

New Uses of Wen Dan Tang in Gynecology

abstracted & translated by

Bob Flaws, L.Ac., FNAAOM (USA), FRCHM (UK)

Keywords: Chinese medicine, Chinese herbal medicine, gynecology, Wen Dan Tang, Sun Si-miao, PMS, morning sickness

On page 292 of issue #5, 2008 of the *Zhe Jiang Zhong Yi Za Zhi (Zhejiang Journal of Chinese Medicine)*, Wu Pin-qiong *et al.* published an article titled “New Uses of Wen Dan Tang in Gynecology.” Since Wen Dan Tang is one of my favorite formulas created by one of my favorite Chinese doctors of antiquity, Sun Si-miao, the following is a summary of that article.

Case 1: Menstrual movement emotional abnormality (*i.e.*, premenstrual dysphoria)

The patient was a 32-year-old female who was initially seen on September 7, 1999. This woman experienced marked flaring of anger premenstrually along with inability to control herself, a bitter taste in her mouth, a feeling of blockage in her throat, profuse phlegm, a stuffy feeling in the center of her chest, and delayed menstruation which gradually had turned into amenorrhea for the last half year. The woman’s tongue tended to be red with slimy, yellow fur, and her pulse was bowstring, slippery, and rapid. Therefore, her pattern was discriminated as phlegm fire harassing above, and the treatment principles were to clear heat and transform phlegm, calm the heart and settle the mind. The formula consisted of Wen Dan Tang (Warm the Gallbladder Decoction) plus Gan Mai Da Zao Tang (Licorice, Wheat & Red Dates Decoction) with additions and subtractions:

ginger-processed Ban Xia (Rhizoma Pinelliae)
Chen Pi (Pericarpium Citri Reticulatae)
Huang Qin (Radix Scutellariae)
Zhi Shi (Fructus Immaturus Aurantii), 9g each
Fu Ling (Poria), 12g
Zhu Ru (Caulis Bambusae in Taeniam), 10g
Gan Cao (Radix Glycyrrhizae), 6g
Sheng Jiang (uncooked Rhizoma Zingiberis), 3 slices
Da Zao (Fructus Jujubae), 7 pieces
Huai Xiao Mai (Fructus Triticici), 30g
Dan Nan Xing (bile-processed Rhizoma Arisaematis), 5g
Long Gu (Os Draconis)
Mu Li (Concha Ostreae), 20g each

After five packets of this formula (over a period of five days, one packet per day), the patient’s symptoms had decreased and her psyche had become stable again. After five more packets, all the woman’s signs and symptoms had disappeared and there was no recurrence of this condition. (It’s my assumption that the second five packets were administered beginning five days before the expected onset of her next menstrual period.)

Explanation:

This woman had a body with habitually a lot of phlegm and she was easily emotionally stressed. At the time of menstruation, the blood accumulating in the chong and ren left the rest of the vessel

malnourished. Hence yang qi became effulgent and hyperactive, yin and yang lost their regulation, and phlegm and fire along with surging qi ascended to harass the heart spirit. This then resulting in all of her symptoms. Treatment with Wen Dan Tang plus Huang Qin and Dan Nan Xing was to clear heat and sweep away phlegm, while Gan Mai Da Zao Tang plus Long Gu and Mu Li was meant to nourish the heart and quiet the spirit. Thus the patient was cured.

Case 2: Menstrual movement dizziness (i.e., premenstrual dizziness)

The patient was a 28-year-old female who was first examined on February 19, 2001. This woman had experienced dizziness during each premenstruum for the last half year. This was accompanied by distention and pain in her head and eyes, heart vexation, a bitter taste in the mouth, chest oppression, and a desire to vomit. The patient's tongue fur was slimy and yellow, and her pulse was bowstring and slippery. Her menstrual cycle had been delayed but had returned to normal. Base on the foregoing, the patient's pattern was categorized as phlegm brewing and transforming heat, and the treatment principles were to clear heat and sweep phlegm, level the liver and subdue yang. The formula used was Wen Dan Tang with additions and subtractions:

ginger-processed Ban Xia (*Rhizoma Pinelliae*)
Zhi Shi (*Fructus Immaturus Aurantii*)
Huang Qin (*Radix Scutellariae*)
Chen Pi (*Pericarpium Citri Reticulatae*), 9g each
Gan Cao (*Radix Glycyrrhizae*), 6g
Zhu Ru (*Caulis Bambusae In Taeniam*), 10g
Sheng Jiang (uncooked *Rhizoma Zingiberis*), 3 slices
Da Zao (*Fructus Jujubae*), 7 pieces
Ju Hua (*Flos Chrysanthemi*)
Sang Ye (*Folium Mori*)
Fu Ling (*Poria*)
Ci Ji Li (*Fructus Tribuli*), 12g each
Zi Shi Ying (*Flouritum*), 30g

After taking five packets of these medicinals, the patients menses came again and all her symptoms greatly decreased. Another five packets of this same formula was administered, and the patient was completely cured.

Explanation:

Due to phlegm dampness brewing heat, the patients orifices had become blocked and obstructed. Then, when her menses were moving (i.e., premenstrually), the chong mai qi was exuberant. This mixed with the phlegm heat and ascended to harass above. Thus the clear orifices were not open and there was head and eye dizziness, heart vexation, a bitter taste in the mouth, slimy, yellow tongue fur, and a bowstring, slippery pulse. Within this formula, Wen Dan Tang plus Huang Qin clears heat and sweeps away phlegm. Then Ju Hua, Sang Ye, Zi Shi Ying, and Ci Ji Li level the liver and subdue yang.

Case 3: Menstrual movement dizziness (i.e., premenstrual dizziness)

The patient was a 29-year-old female who was first examined on August 27, 2000. The patient was fat and 28 weeks pregnant. For the last half year, prior to her menses, she had experienced heart vexation, restlessness, dizziness, and chest oppression. Currently, she experienced nausea with phlegm drool, ductal fullness, torpid intake, a bitter taste in her mouth, heart palpitations, and gallbladder timidity. Her tongue fur was thin, yellow, and slimy, and her pulse was slippery and rapid. Based on these signs and

symptoms, the patient's pattern was categorized as phlegm heat internally struggling, forcing and harassing the heart spirit. The treatment principles were to clear heat and sweep away phlegm, clear the heart and eliminate vexation. For these purposes, the formula used was Wen Dan Tang with additions and subtractions:

ginger-processed Ban Xia (Rhizoma Pinelliae)
Gan Cao (Radix Glycyrrhizae), 6g each
Zhu Ru (Caulis Bambusae In Taeniam), 10g
Fu Ling (Poria)
Mai Men Dong (Tuber Ophiopogonis), 12g each
Sheng Jiang (uncooked Rhizoma Zingiberis), two slices
Huang Qin (Radix Scutellariae)
Chen Pi (Pericarpium Citri Reticulatae)
Zhi Shi (Fructus Immaturus Aurantii), 9g each
Huang Lian (Rhizoma Coptidis), 3g, added later
Long Gu (Os Draconis)
Mu Li (Concha Ostreae), 15g each

After administering three packets of these medicinals, all the woman's symptoms had decreased but her appetite had not increased. Therefore, 12 grams of Bai Zhu (Rhizoma Atractylodis Macrocephalae) and six grams of Huo Xiang (Herba Pogostemonis) were added to the above formula. After three packets of these medicinals, the woman's appetite increased and all her other symptoms had disappeared. At full terms, she gave birth normally.

Explanation:

According to a premodern book on gynecology, "The disease of fetal vexation is said to be due to phlegm, fire, and yin debility." In this case, the woman habitually had phlegm rheum which had turned into phlegm heat with pregnancy and had ascended to harass her chest and diaphragm and had caused heart vexation. Therefore, within the above formula, Che Pi, Ban Xia, Fu Ling, Gan Cao, and Sheng Jiang transform phlegm, rectify the qi, and harmonize the stomach. Zhu Ru and Zhi Shi clear heat and downbear counterflow. Huang Qin and Huang Lian clear the heart and eliminate vexation as well as transform phlegm. Long Gu and Mu Li settle the heart and quiet the spirit. Mai Men Dong clears heat and nourishes yin. On the second visit, Bai Zhu and Huo Xiang were added in order to fortify the spleen, harmonize the stomach, and transform dampness, protect and guard the stomach qi. As a result, heat was cleared and phlegm was transformed, the heart was cleared and vexation was eliminated, and the patient was cured and had a normal delivery.

Case 4: Nausea during pregnancy (i.e., "morning sickness")

The patient was 27 years old and was first examined on August 17, 1998. The patient had been pregnant for 50 days and experienced ductal fullness and indigestion, chest oppression and profuse phlegm, recurrent nausea, and vomiting of bitter water. There was a bitter taste in her mouth and she experienced vacuity vexation, dizziness, and distention of her head. In addition, there was low back soreness, lassitude of the spirit, a tongue tending to red, and a bowstring, slippery pulse. The patient's pattern was discriminated as liver-gallbladder depressive heat, phlegm heat internally obstructing, and stomach qi counterflowing upward. Therefore, the treatment principles were to clear the gallbladder and harmonize the spleen and stomach, downbear counterflow and stop vomiting. The formula used was Wen Dan Tang with additions and subtractions:

ginger-processed Ban Xia (Rhizoma Pinelliae), 6g

Chen Pi (Pericarpium Citri Reticulatae)
Huang Qin (Radix Scutellariae), 9g each
Mai Men Dong (Tuber Ophiopogonis)
ginger-processed Caulis Bambusae In Taeniam), 10g each
Huang Lian (Rhizoma Coptidis), 3g, processed in ginger juice and added later
Zi Su Ye (Folium Perillae), 5g
Bei Sha Shen (Radix Glehniae)
Sang Ji Sheng (Herba Taxilli)
Xu Duan (Radix Dipsaci)
Fu Ling (Poria)
Du Zhong (Cortex Eucommiae), 12g each

After taking three packets of these medicinals, the nausea decreased and the vomiting stopped. In addition, all this woman's other symptoms got less. However, she still had head distention and pain along with a dizzy sensation. Therefore, 20 grams of Zi Shi Ying (Flouritum) and 12 grams of Ju Hua (Flos Chrysanthemi) were added to the above formula. After three more packets, the nausea had completely stopped, her appetite had increased, and gradually all her other symptoms disappeared.

Explanation:

After conceiving, the blood gathers to nourish the fetus. If there is blood vacuity, then the liver may become, as it did in this case, effulgent. The liver loses its coursing and discharge, spreading and reaching. Then liver-stomach disharmony lead to frequent nausea and vomiting, ductal fullness, and sour eructation. Within the above formula, ginger-processed Ban Xia and ginger-processed Zhu Ru downbear counterflow, transform phlegm, and stop vomiting. When ginger-processed Huang Lian is combined with Huang Qin, acridity upbears and bitterness downbears. Chen Pi and Zi Su Ye course the liver and harmonize the stomach. Bei Sha Shen and Mai Men Dong nourish yin and engender fluids. Xu Duan, Sang Ji Sheng, and Du Zhong boost the kidneys and quiet the fetus. Thus, as a whole, this formula levels the liver, downbears fire, disperses phlegm, normalizes the flow of qi, harmonizes the stomach and hence nausea was automatically cured.

Copyright © Blue Poppy Press, 2008. All rights reserved.