shallowly or sinks deeply in various locations.' (Chap. 59: Dysfunction of the Defense Qi)

The Plain Questions presents the same idea with more details, 'Illness could be at hairs and follicles, or at the skin, or at muscles, or at vessels, or at sinews, or at bones, or at marrow.' (Chap.50: On Needling Principles). The illness of different layers surely requests acupuncture in different depths.

2.) The factors determining the depth of illness

The pathogenic Qi could cause disease shallowly or deeply with responding to the heaven Tao and the condition of the Qi-blood, as it is discussed in the Miraculous Pivot, 'The attacking of stealthy wind and malicious Qi on human body not only depends on the season but also by chance. When the door of Qi is open, it invades deeply and causes illness into the interior urgently. When the door is closed, it invades shallowly and causes illness at the exterior hesitantly.' (Chap.79: On Dews of the Year).

The depth of the illness also depends on whether the pathogenic factor is the regular wind or irregular wind according to another quotation, 'The malicious Qi (xié qì 邪气) is the deficiency wind that stealthily injures human deeply and is reluctant to leave. The regular wind (zhèng fēng正风) strikes human shallowly and leaves after confrontation, as it is too mild and weak to beat the healthy Qi (zhēn qì真气, natural Qi).' (Chap.75: The Phases and Needling, the Natural and the Malicious, Miraculous Pivot).

The depth of illness is also influenced by the property of the pathogen and the level of the normal Qi and blood, just as it is analysed in the following:

Most of the conditions with tight-pulse are cold conditions and most of the conditions with soft-pulse are heat conditions. Big-pulse shows an excess of Qi and deficiency of blood, while small-pulse advises deficiency of both Qi and blood. Fluent-pulse means strong Yang Qi with slight heat and difficult-pulse means excessive blood and deficient Qi with a slight cold. Thereby for conditions with tight-pulse, it is needled deeply and needles are retained for a longer time; for soft-pulse, it is needled shallowly and quickly to reduce the heat; for big-pulse, reduce the Qi slightly but not let out blood; and for fluent-pulse, needle it shallowly and remove needles quickly to reduce Yang Qi and heat. (Chap.4: Malicious Qi and Disorders of Zang-Fu, Miraculous Pivot).

To summarize the above discussions, the property of the pathogenic factor influences the depth of the illness, while the strength of healthy Qi and its open-close status determines how deep the pathogenic could get into and stay in the body.

3.) The identification of the depth of the illness

From the features of the onset of the regular wind or irregular wind to the disordered pattern of cold or heat, many factors should be valued to find the depth of the illness. Furthermore, the colour diagnostic method, the pulse diagnostic method and other specific diagnostic methods are practical methods to identify the depth and location of the illness. The Plain Questions narrates that 'holding and accessing means to access the depth of the disease' (Chap.15:On Key Points of Script on Jade Tablets), and the Miraculous Pivot states that 'Five colours occur on each part, thereby to observe its floating or sinking status helps to identify the illness being deep or shallow' (Chap.49: Five Colours). Referring to the oldest Chinese dictionary, the meaning of 'colour' is 'the Qi of the face'. By the text of the Internal Classic, the five-colour diagnostic method is a miraculous super method that helps to identify the disorder of five-Zang precisely even in a very early stage.

The Miraculous Pivot also introduces a method to identify the location of pain and to determine the depth of needling by Yin-Yang features of symptoms, 'Pain is a Yin symptom. If pressing by hand does not cause tenderness, the pain must be at the Yin layer and it should be needled deeply. The illness at superior is Yang disorder and that at inferior is Yin disorder. Itchiness is a Yang symptom, thus should be needled shallowly.' (Chap.9: From Beginning to End).

2.2 The Clear, The Turbid and Yin-Yang

The Miraculous Pivot says in Chap.40, 'The Qi received from food is turbid and that received from the air is clear. The clear flows to Yin and the turbid flows to Yang.' 'It is the normal feature of Qi that the clear Qi is fluent and the turbid Qi is reluctant, thus do it deeply and retain needle longer for needling the Yin and do it shallowly and quickly for needling the Yang. When the clear and the turbid are entangled, regulate it according to the code.' (Chap.40: The Clear, the Turbid and YinYang)

And it narrates in another chapter, 'The fluent Qi flow out quickly and the reluctant Qi flow out slowly, thus use small needles and needle it shallowly if Qi is rapid, and use big needles and needle it deeply if Qi is reluctant. Deep needling should be retained longer and shallow needling should be retained shorter in time.'(Chap.5: The Roots and Ends)

The above discussions indicate that the healthy Qi is differentiated by Yin-Yang or clear-turbid and the flow speed of Qi varies accordingly. Consequently, the depth and retaining time of needling is also different.

The blood and Qi are from food and drinks. The clear food Qi is the Nutrient Qi, which flows with blood within the vessels, and is called the Yin; the turbid food Qi is the Defense Qi, which flows with body fluid outside the vessels, and is called the Yang. Both the Nutrient-blood and Defense-Qi run within meridian tunnels (jīng suì经隧) which also are called streams and valleys (xī gǔ溪谷). The following references are all on this topic.

The Qi and blood from the stomach make (the contents of) meridian channels. (Chap. 60: The Jade Tablets, Miraculous Pivot)

The natural Qi is the meridian Qi. (Chap.27: Separation and Conjunction of the Natural and the Malicious, Plain Questions)

The natural Qi is received from heaven and charges the body together with food Qi. (Chap.75: The Phases and Needling, the Natural and the Malicious, Plain Questions)

We should comprehend that the natural Qi is the clear Yang Qi and it flows along with the Nutrient Ying Qi in blood vessels and with Defense Wei Qi outside blood vessels. The natural Qi could not stay and function without food Qi as a vehicle. The purpose of acupuncture is to let out the pernicious Qi and recharge the food Qi. The normal circulation of the Nutrient and the Defense is the precondition to keep the natural Qi, but on the contrary, a poorly skilled practitioner lets out healthy Qi and retains pathogenic Qi, thus is criticized as 'to exhaust Qi and risk the life'.

2.3 The Shallow-Seated Defense and the Deep-Seated Nutrient.

The location of Qi is also decided by the features of the Defense Qi and the Nutrient Qi.

According to the Miraculous Pivot, the Nutrient Qi and the Defense Qi are both from food but flows in different layers. It narrates, 'A human receives Qi from food, the stomach receives food and transfer Qi to lungs, and then the five Zang and six Fu organs are all supplied with Qi. The clear Qi makes the Nutrient and the turbid Qi makes the Defense; the Nutrient is within the vessels and the Defense is outside the vessels.' (Chap.18: Production and Circulation of the Nutrient and Defense)

The Plain Questions says, 'The big spaces among muscles are the valleys and the small spaces among muscles are the streams. In between the muscles and linking the valleys and streams is where the Nutrient and the Defense flow and confront with the vast Qi (dà qi大气, wind).' (Chap.58: On the Dens of Qi) The statement seems to make not much difference between the route of the Nutrient and the Defense. But if we refer to other related discussions, there would be no longer confusion. The twelve meridian vessels run deeply in between muscles and are invisible. (Meridians and Vessels, Miraculous Pivot)

The Defense Qi, flowing in the body, is usually parallel to the vessels and along the septum of muscles. (On Flatulence)

The floating Qi that does not move along meridians is the Defense Qi; the essence Qi that moves within the meridians is the Nutrient Qi. (Chap.52: The Defense Qi, Miraculous Pivot)

Hence we have acknowledged that the Defense Qi and the Nutrient Qi both find their way between the muscles, but the Nutrient flows deeply within the blood vessels and the Defense Qi flows in the valleys and streams outside the vessels.

The function of the Nutrient and the Defense is discussed in many chapters, such as this one from chapter 47 of the Miraculous Pivot:

The meridian vessels are for circulating the blood Qi to connect the Yin and Yang, for nourishing the sinews and bones, and for lubricating the joints. The Defense Qi is for warming the muscles, filling up the skin, plumping the subcutaneous and controlling the open and close (of the hair follicles). (Chap.47: Zang Organs, Miraculous Pivot)

We have learnt here that the Defense Qi flows as well as at the skin, subcutaneous and spaces between various tissues.

The laws of the production, circulation and functions of the Defense and the Nutrient are the foundation on which the needling methods are established. As the Nutrient and the Defense flows in different layers of the body, deeply or shallowly, within or outside the blood vessels, the deep-shallow needling principle is very important for needling the Defense and needling the Nutrient. The following quotation reflects the value of the above thoughts:

The acupuncture doctrine initiates from the meridian vessels with the knowledge of the routs and measures, thus it enables the needling on the interior for five Zang organs and the needling on the exterior for six Fu organs. As the Defense Qi is where various diseases start from, regulating its deficiency and excess would restore the balance. For needling the collaterals, to let out bad blood completely would prevent deterioration. (Chap.48: Forbidden to Learn, Miraculous Pivot)

Reading through word by word, we find the statement actually involves three different needling methods: the method of needling the Nutrient, the method of needling the Defense and the method of needling the collaterals. To needle the Defense on the exterior layer and let out pathogenic Qi from the skin and the septum of muscles, it could defend the body at the very beginning of the onset of exogenous pathogens. To needle the Nutrient on the interior layer deeply into the blood vessels and follow the law of its circulation, could heal the disorders of the Zang-Fu organs. To needle the floating veins and remove the stagnated blood, could restore the scattered Qi and reconnect the Yin and Yang.

2.4 Qi Floats and Sinks According to Seasons

As the healthy Qi floats and sinks between the exterior and interior along with the Yin-Yang changes of seasons, acupuncture must follow this law with a well understanding.

We can find many relevant discussions in the Miraculous Pivot, such as, 'The Qi of spring is at the hairs; the Qi of summer is at the skin; the Qi of autumn is at the muscles; the Qi of winter is at the sinews and bones. To needle the illnesses of them, each should be needled to the very layer of the season,' (Chap.9: From Beginning to End) indicating the correlation between the depth of Qi and the four seasons.

In addition, the book tells us many times of the links of the up-and-down of the healthy Qi and the invasion depth of the pathogenic Qi to the phases of the moon:

As the human connects to heaven and the earth and corresponds to the sun and the moon when the moon is full and the sea is at high tide, the human's Qi and blood go up to charge the muscles, to firm the skin and hairs, to swell the subcutaneous and to strengthen the halo, the pathogenic Qi could not invade deeply into the body; when the moon wanes and the sea is at low tide, the human's Qi and blood goes down with discharging the muscles, loosening the skin, weakening the hairs, shrinking the subcutaneous and reducing the halo, the pathogenic Qi could invade the body deeply and causes the severe emergency condition. (Chap.79: On Dews of the Year, Miraculous Pivot)

2.5 Depth of Qi and the Size of a Person

The Miraculous Pivot also believes that the depth of Qi depends on the size of a person:

The meridians, just like the rivers, the length, depth and

velocity of water and blood of them are different… it is called following the law of nature to assess in mind the age, the size and being fat or being slim of the person.' (Chap.12: The Rivers and the Meridians)

In chapter 38, the depth of needling is discussed in detail according to the type of body build and age: 'For a fat person with a fully charged Qi-blood and firm skin, in case of pathogen invasion, needle him deeply and remain needles for long; for a slim person who is of thin skin, weak halo, small muscles, clear blood and smooth Qi, needle him shallowly and quickly as the Qi and blood are vulnerable.'

'For an average person with righteous personality and harmonious Qi-blood, needle him following the code and depending on his white or black skin colour.' 'For a baby with fragile muscles and vulnerable Qi-blood, needle him shallowly and quickly with hair-fine needles, probably twice daily.' (Chap.38: Upstream and Downstream, the Fat and the Slim, Miraculous Pivot)

3. Applications of Deep-Shallow Principle to the Method of Needling the Defense Qi

From words and discussions seen in different chapters, we found that the Internal Classic introduces four main acupuncture methods, within which the method of needling the Defense is the primary one. Deriving from the aforementioned notions about the depth of needling that is correlated to the severity of the pathogenic invasion, status of the healthy Qi, the distinction of the clear and the turbid Qi, the domain of the Nutrient Qi and the Defense Qi, the seasonal influence and the individual body build, we summarized the key points of the method of needling the Defense as the following.

3.1 Differentiation of the pathogenic Qi and healthy Qi

The exogenous pathogen affects the human body on the skin and subcutaneous first, therefore to expel the pathogen from the exterior Wei Qi (the Defense) layer is the primary method of acupuncture which stresses the great importance of distinguishing the pernicious Qi from the righteous Qi. In the chapter of 'Use of Needles' it is stated: 'The meaning of "to needle it in three steps for the arrival of the food Qi" is that: firstly, pierce the skin shallowly to let out the Yang pathogen; secondly, needle it through the skin and onto the muscle to let out the Yin pathogen; then get it in between the septum of muscles to release the food Qi. Thus the Method of Needling says, "Primarily needle it shallowly to expel the pathogen and induce blood Qi, then needle it deeply to act on the pathogen within Yin Qi, and finally needle it very deeply to bring in food Qi." This is what exactly means here.' (Chap.7: Miraculous Pivot) Completely based on the differentiation of the pathogen and the healthy Qi and being aware of the different depths of the turbid Defense Qi and clear Nutrient Qi, the three-step needling method is designed with the shallow-deep principle to dispel pathogen and recharge the healthy Qi. The three-step needling method, needling in the order of the skin, the subcutaneous (shallow fascia) and in between the septum of muscles (deep fascia) to act on the pathogenic Qi at skin layer, the pathogenic Qi at subcutaneous layer and the food Qi in the deep layer accordingly, is the basic method of needling the Defense following the deep-shallow needling principle. The indications of needling the Defense includes the onset stage of exogenous disorders when the pernicious Qi invades the skin and the subcutaneous, any disorder of the Defense Qi layer from the septum of muscles to the spaces of three-burner, and the cold blockages in various body tissues that need an outlet to evacuate the cold Qi.

To do acupuncture with the three-step method, it is very important to pay attention to awaiting Qi and differentiating Qi. The chapter 'From Beginning to End' presents that 'the pathogenic Qi comes rapidly with stress and the food Qi comes calmly in peace', reminding the distinguishing point of the pathogen and healthy Qi that could be found when awaiting Qi. It is either the phenomena seen under the needle or the finding of the pulse-taking. The diagnostic method is not only applicable to conditions of the pathogen in the Defense Qi layer but also could be used for disorders of the exogenous pathogen in meridian vessels.

3.2 Assessment of the Density of the Pathogenic Qi

Besides the depth of the pathogen and the healthy Qi, the density of the pathogenic Qi is also the index to decide how deep to insert needles and how many needles to use. It should be in compliance with the principle given in the chapter 'Dysfunction of the Defensive Qi':

The variations of illness are countless as it floats shallowly or sinks deeply in various locations. To needle it shallowly for an ailment or to needle it deeply for severe disease, and to use few needles for an ailment or to use many needles for severe disease, thereby being able to regulate Qi accordingly makes a super doctor. (Chap. 59: Dysfunction of the Defense Qi, Miraculous Pivot)

The methods listed in the chapter Use of Needles are good examples of the principle:

'Vertical Needling (Zhí Zhēn Cì 直针刺): pull the skin before needling, for treatment of cold Qi in shallow';

'Near-by Needling (Bàng Zhēn Cì傍针刺): one needle inserted vertically and another in sideway, for treatment of chronic persisting blockage';

'Three Needling (Qí Cì齐刺): one vertical needle and two in sideways, for treatment of a little cold Qi in deep';

'Five Needling (Yáng Cì扬刺): one direct vertical needle and four in sideways, for treatment of a great much cold Qi'.

From one needle in shallow to two needles, three needles and five needles used both in deep and shallow, the number of needles and the depth of needling are decided by the amount and depth of pathogenic cold Qi. The needles inserted in sideways are of the method of needling the Defense, and the vertical needle right on the blockage point to the very layer or tissue of the cold blockage is of the method needling the five body constituents. In practice, the number of needles does not have to be limited by the book, actually many modern needling methods, such as the Surrounding Needling method, could apply even tens of hair-fine needles on the focus.

3.3 Identification of the Floating-Sinking Status

As Qi floats or sinks, the depth of Qi and the excess or deficiency condition must be identified primarily in both pathogenic Qi and healthy Qi aspects, through various diagnostic methods and consideration of body response to the heaven Tao, to determine the depth of needling on the Defense Qi. This idea is presented by the Internal Classic in many discussions:

He, who is good at diagnosing, would differentiate Yin and Yang firstly by observing the colour and palpating the pulses. Assessing the clear and the turbid to know the location…pressing on Chi and Cun to feel the floating-sinking and fluent-difficult feature for identifying the origin of the illness, in this way he would not fail in diagnosis and treatment. (Chap.5: Great Discussion on Manifestations of Yin-Yang, Plain Questions).

One must inquire for the initial illness and present illness first and then press on each of the pulse points to find the floating or sinking status of the meridians and collaterals, to the superior and the inferior in both downward and upward directions. (Chap.20: On Three Parts and Nine Pulse Points, Plain Questions).

For excessive pulse, needle it deeply to drain the Qi; for deficient-pulse, needle it shallowly to maintain the vessel by letting out only the pathogenic Qi but not the Essence Qi. (Chap.9: From Beginning to End, Miraculous Pivot).

To get a present proof, one must first identify the warmth or coldness according to the sun and the rise or fall according to the moon to assess the floating-sinking status of Qi and regulate it within the body for an instant efficacy. (Chap.26: On the Eight Timely Winds and the Miraculous Luminous, Plain Questions).

3.4 Getting in the Qi Xue

As is stated in both the Miraculous Pivot and the Plain Question, getting the needles in Qi Xue is a key point of the technique code.

This indicates to get (the needle) into the hideout between muscles, namely in the Qi Xue. If not getting in Qi Xue down between the muscles, the Qi remains blocked and could not be moved; but needling over the depth and into the muscle, the Defense Qi is in chaos and the Yin and Yang are in conflict. (Chap. 35: On Flatulence, Miraculous Pivot)

Do it in between the septum of muscles but neither puncture the meridian nor damage the collaterals, the Defense Qi is thus restored and the pernicious Qi is weakened. (Chap. 62: On Regulating Meridians, Plain Questions)

'Qi Xue (气穴)' literally means the den of Qi. Being similar to the den or hideout in the earth, the den of Qi is the hollow in the flesh, therefore saying 'getting in the Qi Xue' refers to any process inserting a needle into the space between the skin and muscles or in between muscles. Deriving from this apprehension, a Qi Xue might be a standard acupuncture point or might not. 'The hideout of muscles (Ròu Huāng肉肓)' means the space between the muscles that Qi could hide in, which is also described as between 'septum of muscles (Fēn Ròu分肉， fasciae)'. The chapter 'Use of Needles' provides a clear explanation of it by defining the In-between Needling (Fēn Cì分刺) as 'to needle in between the septum of muscles'. This should remind us of one of the functions of the Defense Qi, as to warm the septum of muscles, and recognize that In-between Needling is exactly the method to work on the Defense Qi, in other words to the needle in Qi Xue. With extended thinking, we believe that needling the Defense Qi must aim the needle at the hollow part but not at the solid tissues such as muscles or blood vessels, otherwise, there causes an inverse consequence. It is warned in the Miraculous Pivot, 'Saying"had needled too deeply, the pernicious Qi would sink inversely" means that deep needling is impropriating for a shallow illness, as deep needling does not bring the pernicious out but bring it deeply, that's why it is described 'sink inversely'.'(Chap.3: Lesser Annotation of the Needling Classic)

This principle is also emphasised in another article, 'There is a certain location of the Qi in each of the four seasons, thus getting the den of Qi is certainly the principle to follow the law of acupuncture and moxibustion.' (Chap. 19: Qi in Four Seasons, Miraculous Pivot)

There hence, to get the den of Qi, an adjustment must be considered according to seasonal influence and body size of the patient:

'Acupuncture on a fat person takes the same measure as in autumn and winter, while acupuncture on a slim person takes the same measure as in spring and summer.'(Chap.9:FromBeginningtoEnd,MiraculousPivot) It is very inspiring that the concept of the Defense Qi and den of Qi meets in many features with the latest reported newly found structure of interstitium. [1][2]

3.5 Not Necessarily on Acupoints or Meridians

As 'the Defense Qi is the floating Qi that does not move along the meridians' (Chap. 52: Defense Qi, Miraculous Pivot), it is not necessary to do it exactly on acupoints or meridians for needling the Defense Qi. The A-shi point (ouch point) is the point identified directly on the painful point and is commonly used in modern acupuncture practice. In many conditions, the tenderness of the body is a reflection of the blockage of Defense Qi or cold blockage in solid tissues but very occasionally to be exactly on a standard acupuncture point. "'(To take) the adjacent and the distant as one" means to await Qi in the same depth', therefore in the case, Qi is successfully obtained, whether the point is an acupoint never should be a concern.

Merely noticed and used nowadays, the Responding Needling (Bào Cì报刺) method is another important classical method working on the Defense Qi:

For the Responding Needling, to needle the pain without a certain location that keeps moving up and down, the needle is inserted directly (on the painful point) and not pulled out until you have found and pressed on the next point with the left hand, then the needle is withdrawn and inserted again. (Chap.7: Use of Needles, Miraculous Pivot)

The action of the therapist is the response to the shift of the pain, as well as a response to the feedback of the patient who is asked to report where the pain has moved to. This method is the specific needling method for the treatment of Moving Impediment (Xíng Bì行痹) which is caused by pathogenic wind.

The pathogenic wind flows in between the subcutaneous and the muscles and blocks the Qi in various places without limit to meridians, therefore by tracing the malicious wind and pressing on the focus one can stop it and needle on the very point to drain it.

By any means to do acupuncture on the skin, to the subcutaneous or in between the muscle septum, they all should be listed under the method of needling the Defense Qi. Since almost every inch of the body could be the point to use this method, therefore it happens to satisfy the conditions of the nonspecific effect of acupuncture (NSEA) as well as the features of various extra acupuncture points.

As many modern acupuncture methods, including micro-system acupuncture and extra-point acupuncture, prefer shallow insertion of needles and/or needling on non-acupuncture points to 'standard acupuncture', the efficacy could confuse the researchers and raise doubts against the theory of traditional Chinese medicine. But once we turn to the mechanism of the method needling the Defense Qi, there within the traditional framework of acupuncture could be an approachable explanation to meet the challenge. In addition, the so-called sham acupuncture adopted for the control group in clinical trials is actually not fake acupuncture but to some extent the acupuncture on the Defense Qi layer, thereby it is not surprising to find a result that the real acupuncture is no better than the "placebo" acupuncture or "sham" acupuncture.

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By You Jun Wang

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Your Belief Never Affects Our Treatments - On The Sources of Acupuncture Power

By Jun Xu

There have been numerous debates in the West about how acupuncture helps patients in various scenarios. Some believe that acupuncture treatment involves psychological responses such as Placebo Effect or Mind-body Effect ; some attribute it to Self-healing power of individual patients. And some speculated that treatment with randomly selected two different acupoints may achieve the same outcome due to the neurological reactions, the so called Pan-acupoints effect.

Moreover some advocates of evidence-based medicine designed various Randomized Controlled Trials (RCTs) with sham needles in efforts to clarify the insight of acupuncture effect, but some of them aroused further debates over the validity of their research methods due to disagreements in the understanding of the realm of acupunctures.

To consolidate various views, Dr. Yongming Li (Dermatologist and Acupuncturist in New Jersey, USA) proposed in 2011 a "Balloon Theory" of Acupuncture Effects, suggesting that the acupuncture can produce a combined effect of 5 different effect balloons, namely (1) Self-healing, (2) Placebo, (3) Mind-body, (4) Pan-acupoints, (5) Specific Acupoints . According this hypothesis, the final outcome of acupuncture is viewed as a fixed total volume of the 5 foregoing balloons, which means that within a particular space an enlargement of one specific balloon will reduce the sizes of the other four.

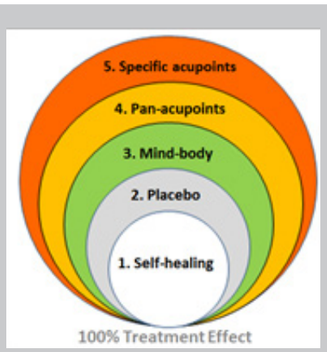


Figure 1: The Balloon Theory

Figure 1 - The Balloon Theory

The "Balloon Theory" as indicated in Figure 1, is a plausible progress to bring all sides of different views to the same table to work out possible routes of consensus. It could also serve as a touchstone to differentiate the viability of each acupuncture technique. In other words, techniques that can 'pierce' the Balloons of Self-healing, Placebo Effect, Mind-body Effect and Pan-acupoints Effect will uncover the authentic power of acupuncture.

Before proceeding to discussions over individual cases, we need to clarify our view on the confusing expression of 'Self-healing' which creates misleading impression that human body got the capacity to recover without ANY EXTERNAL INTERVENTIONS. It is actually a fancy derivative of the medical/biological term of Homeostasis, which *'refers to any self-regulating process by which biological systems tend to maintain stability while adjusting to conditions that are optimal for survival. If homeostasis is successful, life continues; if unsuccessful, disaster or death ensues. The stability attained is actually a dynamic equilibrium, in which continuous change occurs yet relatively uniform conditions prevail. Any system in dynamic equilibrium tends to reach a steady state, a balance that resists outside forces of change. When such a system is disturbed, built-in regulatory devices respond to the departures to establish a new balance; such a process is one of feedback control.'*

From this scientific elaboration of 'homeostasis', we could easily understand that any ongoing illness is in a reset equilibrium of new parameters. Without adequate external intervention from minimum eating/drinking/sleeping to maximum surgical operations/life support, the illness cannot get recovered on its own. **It is often neglected that once a new equilibrium of illness status comes into shape, the 'homeostasis' will be an obstacle rather than assistance for any external intervention to bring the body to the original normal. That explains logically why the chronic illnesses usually take more time and repeated treatments to recover. More precisely the so called 'Self-healing' is somehow a 'foe' rather than 'friend' of acupuncture treatment for chronic conditions.**

Bearing this in mind, we consider it more appropriate to describe the 'homeostasis' phenomenon as 'life momentum' in an explicit and colloquial way as is the truth. Compared with the power of effective intervention, homeostasis or life momentum carries insignificant weight to reverse the acute conditions but constitutes a stubborn counterforce for recovery from the chronic.

Having cleared the meddling concept of 'Self-healing', we only have 3 remaining balloons (namely Placebo, Mind-body, and Pan-acupoints effects) to pierce to reveal the insight of acupuncture effect. Now let us look into two cases of treatments conducted in our clinic with tests of metabolic indices as objective proof, for which DIY Test Kits and purchased laboratory services for blood and urine tests will be applied as appropriate. A prototype as such can be easily upgraded in scales for evidence-based RCT research.

Case 1 - Patient:

Hyperuricemia, Chinese Male, 50;

Blood Uric Acid (BUA) mostly 430 -550 µmol, occasionally > 600 µmol, had Gout attack years ago;

Often feel dull aches in Great Toes, favorite diet including all purine rich food;

Voluntarily to see whether acupuncture could change the BUA in both directions.

Observations:

Four 1-hour sessions of acupuncture were performed in two modi operandi: 1) Positive treatment, to reduce BUA; 2) Combined treatment, a half hour negative treatment to increase BUA, followed by a half hour positive treatment to rewind the previous increment.

All positive treatments achieved the intended results of BUA reduction and reduced the probability of gout attack; and the negative treatments actualized the opposite and increased the probability, as shown in Table 1, Figures 2 & 3.

The set of acupoints for positive treatments are totally different from those of negative treatments, the selection of which are purely based on the same criteria of pulse reading. This constitutes solid evidence that the presumption of 'Pan-acupoints Effect' holds no water as claimed.

Since we have prior blanket authorisation of the patient to take actions against his expectations at any time as appropriate, we may exercise such discretion without the awareness of the patient. This ad hoc decision by the acupuncturist of making either positive or negative treatments disintegrated the possible influence of patient's psychological expectations from our treatments. More accurately Placebo Effect or Mind-body Effect are technically excluded from our treatments.

Case 2 - Patient:

Asian Male, 52, low eGFR (<90mL/min) for 10 months due to constant usage of pain killers for 2 months (04 - 06/2020), warned by his GP in 08/2021 to watch out for Stage 2 Chronic Kidney Deficiency.

Before the first acupuncture session, the Blood/Urine Test Reports of NHS were summarized in Table 2 with the indices of Serum Creatinine /eGFRcreat/Urine Creatinine marginally out of normal ranges.

Symptoms include tinnitus, giddiness, lumbago, neck stiffness, and hearing his own heart beats when lying down.

A believer of 'my believing of you is the foundation of your treatment effects', our opposite views on which led us to an agreement to the authorised tests of bidirectional treatments to be conducted without his awareness once the DIY test kit is available.

Table 1 Acupuncture Impact on BUA Levels

Date	BUA µmol/L	P - Gout	Direction of Treatments
14/11/2019	454	86%	Before Positive Treatment
14/11/2019	361	22%	After 1H Positive Treatment
16/11/2019	398	50%	Before Negative Treatment
16/11/2019	486	89%	After 30Min Negative Treatment
16/11/2019	367	18%	After 30Min Positive Treatment
20/11/2019	398	50%	Before Positive Treatment
20/11/2019	269	0%	After 1H Positive Treatment
21/11/2019	311	10%	Before Negative Treatment
21/11/2019	437	82%	After 30Min Negative Treatment
21/11/2019	356	12%	After 30Min Positive Treatment

Table 1

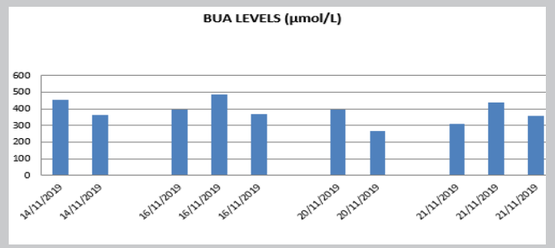


Figure 2: Changes along treatment directions

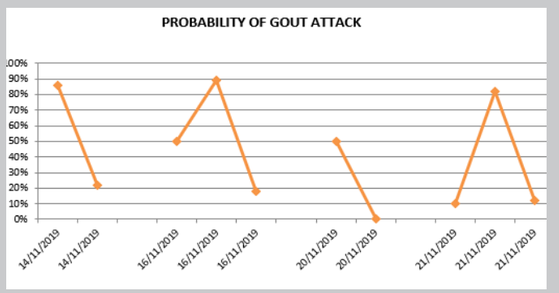


Figure 3: Changes along treatment directions

Observations:

Positive Acupuncture (increasing Urine Creatitine) twice a week from 04/09 to 13/10/2021, from which once per week onwards. Serum Creatinine levels were tested via NHS with results specified in Table 2.

Table 2 Acupuncture Impact on Serum Creatinine/ eGFR/ Urine Creatinine

Date	Serum Creatinine	eGFR	Urine Creatinine	Treatment
	64 - 104 umol/L	90 - 120 mL/min	3.54 - 24.6 mmol/L	
27/07/2021	104	72	2.7	Nil
25/08/2021	109	68		Nil
09/09/2021	103	78		After 2 sessions of positive acupuncture
14/10/2021	96	87	22	The next day after a mixed acupuncture

Table 2

All symptoms were tackled in the first session on 04/09/2021 and no recurrence was observed in Positive Acupuncture afterward.

DIY Test Kit became available on 18/09/2021. A positive treatment was conducted on the same day with Urine Creatinine tested before and after the session, the results of which as shown in the Figure 4 confirmed the alignment of effect with our intended direction.

Therefrom a daily follow up of early morning Urine Creatinine was recorded till 24/11/2021 as shown in Figure 5, in which the lower valley values were more frequently observed after 13/10/2021 when the time between treatments was extended from twice to once per week and the valley values before 13/10/2021 mostly occurred in the morning of appointment days (i.e. Wednesdays and Saturdays), confirming the need of treatment to maintain the momentum of effects.

Another tested treatment was conducted on 13/10/2021 combining a half hour negative treatment to reduce Urine Creatinine (from A to B as in Figure 6) plus a half hour positive treatment to increase the same (from B to C as in Figure 6).

The results shown in Figures 4 & 6 evidenced two points: (1) the so called Pan-acupoints Effect does not exist given the fact that the set of acupoints for positive treatment is totally different from the one of negative treatment and their outcomes are just opposite; (2) Placebo Effect and Mind-body Effect played negligible roles in our treatment.

It is worth of mentioning that one of his original symptoms – 'hearing his own heart beats' recurred during the negative treatment and subsequently disappeared after the positive treatment started.

When the patient was less busy November, he made a 24/5 Surveillance of his Urine Creatinine as shown in Figure 7, which indicated that his Urine Creatinine levels were less volatile around noon time every day when our treatments were usually conducted, meaning that there is minimal impact of his natural metabolic cycle on our treatments.

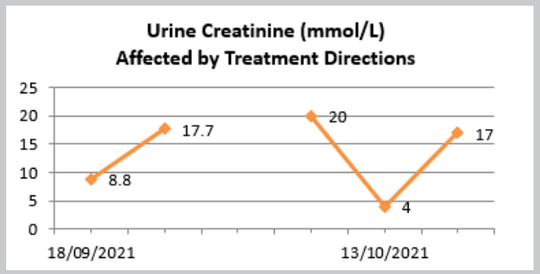


Figure 4

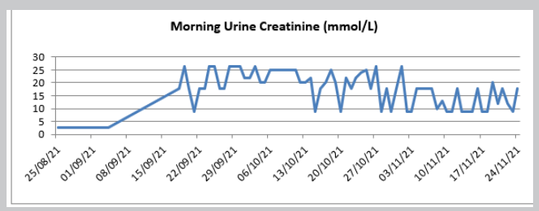


Figure 5

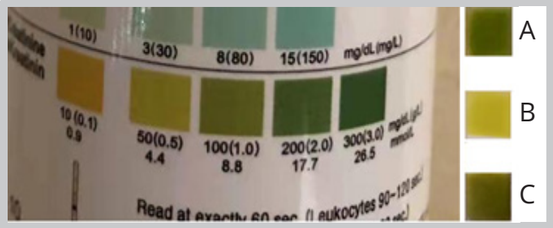


Figure 6

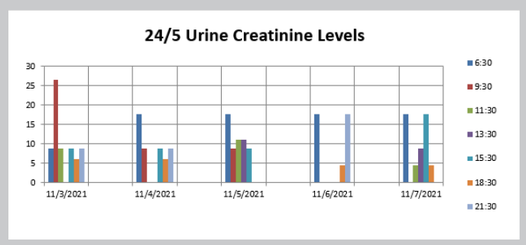


Figure 7

Summary:

Understanding of acupuncture techniques is based on different perspectives of individual practitioners. Advanced or sophisticated techniques are more RCT proof in terms of evidenced based medicine, but unfortunately rarely seen in the mainstream research paper so far. That is probably why acupuncture was so often misunderstood in the West as a media of Placebo or Mind-body Effects or nothing more than 'Self-healing'.

The concept of 'homeostasis', nicknamed as 'Self-healing', is an enemy of acupuncture because it protects the status quo while the acupuncture is to break it down. In fact healing cannot start from nowhere in homeostasis without being ignited or assisted by acupuncture.

It is indisputably clear that Placebo and Mind-body Effects are not as powerful as some claimed, our negative treatment would not have been so successful otherwise. Meanwhile natural fluctuations of metabolism are not comparable to the extent of change caused by acupuncture.

The presumed Pan-acupoints Effect melted down automatically when different sets of acupoints generated completely opposite effects to discernible levels.

After all balloons except Specific Acupoints Effect were removed, the multi-layer Balloon Theory, having been applicable to many other acupuncture methods and their relevant researches, leaves only one layer to our approach in particular.

Given the facts above, there is no doubt that our approach will satisfy the strict criteria of the Evident-based Acupuncture. In other words, patients' belief or expectations would not affect our treatments.

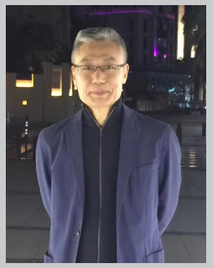
This article is by no means a research paper but an extended record of clinical observations to be shared with general public. Nevertheless it can be a reasonable lead to the scientists who have the access to public or private fund and are engaged in large scale clinical research. It may offer a thread of clue for relevant researchers to free themselves from individual limitations of knowledge, experience and expertise in acupuncture and thus to develop more convincing clinical research in the future.

Endnotes:

1. Placebo Effect means the contribution of an active psychological expectation of the patient along with the improving direction of the treatments.
2. Mind-body Effect means the contribution of both active and passive psychological expectations of the patient along with the improving direction of the treatments, while the latter is induced by the acupuncturist.
3. Self-healing is a loose colloquial description of Homeostasis in medical terms, which caused misleading impression to the general public that the body can heal itself without any external intervention.
4. Sham needles mean the artificial needles which touch the skin but not pierce it through, giving the patients in Control group a psychological confirmation that they are receiving the proper acupuncture treatment as expected.
5. Specific Acupoints Effect means the improvement contributed by the specific acupoint or set of acupoints in acupuncture treatment.
6. Sourced from www.britannica.com

By Jun Xu

Jun Xu



Jun Xu, a graduate of medicine from Shandong Medical University, started his career in 1986 in Beijing Medical University. Following Professor Chen Naiming, a state leading acupuncture maestro of the prestigious title - "Top Ten Most Renowned TCM Doctors in China", Jun came to the UK in 2000 and having practiced acupuncture for over 20 years in London, Jun is an acupuncture expert and dexterous in wide-range of techniques spearheaded with pulse-based acupuncture. What he is proud of most is the 2 new acupuncture first-aid methods that he created on the site of rescue, one on an international flight in 2007 and the other by roadside in 2018.

In his practice routine, he introduced "de-suggestive" and "reverse suggestive" approaches to maximize the acupuncture efficacy, i.e. eliminating completely the possible "placebo effect" that some people may claim to happen in treatment. While helping patients of metabolic diseases whose laboratory test indicators can be obtained, a combination of "forward treatment" and "backward treatment" has been designed and applied by Jun to highlight the specific effects of acupuncture for evident-based pilot research.

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臟腑經絡先後病脈證第一
Chapter 1: Zang Fu Jing Luo, Xian Hou, the Diseases and Pulse

Translated and annotated by Zan Yu Chen and Yu Gu

Clause 1

Question: *There is a saying: 'the good doctors treat anticipated potential disease(s) ', could Master explain what this means and how to achieve that?*

Master answers: To treat an anticipated potential disease: when a Liver disease happens, it will more likely affect and lead to the spleen functions disorder(s), thus the additional treatment principle of strengthening the spleen functions should be considered before spleen disorder occurs. However, when approaching the second half of each season, the nourishing spleen treatment is not necessary since the spleen can gain support from nature in its own seasonal time. The mediocre doctors could not foresee this transmission, hence only treating the liver where the disease is manifested.

Annotation: Prevention, to treat the disease before the symptoms manifest, is a profound principle of TCM. Most civilisations share similar values on this topic. Indeed, preventive treatment is challenging to achieve, but the benefits are enormous. In TCM, the Five Elements theory provides a different approach. For instance, the Wood element regulates the Earth. The (malfunctioned Wood will cause the defect of Earth. Thus foreseeing this aetiology and preventive measurement should be considered beforehand. However, in the seasonal strong Earth time, supporting Earth is unnecessary. The rules can be applied for the individual five elements, such as consolidating Water Element while treating abnormal Earth function, strengthening Metal Element while treating disrupted Fire function and so on. This practical method of TCM has great value today.

Undoubtedly, such a principle makes TCM truly holistic medicine. When applying it in acupuncture and herbal treatment, dietary therapy, even daily cooking, taking into consideration the relations of the target or aim will hugely enhance the effect of the formula and build a harmonised team.

To treat liver disease, sour taste tonifes the Liver, burnt and bitter substances support the Liver, and sweet taste harmonises the Liver. Sourness enters the Liver, burns the Heart, and sweetens Spleen. Diminishing Spleen compromises the Kidney, resulting in static water circulation, thereby Fire and excessive qi in the Heart, which consequently leads to the impairment of the Lung and immobile Lung qi. In the end, weak Metal lost control of Liver qi, hence excessive Liver qi. Therefore, Liver restoration is achievable when the Spleen is consolidated and supported. That is the beauty of treating Liver disorders through strengthening the Spleen. Of course, this method is more suitable for deficiency in the Liver rather than excessive Liver patterns.

Yellow Emperor's Internal Classic says: *"When addressing conditions of weakness and excessiveness, methods of strengthening or reduction should be applied accordingly – strengthen and tonify the deficiency and reduce the excessiveness."* This is a profound principle that should be applied to all other organs.

Annotation: The rule is clear and well known, but the application is not always easy. Saint Chinese Medicine (Zhang Zhongjing) tells us how to apply the true Chinese Medicine philosophy of holistic thinking in clinical practice via the interpretation of relations between different Zang and Fu according to the Five Element theory. Laozi said: 'My Dao is immensely simple to learn and undoubtedly easy to do, but nobody truly understands, and nothing is quite easy to do.' Indeed, this is commonly seen in life.

Clause 2

Five Element is immanent in the human body which growth is initiated by the Wind (Qi). However, Wind could give birth to or harm all lives on earth, just like water can float the boat as well as sink the boat. When the primordial live force flows freely throughout the five organs, the human is harmonised and feels contented. Unseasonal pathogens and evil wind striking the human body is often fatal.

Regardless of the diseases, there are three general conditions: firstly, pathogens attacking the body channels, and the Zang and Fu are affected, this is the internally induced diseases; secondly, external pathogens attack the skin surface causing obstruction and congestion in the limbs, body orifices and blood vessels, namely the externally triggered diseases; thirdly, other causes of diseases including excessively sexual activities (drains the Jing), injuries such as cut (by knife and sword) and insects and animal-related injuries. Those are all causes of diseases in general.

Annotation: This clause reflects the understanding of diseases using Chinese medicine: the strength of Zheng Qi is the real determiner. Yellow Emperor's Internal Classic said: 'When Zheng Qi is strong, nothing can damage the body. If diseases happen, Zheng Qi must be insufficient in the first place.' Hence strengthening Zheng Qi is the key to the treatment plan, which is particularly beneficial towards chronic illness. TCM takes both the external pathogens and internal balances of Zang and Fu as important factors in disease. Meanwhile, the deep connections between those factors have been perfectly explained using Yin Yang and the Five Elements theory.

A prudent and practical living style reduces the risk of evil wind attacking the body channels. When the evil wind is lodged in the channels, eliminate the pathogens before it penetrates internally into Zang and Fu. Apply Dao Yin, Tu Na, Acupuncture, Moxibustion and Gao Mo massage to avoid the blockages of Nine body orifice as soon as the heaviness and stiffness of limbs appear. Additionally, avoid crime, injuries from animal attacks, accidents and excessive sexual activities, and maintain dietary with moderate and balanced cold and hot food, bitter, sour, pungent and sweet flavours. No disease will form due to evil wind strikes Cou Li, only if there is no deficiency or impairment on the physical body. Cou refers to the place where Original Qi (Yuan Zhen) and Triple Warmer gather and connect, is where Qi and Blood to perfuse; Li refers to the texture and creases on the skin and Zang Fu.

Annotation: To achieve and maintain health conditions, the fundamental principle is to remain the entirety of a human being balanced and harmonised. Living in harmony enables people to cope with the environmental changes well and achieve a prompt recovery from injuries and illness. The physical balance is coherent with spiritual balance, and vice versa. Generally speaking, the universal cure for health conditions is to regain balance and harmony by treating internal issues. Abnormal presence on the pulse and tongue, signs and symptoms are the reflections of the state of internal imbalance. Understanding the meaning of those diagnostic tools is the first step of treatment. Indeed, TCM focus on the inner balanced state of the person.

Clause 3

Question: *Could Master explains the indication of the complexion of a patient?*

Master answers: The blue colour on the nose indicates the patient is suffering from abdominal pain. If combined with a cold feeling, then it is a severe or fatal condition. The dark colour on the nose suggests the condition of water retention. Whereas a yellow colour means the cold stagnates in the chest; white colour indicates blood loss. If blood loss is accompanied with the alternative slight red and normal colour on the nose indicates severe body conditions. Lacklustre and widely opened eyes suggest convulsions which is a critical situation.

In addition, the blue colour implies pain, black is the evidence of exhaustion, red is wind, yellow is constipation, light and bright colours indicate fluid retention.

Clause 4

Master said: A quiet patient who exclaims with pain indicates bone and joint diseases; vague and mumbled speech and voice indicate diaphragm and heart region problems; a softly-spoken patient with a low pitched voice suggests the presence of headache.

Clause 5

Master said: Breathing with the assistance of moving up the shoulders indicate the obstruction in the chest and heart region; breathing with upraising qi in the chest denotes cough; breathlessness with mouth open indicates Fei Wei and lung obstructed with mucus and phlegm.

Annotation: Fei Wei, Lung Atrophy, is a lung disease due to chronic cough, marked by atrophy of the lung with shortness of breath and expectoration.

Clause 6

Master said: Rapid inhalation indicates the excessiveness in the Middle Warmer which could be cured with the purgative method. Whereas the treatment is more complicated if the Middle Warmer is insufficient. Rapid shallow inhalation indicates the pathogen is in the Upper Warmer, whilst deep and long inhalation with breathlessness suggests the illness in the Lower Warmer, and the treatment for both conditions is very difficult. If a patient's whole body is shaking while breathing, the condition has a poor prognosis.

Annotation: From the characteristics of breath, extracting the pathology and prognosis of a disease is a common practice in TCM. There is an idiom: One falling leaf indicates the coming of autumn.

Clause 7

Master said: The Cun Kou pulse (radial artery on the wrist) could indicate the characteristics of the individual Zang at its peak time. So does skin colour. The four seasons have four different dominant colours. For

instance, at the liver time, the dominant colour should be cyan. If the colour is white rather than cyan at the liver time, suggesting the pulse and colour of other Zang, and the relevant illness of the liver and the associated Zang.

Annotation: Spring is the liver time, with cyan colour and taut (Xian) pulse manifestation. Summer is the heart time, with the manifestation of red colour and hook (Gou) pulse. Chang Xia is the spleen time, with yellow colour manifestation and moderate and gentle (Dai) pulse. Autumn is the lung time with the manifestation of white colour and feather (Mao) pulse. Winter is kidney time with black colour manifestation and a deep and content (Shi) pulse. Those phenomena are special codes of nature integrated into the human, which reflects the body conditions as well. Attention should be given if the colour and pulse do not match with the Zang time. E.g. when a patient shows white colour in spring, the liver should be checked first. Besides, excessive lung condition(s), possible heart Qi weakness should also be considered for a comprehensive diagnostic analysis.

Clause 8

Question: *There is a time, that the Qi (seasonal climatic qi) comes early or late, or the Qi (seasonal climatic qi) overstays or is overpowering. What does this mean?*

Master answers: From the midnight of Jia Zi day, after the winter solstice, it is Shao Yang time when Yang starts to rise, and it gets warmer. If the weather becomes warm before Jia Zi day, that is the Qi (seasonal climatic qi) coming early (when it shouldn't); if the weather does not get warmer after Jia Zi day, that means the delay of Qi (does not come when it should be); if it is still very cold after Jia Zi day, it implies the overstayed Qi (when it should be gone); if the weather gets hot like summer right after Jia Zi day, that is the overpowering Qi.

Clause 9

Master said: A floating pulse in Qian (distal position of radial artery pulse) indicates an exterior disease; a floating pulse in Hou (proximal position of radial artery pulse) suggests the internal disease with the symptoms of lower back pain, stiff neck and walking abnormalities, short of breath and exhaustion.

Annotation: In this paragraph, the terms 'front' (Qian) and 'back' (Hou) could be confusing, since they refer to both time or location in Chinese.

Hypothesis 1. The definition of Qian and Hou is related to time: a floating pulse at the initial stage of a disease indicates the exterior patterns. If a floating pulse appears later than the exterior symptoms, the internal condition should be considered. The symptoms of painful back, stiff neck, walking abnormalities, shortness of breath and exhaustion could be the manifestation of severe depletion of the Qi and Jing resulting from the treatment of expelling or attacking methods for initial exterior patterns.

Hypothesis 2. The definition of Qian and Hou is associated with pulse location as Cun and Chi respectively. A floating Cun pulse indicates the exterior syndrome(s), as the Cun pulse presents the upper part of the body and superficial resistance. A floating Chi pulse indicates the interior syndrome since the Chi pulse implies the lower part of the body and internal issues. If the Chi pulse is incompatible with Cun and Guan pulses as a floating position, the symptoms must be severe and urgent, because the interior Qi or the root of the body is not settled and on the edge of exhaustion.

Generally speaking, the floating pulse belongs to the Yang character. Therefore, when it appears in a Yang location or Yang time, the patient's condition is less severe, compared to in Yin location or Yin time. This is an overall principle of TCM, so-called Shun (match) Ni (discord), that applies to all similar conditions.

Clause 10

Question: *Classic script said: Jue Yang works alone, what does that mean?*

Master said: This is Yang without Yin, so named Jue Yang.

Annotation: Jue is not a daily language and its precise meaning remains uncertain. The primary meaning of Jue is stone. Its extended meaning is hard and cold. Yi Sheng gave the word more connotation in this section – the solitary Yang is Jue Yang, where Jue means extreme and maximum.

Clause 11

Question: *Cun pulse is sinking (Chen), large (da) and slippery (Hua). Sinking indicates excessiveness. Slipperiness suggests the fullness of Xie qi. The excessive qi combined with blood penetrating and obstructing in Zang organs is fatal, whereas it is relatively easy to treat if this happens in Fu organs. Could Master please explain Cu Jue (sudden syncope)?*

Master answers: The blue-coloured lips accompanied with cold body temperature indicate that Cu Jue is in Zang and critical. Generally, good feeling and spontaneous sweating suggest that the pathology is in Fu with a good chance of healing.

Annotation: Cu Jue (sudden syncope) in TCM could be caused by deficiency of Qi Blood Yin Yang or excessiveness of cold, heat or other pathogens. The location of the extreme disharmony could be in Zang or Fu, hence the treatment and prognosis of each condition vary. The pulse review provides practical information on revealing the qi flow and engagement in clinical practice.

Clause 12

Question: *The exhausted pulse and disease in Zang, then the prognosis is poor, while the prognosis is good if the disease is in Fu. How should we understand this?*

Master answers: This is a common rule applying to majorities of diseases, not only to one condition. For instance, Jin Yin Chuang (the contagious suppurative infection on the body surface with discharges), spreading from the infected area toward the direction of limbs suggests the disease is treatable with a good prognosis. If the infection spreads from the limbs towards the original infected area indicating the condition is deteriorating with a poor prognosis. A disease is easier to treat if it is in the exterior. Otherwise, it is difficult to treat if the disease penetrates deeply and internally.

Clause 13

Question: *Could Master explain the eighteen types of Yang diseases, please?*

Master: Headache, spasm pain on neck, back, spine, arms and feet.

Question: *Could Master explain the eighteen types of Yin diseases, please?*

Master: Cough, uprising Qi, asthma, belching, throat, borborygmi, bloating, pain in the heart region and spasm. Each of the five organs has eighteen types of diseases, in total ninety types of diseases. A person has six Wei, each Wei (weakness) has 18 types of diseases, in total a hundred and eight types of diseases. Fives exhaustions, seven depletions, six extremes, thirty-six gynaecological diseases are not inclusive.

Annotation: Some ancient disease names are no longer in use, the others are still seen in literature today. A disease in the Yang part of the body, such as head, neck, waist, spine, arm and foot, are classified as Yang disease. In comparison, a disease located internally is Yin disease.

Qing (light) pathogens stay superiorly, Zhuo (heavy) pathogens sited in the lower part of the body; Big pathogen strikes superficially, Small pathogen attacks internally. The food-related pathogens, referring to the accumulated food stagnation, are taken in through the mouth.

Annotation: The rule of 'like for like' is commonly used in TCM. Qing pathogens refer to light weighted pathogens, such as heat, dryness and wind, which more likely attack superiorly. In contrast, heavy weighted pathogens and turbidity, such as dampness, cold and water more likely to attack inferiorly in the body. Similarly, the lower part of the body illness suggests the aetiology of the disease might be associated with turbidities and heavy pathogens. Then the aetiology characters should be considered when planning the treatment principles besides the modern medical diagnosis.

In this clause, the meanings of 'Big pathogen' and 'Small pathogen' are confusing. The wording of big and small is interpreted as the strength of the pathogen. When 'big' strong pathogens strike, Zheng Qi will form a defence line. Thus the engagement of Zheng Qi and pathogen(s) is at the surface of the body, the so-called 'big pathogen strikes the surface'. If the pathogen is 'small', it is difficult for the body system to detect the danger. Pathogen(s) cripple the body, bypassing the superficial defensive barrier, and the battlefield of Zheng Qi and pathogens would be internal. Thus 'small pathogen strikes the internals'.

The way how Five Pathogens attack the body has their patterns. Wind attacks the front, cold attacks in the late afternoon, damp attacks inferiorly, fog attacks superiorly. Wind causes the floating pulse, cold provokes the tense pulse. Fog impairs the skin and Cou, damp flows around joints, food depletes the spleen and stomach, severe cold harms Jing (meridians), severe hot injures Luo.

Annotation: As Yi Sheng said, it is sensible and easy to understand that pathogens attack the body with their characters. Those theories were summarised and concluded from observation of nature and described in a most simple and basic way. In the clinic, doctors shall apply this simplicity into their practice by trusting the perceptual connotation, which is the initial and most direct way to get information rather than overthinking. Lao Zi said: 'my words are so easy to understand and follow, but nobody understands it and does it.' This over 2500 years old well-known aphorism is still relevant today. It reminds us of the importance of awareness besides thinking. Always come back to the basic rules and be mindful, which offers an insight into the origins of diseases and even life.

Clause 14

Question: *The prioritised treatment principle on treating exterior and interior syndromes. Could Master explain it in detail?*

Master answers: for a disease, the purgative treatment caused continuous diarrhoea combined with aches and pains all over the body, treat the onset interior condition with priority; If aches and pains over the body are the main issues with normal urination and excrement, then the priority is to treat the exterior syndrome.

Annotation: Dealing with life is always challenging. To avoid or minimise mistakes, decision making is fundamental in clinical practice. TCM scholars said decision making is like the tread on thin ice. Treating the external or internal syndrome is always a most common question. Besides the basic rules, Yi Sheng continued to teach us: when exterior patterns are acute, expel the external pathogens if the body can form enough Zheng Qi. Otherwise, saving the internal condition is the priority if it is on the edge of collapse. Up until the internal condition gets better, the treatment of expelling external pathogens should be carried on again.

Often, both internal and external conditions should be treated. With careful consideration and fine-tuned modification of medicine, an experienced doctor can make tailored formulas for complicated conditions.

Clause 15

A patient with long-term illness suffers from acute condition(s), the newly developed condition(s) should be treated with a priority and followed by treating the chronic illness afterwards.

Annotation: Acute disease is normally caused by the invasion of an external pathogen(s), hence requiring urgent care and treatment on the newly-developed condition. Otherwise, external pathogen(s) may sink in and invade internal Zang and Fu and consume more valuable Qi, blood, Yin and Yang, making the treatment more challenging.

This rule had been repetitively emphasised in Shang Han Lun by Yi Sheng. When a deep connection between chronic and acute diseases presents, it is necessary to treat both conditions together. Even though, the acute disease should always be treated with priority if there is a clash of interest.

Clause 16

Master said: an illness or disease of each Five Zang's disease can be cured if the Zang gets its 'likes'. In contrast, the illness or disease of each Five Zang deteriorates if the Zang has its 'dislikes'. A sudden craving for a certain food that the patient doesn't eat normally may induce a body fever since the sudden change in food choices is associated with the pathogen.

Annotation: The great advantage of the five elements system is giving us direct, practical, and effective cognition of anything and everything of the universe. Such a vast connective network enables us to foresee the transformation of the diseases. When an organ gets support from its elemental factor, the organ is wining over the disease and getting healed. But the organ condition will decline or even begin to fall ill if it struggles with the unsupportive, even detrimental elemental factor.

Yellow Emperor's Internal Classic, Chapter the 22nd - Zang Qi in Timing:

Each Zang has an associated colour and particular beneficial taste. The details are below: Liver - green colour and sweet food such as rice, beef, date and kui (chingma abutilon) etc; Heart - red colour and sour food, monk bean, dog meat, plum and Jiu (Chinese chives) etc; Lung – white colour and bitter taste including wheat, lamb, apricot, Xie (macrostemon) etc; Spleen – yellow and salty food such as soya bean, pork, chestnut and Huo (pea shoots) etc. Kidney – black colour and pungent food including yellow grain, chicken, peach, spring onion etc.

In Chapter the 23rd - Xuan Ming Wu Qi:

The five kinds of intolerance: the heart is intolerant of heat, the lung hates cold, the liver is averse to wind, the spleen dislikes damp and the kidney has an aversion to dryness.

The above scriptures summarised the theory of Five-Zang's preferences and dislike. Even though this theory was described differently in other chapters of the Yellow Emperor's Classic, the theory behind it is the same.

Clause 17

Zang diseases should be treated using the attacking method if they present the accumulation of physical or tangible subjects in the body. Treating the thirsty by Zhu Ling Tang is a good example. This treatment principle should apply to all such conditions.

Annotation: Zang stores Jing Qi without leakage. The more Jing Qi is stored, the better the Zang function is. When there is the accumulation of pathogen(s) fulfilled Zang, the treatment of the attacking method should be applied with a consideration of the Zang's nature and characters. When treating Zang diseases using the attacking method, the target should be the tangible material rather than the Zang itself to minimise the depletion of Zang.

To help understand this rule, the Master gave an example of Zhu Ling Tang.

In the Golden Chamber Synopsis, Zhu Ling Tang is used to treat the symptoms of floating pulse accompanied with fever, thirst, and discomfort urination. In Shang Han Lun, the symptoms also include irritation, insomnia, thirst, nausea and cough. The cause of the above symptoms is Shao Yin heat that should be eliminated by attacking methods.

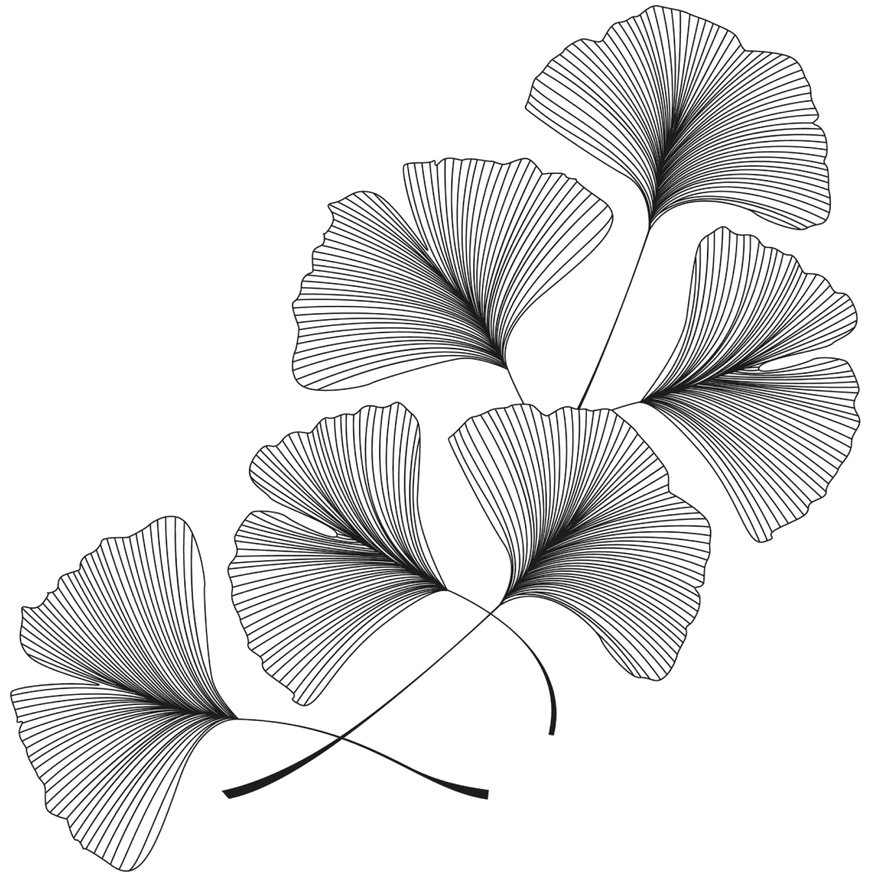
However, the Heart and the Kidney, the hand and foot Shao Yin, are Zangs that should not be attacked. The discomfort urination indicates the combination of water and heat. Zhu Ling Tang induces urination and clears the heat, thereby eliminating Shao Yang heat without consuming Jing in Zang.

By Zan Yu Chen and Yu Gu

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Huo Xiang Zheng Qi San: First recorded in Tai Ping Hui Min He Ji Ju Fang

From the Formularies of the Bureau of People's Welfare Pharmacies

By Zan Yu Chen & Xiao Ying Peng

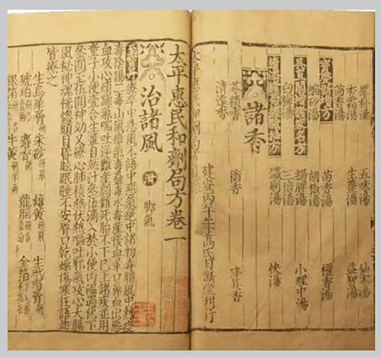
"Huo Xiang Zheng Qi San is used to treat Shang Han, headache, body fever and intolerant cold, cough and asthma, five kinds of exhaustion and seven kinds of injuries, eight kinds of windy phlegm, five kinds of hiccups, abdominal cold and pain, nausea and vomiting, diarrhoea, borborygmi, seasonal pandemics, malaria, swollen, prenatal and postpartum aches and pain, infantile malnutrition.

Huo Xiang Zheng Qi San is used to treat exterior wind and cold attacking with interior dampness stagnation.

Da Fu Pi (Pericarpium Arecae Catechu) 30g
Bai Zhi (Radix Angelicae Dahuricae) 30g
Zi Su Ye (Folium Perillae Frutescentis) 30g
Fu Ling (Sclerotium Poriae Cocos) 30g
Ban Xia Qu (Massa Medica Fermentata) 60g
Bai Zhu (Rhizoma Atractylodis Macrocephalae) 60g
Chen Pi (Pericarpium Citri Reticulatae) 60g
Hou Po (Cortex Magnoliae Officinalis) 60g
Jie Geng (Radix Platycodi Grandiflori) 60g
Huo Xiang (Herba Agastaches seu Pogostemi) 90g
Zhi Gan Cao (Radix Glycyrrhizae Uralensis) 75g

Grind all the herbs listed above together to powder and have them ready to be distributed. Take 6g each time, add about 250ml water, boil with 3 slices of fresh ginger and 1 piece of jujube date, reduce liquid to 170ml, and drink it warm.

For inducing the perspiration, reboil the same powder in the same way and drink together, also covering the body with a duvet."



Huo Xiang Zheng Qi San is a formula commonly used in humid and damp environments, where the damp is a major cause of the various symptoms. The original recorded words described vast ranges of the symptoms and diseases that the formula could be used to treat, from the cold, infections and severe internal exhaustion diseases, infant and adults.

Of course, there is no panacea. But why can the formula be used to treat such a wide range of problems? The reason is that all the symptoms have the same Zheng (证) -- exterior wind and cold attacking with interior dampness stagnation. This so-called Zheng in TCM is normally translated into Symptoms-complex or Syndrome. As a special term of TCM, it includes the symptoms, cause, mechanism, location and nature of the disease, as well as the condition of the struggle between the invading pathogenic factors and body resistance. The Symptoms are an obvious sign of the Zheng, but very often are not the real cause of the problem, even not the reallocation of the conflict. When we apply the treatment of herbs and acupuncture, trying to avoid being misled by the symptoms is a very important training for TCM practitioners.

Back to the formula, as the damp pathogen can attack Qi's transforming, slow down the systems, especially the Middle Warmer, the groups of the symptoms could be developed to:

1. Fatigue, feeling down, poor skin condition, heavy limbs, etc, due to the lack of the Qi supply that is impaired by a damp pathogen. 2.Nausea,vomiting,hiccups,diarrhoea,dysentery,sluggish bowel movement, etc, due to the stagnancy of the digestion and transportation system caused by a damp pathogen. 3. Headaches, migraine, fever, sinus, hay fever, etc, due to the acute conflict between the Wei Qi and external damp pathogen.

The list could be longer, but the characteristics of the damp will give them a very clear mark and that helps TCM distinguish them easily. For instance, feeling heavy in the body like moving in the water, dull colour like the skin has been soaked in the muddy water, discharges and excrement smell like damp fermenting in the septic tank, body fever not very high but on and off, headache not too painful but heavy and dizzy like travel on the sea. Most of all, the pulse is soft like thread soaking in water, the tongue is covered by a slimy and greasy coat.

When we see the signs like those, we can consider applying Huo Xiang Zheng Qi San.

The formula is beautifully thought through. Huo Xiang in high dose, helped by Bai Zhi and Zi Su Ye, expels the external damp pathogen and stimulates the defence Qi with the aromatic property. They also resolve the internal dampness and regulate the flow of the Qi eliminating the sluggishness.

When there is dampness, there always is weakness. To support the Qi of the Middle Warm to process the stagnancy is the real long-term solution. Fu Ling, Bai Zhu, Gan Cao, Ban Xia Qu, Chen Pi work together to strongly invigorate the Qi of the Middle Warm and to break down stagnancies caused by food, dampness and phlegm. Those herbs give the Huo Xiang, Zi Su Ye and Bai Zhi a continuous supply of the Qi and blood for battling against pathogens.







Jie Geng goes to the Upper Warmer, Hou Po and Da Fu Pi focus on the Middle and Lower Warmer, promote and regulate the flow of the Qi in the whole body, rebuild a dynamic system. Hou Po and Da Fu Pi also activate the bowel and bladder work, guide the way to evacuate the waste and pathogen out of the body.

There is a saying by famous TCM master hundreds of years ago, using herbs is just like commanding a battle. This is one of the good samples.

Ban Xia Qu is not easy to get but Ban Xia can substitute it - normally works well if the patient is not suffering from bad Yin impairment. Da Fu Pi is not allowed in Britain, but Cao Dou Kou will just do an equally good job.

By Zan Yu Chen & Xiao Ying Peng

Xiao Ying Peng



Dr Xiaoying Peng was awarded her master's degree of Medicine at the Nanjing University of Chinese Medicine for the programme of Chinese Herbal Prescription in June 2021. She has achieved her Diplomas for Chinese Herbal Prescription, Acupuncture and Tuina Therapy in 2005, 2017 and 2015 respectively at Shulan College of Chinese medicine in the UK. Her 17 years of clinical working experience in the UK as a Chinese Medicine Practitioner has won a good reputation within the industry. Dr Peng joined the FTCMP in 2018 and was newly elected as a director on the FTCMP Board of Directors in 2021. She has also been of the ATCM since 2005.

Traditional Chinese Medicine Therapy Whilst Travelling

The Traditional Chinese Medicine Contingency Plan When Travelling, Including Necessary Medicines Recommended

By Jie Chen Zhou

Last year I was temporarily transferred from the clinic in a hospital to Beijing 2022 Olympic Organising Committee. In mid-to-late August of this year, just during the opening ceremony of the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games, I was with a five-person team to take part in The Tokyo 2020 Games Experience Programme, organised by International Olympic Committee.

The weather is different between Tokyo and Beijing after the start of autumn. It was boiling hot, with a maximum temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit. Due to the showers, the climate in Tokyo as a whole was muggy. When our bodies adapt to the climate in the places of residence, it is much easier to get sick due to temperature changes and different foods.

Thanks to many years of clinical experience, I have summarised and shared Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) contingency plans which are beneficial to many patients, my relatives and friends. I also developed the TCM contingency plan for our team this time. Some of my friends in other fields, inspired by the unique simple characteristics, convenience, inexpensiveness and effectiveness of TCM, have asked me to make it public so that they can be prepared for travelling abroad in the future. Therefore, with this special opportunity, I willingly write it down and hopefully this TCM therapy can be beneficial to people with a busy life in modern times.

The common travel-related illness includes common cold, gastrointestinal disorder, skin problems, acute insomnia and women's menstrual problems. But we don't need to be panic - I suggest that people prepare an emergency treatment kit containing Chinese medicines, scraping plates (Gua Sha Scraping Board), acupuncture press needles, Chinese medicinal herbs sachets, ear press seeds acupuncture, etc. Meanwhile, it is necessary to check the temperature and humidity of destinations in advance and to prepare to clothe accordingly to reduce the possibility of getting sick.

Common Cold

Due to the difference in climates between our residence and destination, we could easily catch a common cold. In TCM theory, we classify the common cold into several types, which need to be dealt with in different treatments.

1.1 Common Cold due to Wind-Cold

The main symptoms are nasal congestion, feeling cold or fever, body pain, tightening in the neck, sometimes accompanied by diarrhoea. It is not always that the body temperature goes up. It is recommended to take the GanMao QingRe Keli regularly as instructed, at the same time, using the scraping plate to scrape down the spine and erector spine skin. It is recommended the make the skin slightly red. Use some massage oil as lubrication on the skin before scraping, it could improve blood circulation and alleviate muscles tension. After scraping, some red dots may appear on the skin, these marks are temporary and will fade away a few days later.

1.2 Common Cold due to Wind-Heat

It is generally with a stuffy nose or a yellow runny nose, dry throat, sweating, headache, sore throat, cough with yellow or white phlegm. The body temperature is often above 38.5℃ (101.3℉) or higher. It is recommended to take the LianHua QingWen capsule following the medicine's instruction. If one is with severe headache, it is better to use hot green tea to dissolve ChuanXiong ChaTiao Keli. Meanwhile, scraping down the skin from elbow stripes to wrist, placing pressing needles on Yuji Point (LU10), Kong Zui Point (LU6), Quchi Point (LI11) to eliminate lung heat.

1.3 Common Cold due to Summer Heat-Dampness

The heat and humidity of the summer months can cause Summer cold symptoms. It is mainly with headache, being woozy, mild nausea, vomiting, sweating and fatigue. HuoXiang ZhengQi capsule or pills can induce diaphoresis and clear away summer-heat, to resolve damp and regulate the function of the spleen and stomach. Do not use if pregnant, breastfeeding or taking other medications. Avoid using HuoXiang ZhengQi Shui with cephalosporin, metronidazole file and other antibiotics.

1.4 Common Cold due to Yang Deficiency

This type is common in physically weak people. After long exposure to cold or heavy sweating by taking antipyretic analgesics, one may have symptoms such as fatigue, feeling cold, loss of appetite, body pain or soreness and diarrhoea. The first thing to do is to keep your body warm and then to use moxibustion on DaZhui point (DU14), QuChi Point (LI11), MingMen Point (DU4), ZuSanli Point (ST36), which can stimulate yang energy. Pay attention to avoid getting burned in the process and make sure each point applies within five minutes.

Modern people have three misconceptions about the care of exogenous diseases. Firstly, drink more water when having a cold. In the clinic, we can see many people drink a lot of water after the common cold, resulting in a stubborn cough, asthma, etc. In Han Dynasty, the famous Chinese physician wrote about this situation in the Treatise on Cold Damage. If someone catches a cold without resolving the exterior pathogen, presenting nausea, cough, fever, diarrhoea, asthma, thirst or abdominal bloating, that would be water-rheum collecting below the heart. To avoid this situation, we should follow the principle that "drink when feeling thirsty, drink warm water slowly, just to quench thirst".

Secondly, dietary restriction while taking medicine. The majority of the modern diet is based on meat, eggs, milk, fruit and spicy spices. It is better to keep dietary restrictions while taking Chinese medicine. If not, it might incur the negative effect of endangering the patient's health condition or trigger possible side effects. For patients, light and blended foods are strongly recommended.

Thirdly, working while being ill. Suffering from a cold or flu, at the same time staying up late to work is very harmful to the body. It does not only have a negative impact on self-healing but also leads to new diseases.

Recently, with the global epidemic of coronavirus disease (COVID-19), China has made big progress in the control and prevention of the pandemic. TCM has played a key role in the whole process. In TCM theory, the pandemic is caused by "Pestilence Pathogen". We have made traditional Chinese herbal sachets for external use, which can be attached to the bedsides, bags or put into private cars, to improve the immunity of the upper respiratory tract through the aroma of the herbs. The recommended sachet formula is lonicera, forsythia, mint, Acorus, Agastache, rhizome, eupatorium, prunella, Lepidium, lotus leaf, (忍冬、连翘、薄荷、菖蒲、藿香、根茎、紫草、夏枯草、海参、荷叶) each for 3 grams, borneol for 0.3 gram.

2. Gastrointestinal Disorder

No matter if travelling for business or tourism, because of different eating habits, it is common that people suffer from travel-associated constipation, indigestion, diarrhoea, etc. But for those unexplained abdominal pain or vomiting and serious diarrhoea, accompanied by fever, it is necessary to see a doctor. Pregnant or breastfeeding women should consult their health care provider before taking any medicine.

2.1 Indigestion

As a result of overeating, having a lot of cold water or food, consuming too much high-calories or spicy food, symptoms may appear such as abdominal cramping and pain, constipation, diarrhoea, bloating, belching sour, foul-tasting fluid, etc. JiaWei BaoHe Wan could be strongly recommended, which can stimulate digestion, remove food stasis and regulate stomach function. While taking the medicine, placing pressing needles on Neiting Point (ST44), Sanjian Point (LI3), Gongsun Point (SP4) could help with digestion and removing food stagnation.

2.2 Constipation

DangGui LongHui Wan can be used to treat constipation with dizziness, deafness, rib pain, bitterness in the mouth or toothache. If constipation with mouth sores, swollen gums, sore throat, thirst, ZhiZi JinHua Wan is recommended. For those people who have habitual constipation, MaRen RunChang Wan is suggested. Of course, pressing Zhigou point (TH6) is suitable for improving intestinal function.

2.3 Diarrhea

Due to overeating or exposure to cold, acute diarrhoea may occur. If diarrhoea is with anal burning, sweating and feeling hotter than usual, Huang Lian Su Tablets can be taken to clear damp-heat and eliminate toxic heat. When feeling cold in the abdomen and wanting to drink hot water more than usual, it is suggested to have moxibustion on Zhongwan point (CV12), Zusanli Point (ST36), Taibai Point (SP3). Here, I must strongly emphasise that going to see a doctor when diarrhoea continued without relief, accompanied by nausea, vomiting, fever and other symptoms.

2.4 Acute Insomnia

Travel-associated insomnia can be relieved by listening to some pieces of relaxing music, applying deep pressure on the medial midline of the lower leg and the medial midline of the lower arm to massage tense muscles.

2.5 Irregular Menstruation

Mental tension, lack of sleep, differences in diet, travel fatigue and other factors, can cause period pain or postponed menstruation. Massaging Sanyinjiao Point (SP6) can enrich blood circulation and improve sleep quality. However, this point is prohibited for using during pregnancy.

2.6 Skin Problems

The most common skin problems during travel are eczema, hives, facial furuncle and so on. It is recommended to apply to scrape at Quchi Point (LI11) and Xuehai Point (SP10), together with Bactroban for

external use. In addition, get anti-allergic medicine and sunscreen cream in advance. If going to a place such as a lush meadow or jungle, it is necessary to take personal care to reduce the exposure of skin to avoid a tick bite. After being bitten by a tick, the skin can appear red in some parts and bleed. If there is a large area of aglow and it may be a haemorrhage, with a high fever, headache or fatigue. If so, it is recommended you see a doctor.

Conclusion

The statement above is only a simple framework of contingency plans. It is aimed to be convenient, safe and effective, especially for those who haven't learned any TCM before. For those acupuncture points recommended, it doesn't have to be 100% accurate, knowing the general location through searching on the internet, will produce good results.

Of course, if readers have more in-depth knowledge of TCM theory, you can add more under my framework. I would also like to encourage you to learn more about Chinese medicine. In the future, draw up a Chinese medicine contingency plan of long-distance travelling for your family to suit their own needs. In addition, during the COVID-19 pandemic, it is still the most important thing to keep your protective equipment and sanitize your hands.

By Jie Chen Zhou

Jie Chen Zhou



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