

Prof. WANG Xiao-yun's Experience in Treating Climacteric Syndrome from the Pathogenesis of Kidney Deficiency and Liver Stagnancy

XU Ying 许英¹, LIU Jian 刘建² & Supervisor: WANG Xiao-yun 王小云³

¹Doctoral Student of Grade 2007, Guangzhou University of Traditional Chinese Medicine, Guangzhou, Guangdong 510405, China

²Doctoral Student of Grade 2009, Guangzhou University of Traditional Chinese Medicine, Guangzhou, Guangdong 510405, China

³Department of Gynecology, Guangdong Provincial Hospital of Traditional Chinese Medicine, Guangzhou, Guangdong 510120, China

Prof. WANG Xiao-yun, a chief physician in the Second Affiliated Hospital of Guangzhou TCM University (Guangdong Provincial Hospital of TCM), is a leading physician, professor, and the supervisor of doctoral students in the national key subject of TCM gynecology. Having been engaged in TCM gynecological clinical practice and scientific researches for about 30 years, Prof. WANG has obtained rich experience in the treatment of obstinate and miscellaneous diseases of gynecology, especially in the analysis of pathogenesis and differential treatment of climacteric syndrome. Based on the TCM theory and clinical experience, Prof. WANG holds that deficiency of the kidney and stagnancy of the liver should be the main pathogenesis for climacteric syndrome, which should be treated by tonifying the kidney and soothing the liver. The commonly used herbs may include Bai Shao (白芍 Radix Paeoniae Alba), Chi Shao (赤芍 Radix Paeoniae Rubra), Bai Zhu (白术 Rhizoma Atractylodis Macrocephalae), Yu Jin (郁金 Radix Curcumae), Shan Yu Rou (山萸肉 Fructus Corni), Qian Hu (前胡 Radix Peucedani), Dang Shen (党参 Radix Codonopsis), Huai Shan Yao (淮山药 Rhizoma Dioscoreae), Shu Di (熟地 Radix Rehmanniae Preparata), Fu Shen (茯神 Poria cum Ligno Hospite), Chuan Duan (川断 Radix Dipsaci), Dang Gui (当归 Radix Angelicae Sinensis), Xiang Fu (香附 Rhizoma Cyperi), Dan Pi (Cortex Moutan Radicis), Di Yu (地榆 Radix Sanguisorbae), Di Gu Pi (地骨皮 Cortex

Lycii), Gan Jiang (干姜 Rhizoma Zingiberis), Sang Bai Pi (桑白皮 Cortex Mori), and Duan Mu Li (煅牡蛎 calcined Concha Ostreae, etc.). By following Prof. WANG in clinical practice, the authors have summed up the experience in use of Chinese herbs for treating climacteric syndrome, and introduced as follows.

Tonifying the Kidney Should Better Tonify both the Liver and Kidney, and Treat Yin and Yang at the Same Time

For patients with deficiency of the kidney, Prof. WANG often uses Xian Ling Pi (仙灵脾 Herba Epimedii), Shu Di (熟地 Radix Rehmanniae Preparata) and Du Zhong (杜仲 Cortex Eucommiae), because they can enter both the Liver and Kidney Channels, with the effects for both the liver and kidney. In order to obtain a perfect effect of nourishing the kidney-yin, the herbs for warming the kidney-yang should be properly added. Prof. WANG points out that most of the patients with climacteric syndrome may tend to have the symptoms of tidal fever with flushed face, dizziness and vertigo, tinnitus, and soreness and weakness of the waist and knee joints, for which the differential treatment should be mainly nourishing yin and tonifying the kidney. However, it was described in *Su Wen* (素问

Correspondence to: Prof. WANG Xiao-yun, Department of Gynecology, Guangdong Provincial Hospital of Traditional Chinese Medicine, 111 Dadelu, Guangzhou 510120, China
Email: zp@gdivdc.com Tel: 86-20-81887233-36703

Plain Questions) by SHANG Ying-zong that ‘the *yang-qi* is rooted in *yin*, and the *yin-qi* is rooted in *yang*. *Yang* can not be generated without *yin*, and *yin* can not be formed without *yang*’. Therefore, the use of Xian Ling Pi (仙灵脾 *Herba Epimedii*) and / or Rou Cong Rong (肉苁蓉 *Herba Cistanches*), the herbs for warming and tonifying the kidney-*yang*, is aimed at ‘seeking *yin* from *yang*’. Moreover, the herbs of cold nature for nourishing *yin* are liable to cause stagnation of *qi*. So, suitably adding of the herbs of warm nature can invigorate *yang-qi*, so as to soothe the stagnated liver-*qi*.

Herbs Used in Pairs

In clinical practice, Prof. WANG often uses the herbs in pairs, for example, Han Lian Cao (旱莲草 *Herba Ecliptae*) with Nü Zhen Zi (女贞子 *Fructus Ligustri Lucidi*); Shu Di (熟地 *Radix Rehmanniae Preparata*) with Bai Shao (白芍 *Radix Paeoniae Alba*); Bai Shao (白芍 *Radix Paeoniae Alba*) with Xiang Fu (香附 *Rhizoma Cyperi*); Bai Shao (白芍 *Radix Paeoniae Alba*) with Chi Shao (赤芍 *Radix Paeoniae Rubra*); Dang Gui (当归 *Radix Angelicae Sinensis*) with Bai Shao (白芍 *Radix Paeoniae Alba*); and Xiang Fu (香附 *Rhizoma Cyperi*) with Dang Gui (当归 *Radix Angelicae Sinensis*), etc.. These pairs of herbs may show synergistic actions with better therapeutic effects.

1) The compatible use of Han Lian Cao (旱莲草 *Herba Ecliptae*) and Nü Zhen Zi (女贞子 *Fructus Ligustri Lucidi*): These two herbs can enter both the Liver and Kidney Channels, and tonify *yin* of the liver and kidney. The joint use of the two can treat both the liver and kidney to exert specific and stronger action. Prof. WANG thinks that the two herbs, being nutritious but not greasy, can be administered for a long time to give slow lasting tonification, so they are suitable for patients with climacteric syndrome who need long-term herbal regulation.

2) The compatible use of Shu Di (熟地 *Radix Rehmanniae Preparata*) with Bai Shao (白芍 *Radix Paeoniae Alba*): Being sweet in taste and warm and moistening in property, Shu Di (熟地 *Radix*

Rehmanniae Preparata) may show the effects of tonifying the kidney, replenishing the essence, and nourishing the blood. Being sour in taste and slightly cold in nature, Bai Shao (白芍 *Radix Paeoniae Alba*) has the specific action of entering the liver to nourish and enrich the blood. Since the essence and blood are of the same source and are mutually generating, the compatible use of these two herbs can strengthen the effects of treating both the liver and kidney, and generating the essence and enriching the blood.

3) The compatible use of Bai Shao (白芍 *Radix Paeoniae Alba*) with Xiang Fu (香附 *Rhizoma Cyperi*): With a sour and bitter taste and slightly cold in nature, Bai Shao (白芍 *Radix Paeoniae Alba*) has the special effects of nourishing *yin* and softening the liver. Xiang Fu (香附 *Rhizoma Cyperi*) has the effect of relieving the depressed liver and is good at activating the circulation of *qi*, so it is called ‘the commanding herb for *qi* diseases’. The compatible use of these two herbs, with one for reinforcing and one for reducing, will benefit both *qi* and blood, which is suitable for climacteric syndrome with disorder of *qi*, blood, *yin*, and *yang*.

4) The compatible use of Bai Shao (白芍 *Radix Paeoniae Alba*) with Chi Shao (赤芍 *Radix Paeoniae Rubra*): Bai Shao (白芍 *Radix Paeoniae Alba*) has the effect of nourishing the blood and astringing the *yin* fluid, while Chi Shao (赤芍 *Radix Paeoniae Rubra*) has the effect of cooling the blood and activating the blood flow. When used together, the two herbs can supplement each other to yield the effects of nourishing *yin* without astringing the pathogens, and activating the blood flow without injuring the vital-*qi*.

5) The compatible use of Dang Gui (当归 *Radix Angelicae Sinensis*) with Bai Shao (白芍 *Radix Paeoniae Alba*): Dang Gui (当归 *Radix Angelicae Sinensis*) can activate the blood flow and dominate motion, while Bai Shao (白芍 *Radix Paeoniae Alba*) can astringe *yin* and dominate stillness. When used together, the two herbs can supplement each other in balancing motion and stillness, and activation and astringency.

6) The compatible use of Xiang Fu (香附 Rhizoma Cyperi) with Dang Gui (当归 Radix Angelicae Sinensis): With the pungent and circulating, the bitter and descending properties, Xiang Fu (香附 Rhizoma Cyperi) acts on the Liver Channel and is good at relieving the stagnated liver-*qi*, so it is called 'the commander in chief for women diseases'. Dang Gui (当归 Radix Angelicae Sinensis), pungent, sweet and warm in nature, and specially acting on the blood, can give the effects of nourishing and regulating the blood, and activating the blood flow. When used together, the two herbs can supplement each other to treat *qi* and blood at the same time, and promote the circulation of *qi* and blood without damaging the blood.

Regulating Deficiency and Excess of the Liver and Kidney Should Be in According with the Characters of Zang-fu Organs

As described in *FU Qing-zhu's Obstetrics and Gynecology*, 'the character of the liver is quick-tempered, and the liver-*qi* should be made calm; otherwise, there would appear hyperactivity of the liver-*qi*'. For stagnation of the liver-*qi*, the herbs for relieving the stagnated liver-*qi*, nourishing the blood and softening the liver are often used, such as Xiang Fu (香附 Rhizoma Cyperi), Bai Shao (白芍 Radix Paeoniae Alba), and Yu Jin (郁金 Radix Curcuma). Chai Hu (柴胡 Radix Bupleuri) should be used cautiously in case the liver-*yin* might be injured.

Consideration Given to the Local Climate

The climate in the Guangdong and Guangxi area of China is warm, wet and rainy. So, patients there with climacteric syndrome would have the symptoms mingled with heat and damp. For this kind of patients, Prof. WANG often adds some herbs in the prescription for eliminating damp, such as Su Mi Xu (粟米须 tassels of Semen Setariae) and Chun Sha Ren (春砂仁 Fructus Amomi). Prof. WANG has special experience in the use of Su Mi Xu (粟米须

tassels of Semen Setariae), which, with light clear flavor and light sweet taste, has the effects of removing dampness and promoting diuresis, perfectly suitable for the cases of climacteric syndrome mingled with the symptoms of dampness.

Attention Paid to the Emotions

Prof. WANG holds that the patients with climacteric syndrome tend to have abnormal emotional manifestations, such as irritability and peevishness, depression, and susceptibility to grief. For this case, psychologically counseling the patients to relieve the abnormal emotional state is very important.

The first step: Guide the patient to say what is on her mind without reservation. The doctor may have heart-to-heart talks with the patient, so as to learn the cause of the illness.

The second step: Guide the patient to unbosom herself at will. The doctor may ask the patient to relax her emotion by watching some tragic films, so as to let out the harmful substances resulted from bad emotions along with tears.

The third step: Making joy prevailing over grief. The patients with climacteric syndrome tend to have the emotion of grief and sorrow. For such patients, we should make full use of the positive action of emotions, using one emotion triumphing over the other, that is, 'joy' triumphing over 'grief'.

In treating climacteric syndrome, based on the TCM pathogenesis of kidney-deficiency round the menopausal period, Prof. WANG always pays great attention to the liver stagnancy shown in women of the modern times. And by sticking to the treating principle of tonifying the kidney and soothing the liver, Prof. WANG has obtained satisfactory therapeutic effects.

(Translated by WANG Xin-zhong 王新中)

Received November 19, 2009