

# ***Chief Physician Lei Guangyan's Experience in Treating Constipation due to Deficiency of Both Qi and Yin after Chemotherapy with Huangqi Zengye Decoction***

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**Abstract:** Constipation is a common clinical disease caused by loss of large intestine conduction. Chief physician Lei Guangyan has accumulated a lot of theoretical knowledge and clinical practice experience for patients with constipation after chemotherapy. He pointed out that patients with constipation after chemotherapy are mainly characterized by deficiency, which belongs to the original deficiency and the standard reality. They should mainly supplement deficiency and attack evil. Astragalus Zengye Decoction is composed of Astragalus, Angelica, Radix, Rehmannieae, Scrophulariae, Ophiopogon japonicus, Cistanche deserticola, hemp seed, cypress seed, Polygonum multiflorum, Magnolia officinalis, and Fructus aurantii immaturus. It can nourish qi and blood, and blend yin and yang. The use of Astragalus Zengye Decoction plus reduced chemical formula in the treatment of constipation due to the deficiency of both Qi and Yin after chemotherapy has achieved significant clinical efficacy, bringing good news to the majority of patients with constipation after chemotherapy. This article summarizes the thoughts and experience of Chief Physician Lei Guangyan in treating constipation after chemotherapy, and shares and communicates with the majority of colleagues.

Constipation is a common disease of the digestive system [1]. Its pathogenesis is mainly due to the loss of large intestine conduction, resulting in fecal constipation that stops in the intestinal tract for a long time. Its clinical manifestations are prolonged defecation time, reduced defecation frequency, and fecal texture such as sheep feces. The pathogenesis and etiology of constipation have not been clarified [2]. There are also quite a lot of records on constipation in ancient medicine. The concept of constipation was first described in the Yellow Emperor's Canon of Internal Medicine, which called constipation "difficult to defecate". Modern medicine has achieved some effects by improving diet, changing defecation habits, using laxatives, and other symptomatic relief. However, compared with traditional Chinese medicine, it has obvious advantages [3]. Many patients turn to traditional Chinese medicine for treatment. Chief Physician Lei Guangyan is a postgraduate tutor of Shaanxi University of Traditional Chinese Medicine. He has nearly 40 years of clinical experience. In the treatment of constipation, both Chinese and Western medicine focus

on traditional Chinese medicine. He has his own theoretical system for the diagnosis and treatment of constipation and applies it in daily work, good clinical effects have been achieved [4]. Huangqi Zengye Decoction is an addition to the Zengye Decoction. Chief Physician Lei Guangyan uses it to add and subtract constipation with deficiency of both qi and yin after chemotherapy [5]. Teacher Lei has a good effect in the process of using Huangqi Zengye Decoction to treat constipation after chemotherapy. I am a graduate student of Chief Physician Lei Guangyan. Now I share and exchange with my colleagues Lei's ideas and medication experience in treating constipation after chemotherapy.

## 1. Cause and Pathogenesis

Constipation, as a functional disease, its incidence rate also shows a rising trend [6]. After chemotherapy, many patients have constipation symptoms. If we do not pay attention to timely treatment, constipation is likely to cause many other diseases and even lead to suicidal tendencies of patients [7]. Therefore, it is particularly important to actively explore effective measures to treat constipation after chemotherapy. Astragalus Zengye Decoction is made by adding Astragalus membranaceus on the basis of Zengye Decoction. Its mechanism of increasing fluid for treating constipation may be realized by increasing the expression of AQP9 in the colon [8]. Zengye decoction is derived from the Identification of Epidemic Febrile Diseases. Heat syndrome leads to body fluid deficiency, which leads to the abnormal conduction of the large intestine, that is, the so-called "waterless boat" [9]. Therefore, the stool is dry and shaped like sheep dung, so Zengye decoction is used to nourish the water and boat.

Mr. Lei believes that most cancer patients are elderly, with a constitution of deficiency of both qi and yin, and that they are prone to constipation due to the damage to vital energy after chemotherapy. Therefore, he believes that deficiency of both qi and yin is the main pathogenesis of constipation in the elderly after chemotherapy [10]. The elderly suffer from deficiency of temper, stagnation of qi in the intestine makes it unable to promote the excretion of grain drugs from the intestine. In addition, the elderly suffer from physical failure. After chemotherapy, the healthy qi is weak, and the yin fluid is deficient, which cannot nourish the body, causing dry feces to form in the large intestine. This can be regarded as a syndrome of deficiency based on the differentiation of symptoms. Mr. Lei thinks that the main symptoms of constipation with deficiency of both Qi and Yin after chemotherapy are the reduction of stool frequency, dry stool like sheep dung, very difficult defecation process, sometimes sweating and prolonged toileting time. Secondary symptoms: abdominal distension, dry throat and thirst, lack of qi, and laziness. Tongue and pulse: the tongue is red, with little fur, and the pulse is deficient. In clinical practice, we should patiently inquire about the medical history, make sure that the four diagnoses are combined, and the diagnosis is clear.

## 2. Dispatch Prescription for Medication

Teacher Lei believes that long illness is often deficient and pays attention to tracing back to the origin. In daily clinical work, he strives to find the cause of the disease and make targeted treatment. Mr. Lei has devoted himself to clinical practice for nearly 40 years. He summarized that constipation patients after chemotherapy are mainly characterized by deficiency, which belongs to the essence of deficiency and the essence of reality, and should focus on reinforcing deficiency [11]. However, reinforcing deficiency should not forget to attack evil. After chemotherapy, patients with constipation often buy a traditional Chinese medicine cathartic containing anthraquinones by themselves, resulting in spleen and stomach yang injury, spleen deficiency and weak qi, and lack of energy. Mr. Lei believes that the treatment of such patients should focus on strengthening the spleen and Qi, and the main prescription is Huangqi Zengye Decoction, which can be modified according

to the symptoms. In the prescription, the raw astragalus root and atracylodes macrocephala are used to replenish qi, strengthen the spleen, lift, clear and reduce turbidity, and moisten the intestines and relieve constipation. According to the Collection of Materia Medica, "Astragalus is a medicine that can invigorate the lungs and spleen, keep the body healthy and astringe sweat, and expel wind and poison." Astragalus is an essential medicine for tonifying qi. The lung and large intestine are both external and internal, and the spleen is the source of qi and blood biochemistry. It can replenish spleen qi, transport water, and promote the production of fluid. It can replenish lung qi, dredge water channels, and promote the distribution of fluid. Qi generates fluid and fluid carries qi. It can promote each other to make body fluids vigorous and achieve the effect of "increasing water and pushing the boat" [12]. Astragalus can replenish qi, invigorate the spleen, and benefit the lung, and the foot in the middle of qi can make two stools as usual [13]. It is especially suitable for patients with constipation after chemotherapy that have palpitations, spontaneous sweating, and inability to sit. Modern pharmacological research shows that Astragalus can enhance and regulate the immune function of the body [14], promote blood circulation, and improve microcirculation [15-16]. It is recorded in the New Edition of Materia Medica that "Atractylodes macrocephala generates fluid... Although Atractylodes macrocephala is dry, it is ultimately a substance that can strengthen the spleen. The spleen is healthy and the body fluid is spontaneous." Atractylodes macrocephala dryness and dampness. When the dampness is removed, the body fluid will recover and the intestines will be moistened and the dross will be preserved. Modern pharmacological studies have proved that Rhizoma Atractylodis Macrocephalae can significantly promote gastrointestinal emptying and has a two-way regulating effect on intestinal activity [17]. Teacher Lei mainly treats constipation after chemotherapy with three methods of tonifying qi, moistening intestines, and relieving constipation. The king drug of Huangqi Zengye Decoction is Radix Rehmanniae, Radix Scrophulariae, and Radix Ophiopogonis, which are three heavy drugs. Nourishing yin and moistening the intestines can help to relieve constipation. Modern pharmacological studies have found that the combination of the three drugs can correct the disorder of internal and external fluid ions, regulate the homeostasis of internal and external fluids, and protect organelles under the condition of yin fluid depletion [18]. The official medicines are astragalus and cistanche deserticola. Among them, astragalus is used to "replenish qi and promote yang" [19], which is mainly used to treat all symptoms of qi deficiency and blood loss. Astragalus membranaceus can also accelerate the metabolism of the body, enhance the movement of the small intestine and smooth muscle tension, and has the role of promoting the oxidative metabolism of the small intestine [20]. Cistanche deserticola can warm the kidney yang, benefit the blood essence, and moisten the intestine, and can significantly promote the peristalsis of the large intestine in mice, inhibit the absorption of water in the large intestine, and shorten the defecation time [21]. The two medicines have the effect of "seeking yin from yang". Angelica sinensis and polygonum multiflorum can relieve constipation and replenish blood. Among them, Angelica sinensis has the effect of lubricating the colon [22]. In addition, hemp seed and cypress seed, which have the effect of relieving constipation, are adjuvants. Among them, hemp seed contains a large amount of fat oil that can directly play the role of relieving constipation. Animal experiments [23] show that it can stimulate the secretion of intestinal mucosa, accelerate peristalsis, and reduce the re-absorption of water in the large intestine. Its catharsis effect is in a dose-effect relationship with its dosage. Magnolia officinalis and Fructus aurantii are used as medicines to help ministers to smooth the ventilation, clear the turbid, and clear the fur organs [24], so they are used as medicines. The combination of various medicines makes the body fluid sufficient, and the gas pushes the dregs down(see Figure 1). It can also be added or subtracted according to the specific situation of the patient. After analyzing the whole formula, Mr. Lei advocated to adjust yin and yang, nourish qi and blood, pay attention to tonifying deficiency, not forget to attack evil, pay attention to tonifying

deficiencies, and attack evil. On the basis of this prescription, the addition and subtraction can be used to treat the deficiency of both Qi and Yin, and patients can be instructed to take it for a long time.

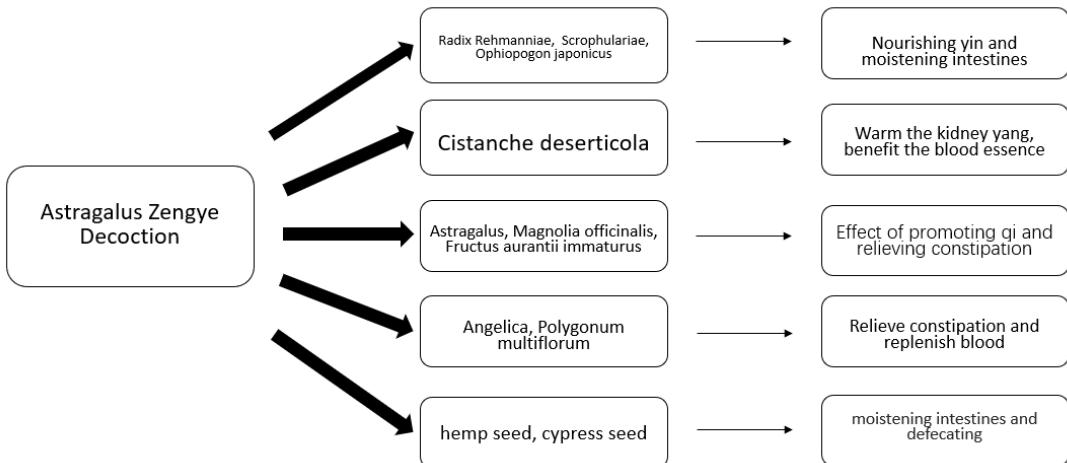


Figure 1: Huangqi Zengye decoction.

### 3. Examples of Case Examination

The patient, female, 68 years old, first saw a doctor on April 10, 2021. Chief complaint: defecation difficulty for 5 years. Five years ago, the patient underwent lobectomy in the local hospital due to lung adenocarcinoma. After the operation, he was given chemotherapy (the specific plan is unknown). Later, he developed symptoms of difficulty in defecating hard stool, like sheep dung. Sometimes, he could not resolve himself for as long as 1 week. He took Niuhuang Jiedu Tablet and Guodao Tablet to assist defecation for a long time. He defecated for about 4 to 5 days when he did not take medicine. He defecated for 1 to 2 days when he took medicine. He sweated when he defecated, the spleen and stomach are damaged, the appetite is not good, the abdomen is full, the body feels short of breath and lazy, the whole body is sour and soft, the color of the lips is light, the tongue is red, the tongue coating is yellow, the pulse is big on the right, and the left is heavy. Recently, the effect of oral catharsis medicine is not good, and you need to use Kaisailu enema to defecate. Physical examination: an old surgical scar can be seen in the right intercostal space of the chest, and there is no stenosis in the anal caliber at the lithotomy position, and there is no blood stained on the retracted fingertip. Auxiliary examination: Chest CT showed postoperative changes of lung cancer. The colonic transmission test was positive (see Figure 2-5). Electronic colonoscopy showed that the colonic mucosa showed tan pigmentation, tiger skin-like changes, and the intestinal cavity became dark. No obvious abnormality were found in defecation radiography. Western diagnosis: 1. slow transit constipation 2. melanosis coli 3. Postoperative lung cancer. TCM diagnosis: constipation, deficiency of both qi and yin. Cure method: replenish qi and yin, moisten intestines, and relieve constipation. It is proposed to use Huangqi Zengye Decoction. Prescription: astragalus 15g, angelica 12g, rehmanna 13g, scrophularia 18g, ophiopogon japonicus 18g, cistanche 20g, hemp seed 18g, cypress seed 15g, raw atracylodes macrocephala 20g, paeonia lactiflora 15g, magnolia officinalis 20g, fructus aurantii 20g. 5 doses, 400ml decoction, warm in the morning and evening, 1 dose per day. On April 16, 2021, the second clinic reported that after taking the above 5 doses, the constipation symptoms were not relieved clearly, and the stool was still blocked and dry. However, when defecating, sweating symptoms are relieved, abdominal distension and dry mouth symptoms are slightly relieved, the tongue is light red, fur is thin and yellow, and

pulse is thin. After syndrome differentiation analysis, add 10g of bitter almond and 15g of trichosanthes kernel on the basis of the original formula, reuse 30g of raw Atractylodes macrocephala, take another 5 doses, and ask them to take the medicine after returning home. Five days later, the patient received three diagnoses: after taking three doses, the patient complained that he did not need to use Kaiselu as an assistant, and he could discharge the hard stool in strips without obvious sweating symptoms. Inform the patient to continue to take 7 doses of the original prescription orally and continue to observe. Seven days later, the patient complained to himself that the stool dryness was alleviated, the number of defecations was normal about two days, the patient's tongue was red, the coating was thin and white, and the pulse was string. Inform the patient to continue taking 5 doses of the original prescription to consolidate the curative effect. If you feel unwell, take outpatient treatment at any time. After half a year of follow-up by telephone, I reported that the constipation symptoms were relieved, the defecation rule was solved once every 1-2 days, which was soft, the defecation process was easy, and Kaiselu was not used to assist defecation. Have a good mood after defecation. He was instructed to take more crude fiber, food, vegetables, and fruits every day to consolidate the treatment. One year later, the patient underwent outpatient reexamination, and the patient complained that the defecation was normal once every 2 days. The colonic transport examination in the outpatient department showed negative results. Electronic colonoscopy showed no obvious abnormality (see Figure 5).



Figure 2: Abdominal plain film (24h).



Figure 3: Abdominal plain film (48h).



Figure 4: Abdominal plain film (72h).



a.Terminal ileum    b.Appendicular stoma    c.Ileocecal valve    d.Ascending colon



e.Transverse colon    f.Descending colon    g.Sigmoid colon    h.Rectum

Figure 5: Electronic colonoscopy.

Note: Most doctors of constipation patients have achieved remarkable results by using the method of purging and attacking at the first time, but it is ineffective after use, and the opposite outcome may occur. Patients who have been using laxatives and enemas for a long time often suffer from severe injury of qi and weakness. If they use powerful drugs, they can consume qi and hurt yin, rob healthy qi, and become ill. This case is a constipation patient with deficiency of both qi and yin after chemotherapy. It can be treated with tonifying qi and nourishing yin, widening the intestines and relieving constipation, and promoting qi moistening dryness. Due to the patient's weak temper and weak transportation, the dross stopped in the large intestine. In addition, the patient is old and weak, the kidney essence is insufficient, the intestinal tract is dry and astringent, and the life gate fire is failing, which leads to cold yin stagnation and poor stool, so it is treated with modified Huangqi Zengye Decoction. Rehmannia glutinosa, Radix Scrophulariae, and Radix Ophiopogonis can nourish yin to moisten intestines. Cistanche deserticola is good for liver and kidney, for blood essence, for kidney yang and kidney yin, for astragalus for qi and yang, for fluid and blood production, and for combination with Magnolia officinalis and Fructus aurantii immaturus, which can be used to facilitate defecation, stagnancy, and constipation. Angelica sinensis and Polygonum multiflorum are used to relieve constipation and replenish blood. Medicines such as hemp seed and cypress seed are nourishing and fatty. Sexual smoothing helps discharge dross. In the second diagnosis, the patient complained that the effect of the upper part was not obvious, the sweating symptoms were relieved during defecation, abdominal distension, dry mouth, and symptoms were slightly relieved, the tongue of the patient was light red, the coating was thin yellow, and the pulse was thin. On the basis of the original formula, two medicines, trichosanthes kernel and bitter almond, were added. Among them, trichosanthes kernel can moisten dry and smooth intestines, increasing the effect of the whole recipe. Because the lung and large intestine are both inside and outside, bitter almonds are used to open the lung qi, so that the turbid qi can be reduced, and the dregs can be transfused. The method of "lifting the pot and uncovering the lid" is used to promote the lung and benefit the intestines. Third, after diagnosis, the patient complained that the symptoms were relieved and continued to take the prescription if the effect was not improved. Because the old people are weak in qi and blood, yin and yang are out of balance, and the functions of the five viscera and six fu organs are impaired, you can't use rhubarb and mirabilite to defeat them. It's

quick to break the ring of emptiness. This patient is so secretive because of his weakness that he can use it to fill the gap, adjust yin and yang, replenish qi, blood, and body fluid, and moisten the intestines and defecate, so the disease is cured.

#### 4. Conclusion

Constipation is a widespread disease in clinics. Western medicine usually uses laxatives. Although it can relieve constipation symptoms in a short time, it may also cause adverse reactions. Long term use will make patients dependent on drugs [25]. If long-term use of drugs containing anthraquinone [26], it may lead to increased constipation. With the change of modern medical models, increasingly psychological factors are considered by the majority of scholars to be the key factors leading to constipation [27]. Therefore, antidepressants are also used in the treatment of constipation, and psychological counseling is now also highly valued. In the treatment of constipation after chemotherapy, although western medicine can rapidly relieve the symptoms of constipation, such as repeated symptoms after drug withdrawal, it has certain advantages over the use of traditional Chinese medicine alone. Teacher Lei treated constipation with deficiency of both qi and yin after chemotherapy based on syndrome differentiation. He emphasized both the objective development law of the disease and the treatment based on syndrome differentiation. He believed that regulating qi, blood, yin, and yang was particularly important in the treatment of constipation. In addition, Mr. Lei also particularly emphasized the significance of eating habits and living habits in the prevention and treatment of constipation [28]. For example, the diet should not be too refined and less residue and more coarse grains [29]. Strengthening sports and participating in social activities to maintain a pleasant mood are also important links to prevent constipation. Through nearly 20 years of theoretical research and clinical practice experience, it has been proved that TCM treatment based on syndrome differentiation has excellent efficacy and fewer side effects in treating constipation after chemotherapy. Teacher Lei takes Huangqi Zengye Decoction as the basic formula for treating constipation with deficiency of both Qi and Yin. Through syndrome differentiation, constipation is treated comprehensively with definite efficacy, which is worth promoting.

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