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Headache *and* TCM Treatments 中醫治療—頭痛

Shang-May Chen, M.S., L.Ac.

Headache (H/A) is a very common clinical symptom. Up to 76% of people will experience H/A at least once in their lifetime. Headache can be primary disorders according to western medical diagnosis (ex. migraine, cluster, or tension H/A) as well as secondary associated with head trauma, tumor, fever, hypertension, sinusitis, toothache, eye disorders, temporomandibular joint pain (TMJ), cervical injuries, menses or other diseases. For more accurate diagnosis, not only we have to ask patients about the frequency, duration, location, quality of the pain, and severity of the headache, but also factors make symptoms better or worse, and other necessary western medical checkups, like CBC, CSF exam, ocular test, X-rays, MRI, and CT scan. One of

common conventional western medical treatments of H/A is prescribing analgesics pain relievers to patients, like NSAIDs.

Traditional Chinese Medicine gives different perspectives on headache based on the detailed background medical information from patients and with unique ways of TCM differentiations. With Eight Principles, *Zhang Fu* theories in TCM, headache can be caused from internal or external origins at different time. We need to apply different acupuncture and herbal treatments for different situation. Here we have some common TCM pathologies and treatments of headache based on the clinical experiences. Suggestions of treatment in this article can



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be modified by professional TCM practitioners based on patients' symptoms.

Internal Origins

A. Liver Yang Hyperactive 肝陽上亢

Headache is caused by *Liver Qi* congestion due to emotional distress, later causing internal fire stuck in the head and upper body area. All wind and dizziness situations are associated with *Liver*. People will have H/A with dizziness on the temporal, vertex, unilateral or both sides of the head, restless, irritability, light sleep, hypochondriac discomfort, red face, bitter taste, red tongue with yellow fur, or dry fur.

Treatment principles: Subdue *liver yang*, clear heat, and calm spirit.

Acupuncture points: Du 20, GB 20, GB 8, GB5, GB 40, GB 43, Liv 2, Liv 3, SJ 5.

Formula: Tian Ma Gou Teng Yin (Gastrodia & Uncaria Combination) 天麻鉤藤飲

Modification:

■ Jia Wei Xiao Yao San (Bupleurum & Peony Formula) 加味道遙散, Chai Hu Shu Gan Yin (Bupleurum & Cyperus) 柴胡疏肝飲: for severe H/A due to stress, or menstrual or hormonal related H/A, hypochondriac pain, yellow scanty urine.

■ Suan Zao Ren 酸棗仁, Ye Jiao Teng 夜交藤, He Huan Pi 合歡皮, Yuan Zhi 遠志: for sleep disorders, stress and anxiety.

B. Qi and Blood Deficiency 氣血虛

When *Spleen Qi* is not nourishing the head, there is no clear *Yang Qi* rise to the

brain and upper body. People experience mild, empty, light-headed headache, sometimes comes and goes, cold body constitution, fatigue, shortness of breath, poor appetite. When *Blood* is not enough to nourish the head causing H/A, it's easy to have dull, mild dizziness, sometimes with palpitation and insomnia, fatigue, pale face, and thready thin pulse.

Treatment principles: Tonify *Qi* and *Blood*, Rise Clear *Yang Qi*.

Acupuncture points: Du 20, UB20, Ren 4, Ren 6, LI4, ST36, SP 6. Moxa on Ren 4, 6, and ST36.

Formula: Ba Zhen Tang (Dang Gui & Ginseng Eight Combination) 八珍湯, Bu Zhong Yi Qi Tang (Ginseng & Astragalus Combination) 補中益氣湯

Modification:

■ Huang Qi 黃耆, Rou Gui 肉桂: promote *Yang Qi* in people who are cold deficient type body, cold hands and feet, aversion to cold, purple blue lips, postpartum or post-operative hemorrhage with anemia, severe fatigue.

■ Shan Zhu Yu 山茱萸, Gou Qi Zi 枸杞子, Du Zhong 杜仲, Shan Yao 山藥, Tu Si Zi 菟絲子: for people who have Kidney essence deficiency with chronic mild H/A, poor memory, hard to concentrate, low back and knee sore, tinnitus, amenorrhea and deep deficiency pulse.

C. Damp Phlegm 痰濁

People who have history of over-eating and irregular eating damaging the Spleen transformation and transportation functions. Symptoms are cloudy, heavy sensation headache, frontal headache, heaviness sensation, vertigo, dizziness, abdominal



gas, and bloating, belching, nausea, vomit, cough with phlegm.

Treatment principles: Expel damp phlegm, harmonize Middle Jiao.

Acupuncture points: Du20, Yin Tang, GB20, ST 8, SP9, SP40, Ren 12, ST 25, LI 11.

Formula: Ban Xia Bai Zhu Tian Ma Tang (Pinellia & Gastrodia Combination) 半夏白朮天麻湯

Modification:

■ Gao Ben 藁本: Vertex headache due to damp cold.

■ Bai Zhi 白芷: Frontal headache, sinus headache.

■ Chuan Xiong 川芎: Headache in general, especial vertex headache, headache due to *Qi* and *Blood* stagnation.

■ Man Jing Zi 蔓荊子: Heavy frontal headache, eye pain, red painful eyes.

■ Zhi Shi 枳實, Zhi Zi 梔子, Hou Po 厚朴, Huang Qin 黃芩, Da Huang 大黃: Dry stools, constipation, bitter taste, indigestion.

D. Blood Stasis 血瘀

Head trauma, concussion, surgery, traumatic injury can cause chronic headache. Headache due to this reason is usually with fixed pain, sharp, stabbing pain, pain sometimes come and go, cloudy thinking, purple red tongue with blue red vein underneath it.

Treatment principles: Eliminate stasis, invigorate *Blood*.

Acupuncture points: Du 20, GB20, Yin Tang, Ashi points on the head, UB17, UB 18, SP10, SI 3.

Formula: Shu Jing Huo Xue Tang (Clematis & Stephania Combination) 疏經活血湯

Modification:

■ Yuan Zhi 遠至, Shi Chang Pu 石菖蒲: They are used to open head orifices and calm spirit, treating headache, insomnia, concussion, unrest, anxiety, mental disorientation.



External Origins

A. External Wind-Cold Evil 風寒頭痛

External wind-cold can obstruct body defensive *Qi* (*Wei Qi*) and attack on the most superficial level of the body and *Urinary Bladder* channels. Headache due to external wind-cold is usually tight sensation with chills and fever sensation, aversion to cold, tight neck, shoulders, and upper back, worse with cold or wind-cold, better with warmth. Pulse is floating, tight.

Treatment principles: Expel wind-cold, release headache.

Acupuncture points: Du 14, GB 20, LI4, Lu7, SJ 5, ST36. Moxa on Du 14, LI4, ST36.

Formula: Chuan Xiong Cha Tiao San (Ligusticum & Tea Formula) 川芎茶調散

Modification:

■ Chai Ge Jie Ji Tang (Buplerum & Pueraria Combination) 柴葛解肌湯: Wind-cold headache and neck muscle tension, and whole body achiness.

■ Ge Gen Tang (Pueraria Combination) 葛根湯:

Wind-cold headache and neck muscle tension due to common cold, and whole body achiness, muscle spasm, diarrhea.

■ Wu Zhu Yu Tang (Evodia Combination) 吳茱萸湯:

Cold evil attack Liver channels causing vertex H/A, excessive salivation, nausea, vomiting, and cold limbs.



辛夷, Cang Er Zi 蒼耳子, Man Jing Zi 蔓荊子, Bai Zhi 白芷: Sinus headache, running nose.

B. External Wind-Heat Evil 風熱頭痛

External wind-heat like early stage febrile diseases or common cold can cause headache, sore throat, slight cough, thirst, sinus.

Treatment principles: Expel wind-heat, release headache.

Acupuncture points: Du 14, GB20, LI4, LI 11, Lu5, Lu9. Cupping and scrapping at Du14.

Formula: Yin Qiao San (Lonicera & Forsythia Formula) 銀翹散

Modification:

■ Sang Ju Yin (Morus & Chrysanthemum Combination) 桑菊飲:

External wind-heat symptoms with common cold, cough, eye strain, headache, thirst, dry mouth, dry throat.

■ Xin Yi San 辛夷散, Qing Bi Tang 清鼻湯, Xin Yi

C. External Wind-Damp Evil 風濕頭痛

Dampness causes the heaviness in the body. The damp energy is usually descending and pulling down. Headache with heavy and cloudy sensation in the head is usually with neck tension, poor appetite, gas, bloating, soft or loose bowel movement, greasy tongue fur.

Treatment principles: Expel wind-damp, release headache.

Acupuncture points: Yin Tang, UB2, Ren 12, SI 5, SP9, ST40, ST44.

Formula: Qiang Huo Sheng Shi Tang (Chiang Huo & Tu Huo Combination) 羌活勝濕湯

Modification:

■ Huo Xiang Zheng Qi San (Pogostemon Formula)

藿香正氣散, Qing Shu Yi Qi Tang (Astragalus & Atractylodes Combination) 清暑益氣湯, Xiang Ru Yin (Mosla Combination) 香薷飲, Shi Wei Xiang Ru Yin (Mosla Ten Combination) 十味香薷飲, Xiang Ru 香薷, Hou Po 厚朴, Yi Yi Ren 薏苡仁, Bai Bian Dou 白扁豆, Fu Ling 茯苓, Cang Zhu 蒼朮: Headache and common cold from damp heat

in summer, heavy head, fatigue, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, indigestion, heatstroke. ⚠



四季中醫食療

Seasonal TCM Therapeutic Diet

Shang-May Chen, M.S., L.Ac.



As people love refined cuisine today, more people have “concept of natural foods” as the diet trends. People now believe that eating healthy and nutritious foods in diets is the first line to prevent diseases and harmonize the body. With this new concept of diets, we want to decrease the dependency on western medications and use daily diet as an important part of therapy. It's only paying some attention on what you eat from daily meals that you can get therapeutic effects and decrease dependency on medications.

In Traditional Chinese Medicine, we deeply believe that “foods and medicine are coming from the same original sources”. “Qi” in foods is referring to the degree to which the taste and properties of one substance. Not only each person has different body constitution, but also there are 4 properties of foods in general, “hot(*re*), warm(*wen*), cool(*liang*), cold(*han*)”, and 5 tastes, “spicy(*xin*), sour(*suan*), bitter(*ku*), sweet(*gan*), and salty(*xian*)” according to its original nature in TCM. Herbs and foods have none of these 4 properties nor 5 tastes are considered to be neutral and bland (*pin*). In *Huang Di Nei Jing (Inner Classic)* stated, “*Spicy and sweet tastes scatter and belong to yang; sour and bitter substances drain and*

belong to yin, the salty taste drains and belongs to yin”.

Spicy substances have the functions to disperse, open and move; sweet things have the functions to tonify and enhance; bitter substances have the functions to drain, dry and clear heat; sour things are astringent; salty foods are purge and soften; bland foods have the property to drain dampness and promote urination. Also, there is property of substance in TCM called aromatic (*fang xiang*) having the functions to drain dampness, open orifices, as well as wake up the channels and body.

Things are especially customized diets for individual with different time in different areas with different foods.

By Seasons

According to the general guidelines of botanical growth in TCM, “**spring is the season to sprout, summer is the season to grow, autumn is season to harvest, and winter is the season to store**”. And each season is associated with individual organ. We naturally choose different foods with different properties and flavors to regulate our bodies in diets in different seasons.

Spring

Everything in nature is sprouting and giving birth in springtime. It's the season of *Liver*. For the past generations of Chinese, diets in spring are especially important. *Yang* start waxing in this time of the year. The weather is changing from cold to warm. Not only flowers and trees, but also bacteria and microorganisms are multiplying. It's still cold in early spring, and easily for people to catch cold or flu. Proper diets help to gain immunity and fight epidemic infections. In "*Qian Jin Yao Fang*" (*Thousand Ducat Prescriptions*) by Dr. Si-Miao Sun in Tang Dynasty pointed out, *diets in spring is better to nourish and tonify Spleen Qi by taking less sour foods substance but more naturally sweet things*. When it comes to "sweet taste" in TCM, we are not talking about sugary foods like donuts and chocolate. Food supplements are sweet in nature without sugary additives, like **Chinese dates, yams, pumpkins, potatoes, carrots, chestnuts, taro, cabbages, rice, soybeans, peanuts** that have the functions to tonify *Spleen Qi* and promote digestion and enhance immunity. Spring is also the season of *Liver*. It's good to prepare cuisine with little spices like **scallions (Chinese green onions), ginger, Chinese leeks, onions and garlic** to help *Liver Qi* to disperse better, promote *Yang Qi*, and expel cold *Qi*. **Chai Hu Shu Gan Tang (Bupleurum & Cyperus Combination)** is a general formula to help disperse *Liver Qi* circulation in spring.

For people with hypertension due to *Liver Yang Excess* in TCM diagnosis tend to have some headache, dizziness and light headed should drink some **chrysanthemum tea (Ju Hua Tea)**. The temperature is still cold in spring, not only hypertension patients have to be aware of cold temperature, but also people who have upper respiratory weakness should nourish *Lung Yin* to prevent bronchial infections.

Summer

Summer time is hot. It's the foremost time of flourishing and growing for life. It's the season of *Heart*. The human metabolism rate is vigorously alive due to evaporation of *Yang Qi* and body fluids in the body due to hot temperature. It's natural to eat lighter during the summer, and you can easily do so without feeling deprived because of heat. When it is raining seasons in the summer time in some parts of the world, there is increasing dampness accumulation in the body. We may consume foods which have the functions to clear summer fire, drain dampness but prevent dehydration, like **lotus, tofu, squash, cucumbers, tomatoes, bitter melons, water melons, pear, cantaloupes, lemons, licorice, mung beans, seeds of job's tears (Yi Yi Ren), sprouts, lettuce, banana, egg white**. High fiber fresh salads will help to take away excessive heat in the body. Formula **Qing Shu Yi Qi Tang (Astragalus & Atractylodes Combination)** is a beneficial formula for replenishing deficiency caused by excessive summer heat and dampness as well as strengthen digestion functions in summer.

Be careful with food storage hygiene in summer. People can easily have some indigestion or stomach flu problems due to rotten or unclean contagious foods. People enjoy cold beers and ice cream in summer, which is not a wise choice according to TCM. Any icy cold foods can instantly restrict the blood vessels, blood circulation and cause some damage in a lot of organs later on. Especially avoid fried or hot spicy foods to keep body and spirit cool in summer time.



Autumn

The weather turns from hot to cool, and waning of *Yang Qi*, *Yin Qi* is waxing in autumn. It's the harvesting time of the year. "Autumn usually affects our lungs and large intestine in TCM". During this transition, weather quickly turns dry at the end of summer and early autumn. It is usually extremely hot at noon then cools down quickly at night, which reduce moisture in the air quickly. Dryness of autumn can damage to the lungs and digestion.

People experience dry mouth, chapped lips, dry throat, thirst, dry cough, cough with phlegm, dry stools, dry skin. In *Ben Cao Gang Mu (Grand Materia Medica)*, Master Shi-Zhen Lee said, *"In autumn, one should eat more sour and warm foods to stay in harmony with the downward Yang Qi movement of the season."* Sour foods in TCM generate more body fluids and prevent dehydration. For the foods that can nourish Lung dryness and moistening are: **apples, apricots, Asian pears, plums, lily bulbs, ginkgo seeds (Bai Gou), loquats, mandarin oranges, radishes, egg white, American ginseng, white fungus**. People have to protect upper respiratory and prevent flu or allergy so that we can be ready for wintertime. Formula **Qing Zao Jiu Fei Tang (Eriobotrya & Ophiopogon Combination)** is a good choice for moistening autumn Lung dryness and upper respiratory protection.

Winter

Winter is the time to store. While *Yang Qi* is most waning, and *Yin Qi* is most waxing. Everything in nature tends to slow down and contract, including our metabolism rate. Foods tend to accumulate more easily in the body at wintertime. Joints, muscles and range of motion also tend to be more tight and stiff. In TCM, winter is strongly associated with kidneys, which are the "Life Gate", "the origin of life", and the most important

organ system in the body. Warm foods and foods have warming up functions are good for warming up the body, expelling coldness, increasing circulation of *Yang Qi*. In Chinese culture, people love to tonify the body by spicy hot pots with special warming herbs and foods in freezing winter. Also suggesting people to drink a little red wine for invigorating blood. Foods that have warm property in nature are good for winter, **beef, lamb, hot soup, chili, cinnamon barks, and longan fruits (dragon eye, aka Long Yan)**. Other dark-colored foods tend to enter kidney channels are good choices, like **black fungus (Hei Mu Er), black chicken, black dates, black berries, raspberries, mulberries, lycium fruits (Chinese wolfberries, aka Gou Qi Zi), dates, seaweeds, and Chinese yams (Shan Yao)**. **Shi Quan Da Bu Tang (Ginseng & Dang Gui Ten Combination)** is the most popular formula for winter tonic adding to the soup and diet to warm up body circulation. But not everyone is good for warming and tonifying methods. Recommend people to consult TCM practitioners before they take winter tonic. For example, people with hot body type or hypertension are not good for tonifying methods.

The concept of seasonal therapeutic diet is deeply rooted common sense in Chinese culture and gradually gaining notice in western culture now. What people eat should also follow the "*Tao*", the natural way of the universe. Foods with different properties and eaten in different seasons have different impacts on the body. People can easily get all the for in any season now. Being more conscious on what we put in the mouth, we can create harmonizing ways of diets based on the essence of different seasons. And the general guidelines for TCM dietary therapy are:

- ★ Do not drink icy liquids or eat cold foods.
- ★ Do not overeat.
- ★ Minimize the intake of alcohol, fried, hot, spicy foods, extremely salty foods, and foods high in fat and calories. ⚠



Announcement



Sun Ten 60th Anniversary

International Symposium on Chinese Herbal Medicine

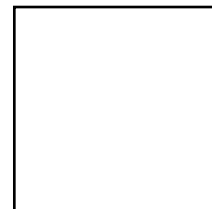
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順天堂60週年紀念 暨 國際中草藥研討會

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