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Treatment of Edema Based on the Theory of "One Qi Circulation"

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Abstract: The theory of "One Qi Circulation" was proposed by Huang Yuan-yu, a Qing Dynasty physician, who believed that the normal operation of the human body depends on a "circular movement" powered by Qi of middle jiao energy, in which Middle Earth mediates, and the liver, heart, lungs, and kidneys rotate in four dimensions. Based on this, Huang proposed that the key to the pathogenesis of edema is "the failure of middle qi and Spleen deficiency wet-sheng," based on this legislation. With excellent results, he selected a formula to treat edema disease, adding and subtracting according to the evidence.

1. Introduction

Huang Yuan Yu honored Huang Di, Qibo, Yue Ren, and Zhong Jing as the Four Sages and simplified the theories of the Four Sages after integrating them. In his later years, he wrote the book "Four Sages' Heart Source," which systematically discusses the theory of "soil pivot four organs and one qi circulation," covering many ideas of Chinese medicine, such as Yin and Yang, five elements, qi, blood, fluids, internal organs, meridians, and six qi diseases. Huang Lao believes that "qi is not free from water, water is not free from qi, qi stagnation leads to water condensation, water accumulation leads to qi gathering [1] 77", and edema originates from "the failure of the middle qi." The lung is the master of qi. The kidney is the master of water, qi is Yang, prevailing at the top, water is Yin, staying at the bottom, Yin and Yang mutually rooted, qi and water mutually transformed, the hub of its operation is the middle qi, if the middle qi fails, qi stagnation and water condensation become edema. If the middle qi is abundant, the earth qi mediates and pivots the four elephants, and one qi flows around and circulates without end, then "all diseases are not born." Treating edema diseases based on this legislative formula has been effective in clinical practice.

2. Theory of "One Qi Circulation"

2.1 A gas flowing around the ring without end, the earth pivots four internal organs safely

The Four Sacred Sources of the Heart - The Interpretation of Heaven and Man says: "Man and heaven and earth are also involved in the foundation of yin and yang, so there is the ancestral qi" [1]3, the ancestral gi is not only the gi of heaven and earth but also the gi of the human body, and the Tao is called "Taiji," which is the beginning of the fetus, and then "the qi contains Yin and Yang, then there are clear and turbid Yin and Yang are different, and the two rites are divided" [1]2, Yin and Yang are hiding in each other, mutual roots and mutual use, between the two, called the middle qi, regulating the pivot of the rise and fall of Yin and Yang, the so-called earth, the human essence, blood, fluids, and other subtle substances are dependent on the regular operation of the middle ground. The middle world mediates between them, clear gas up and fire, turbid gas down and water, if left to half up, then wood, right to half down, then gold, water, fire, gold, wood, that is, the four elephants, as Huang said "four elephants that are the rise and fall of Yin and Yang, Yin and Yang that is the floating and sinking of the middle qi. The name is divided, it is called the four elephants, but together, it is only Yin and Yang; divided, it is called Yin and Yang, but together, it is only the change of the middle qi ear" [1]2, this is the theory of "one qi flow, earth pivot four elephants" connotation. This theory connects the five elements as a whole, which, from the perspective of traditional Chinese medicine, is the embodiment of a holistic view.

The five elements of the human body are mentioned in the chapter on the generation of the internal organs, and the earth is divided into wu and hex, with wu being the stomach and hex being the spleen. The spleen earth rises, the Yin rises and turns into Yang, the yang qi left to half rise is liver wood, the liver qi declares and warms up, continues to rise with the spleen earth is heart fire, the kidney water also rises with the liver wood and goes up to help the heart fire; the stomach earth falls, the Yang descends and turns into Yin, the yin qi right to half fall is lung gold, the lung qi converges and descends, continues to fall with the stomach earth is kidney water, the heart fire also descends with the lung gold and goes down to help the kidney water. The middle world rushes and harmonizes; the liver qi promotes ascension; the lung qi converges and descends; and the heart and kidney intersect. Water and fire are helpful, forming a "circular" qi circulation with the middle qi as the pivotal force and the liver, heart, lung, and kidney rotating in four dimensions [2]. The middle qi can make water and fire both help properly, and the gold and wood converge and disperse appropriately, which is called "Huang Po" by Taoists, and its meaning is refining.

2.2 The middle qi is exhausted and dispersed disorderly, causing the loss of Yin and Yang and adding a hundred diseases

Huang was convinced that "when the righteous qi exists within, the evil cannot dry up; where the evil comes together, its qi will be deficient" [3]. Based on the theory of "one qi flowing around, the earth pivots on the four elephants," it is believed that the obstruction of qi flowing around causes all diseases, and the malfunctioning of qi in any of the internal organs of the earth and the four elephants will obstruct qi flowing everywhere, which will lead to diseases, The root cause of this is the deficiency of middle qi.

In terms of Yin and Yang, if the middle Qi is deficient and the spleen and stomach are out of order in ascending and descending, then the spleen does not ascend to clear and the stomach does not descend to turbid, resulting in a deficiency of both yin and yang. If this further affects the Kan position, it will lead to the depletion of Yin, and if it affects the Li position, it will lead to the extinction of Yang. From the internal organs, the middle qi moves to the left and becomes the 6th heavenly stem earth, the spleen earth is weak and cannot move to the left to promote liver wood, and the liver loses

its control and cannot generate heart fire by turning heat. The middle qi descends to the right as the 5th heavenly stem earth, and the stomach earth cannot move to the right to converge the lung gold. The lung loses suction and can't transform the cold and generate kidney water. The Kan Li water and fire imbalance, then the kidney water can't warm up and transform into wood, and the heart fire can't descend and transform into gold. In short, the spleen does not rise clear, the liver and kidney depression in the lower, the stomach does not descend turbidly, and the heart and lung hyperactivity in the upper. This is "the middle qi failure is lifting stagnation" [1] 52. Regarding qi and blood, "the stomach yang right turn and turn qi If the spleen and stomach are deficient and lack sources of transportation and transformation, the qi and blood will be deficient; if the spleen and stomach are out of order, the qi and blood will be stagnant and stagnant because "the origin of the failure of the lung qi to descend lies in the stomach, which is filled with turbid qi due to the rebellion of the stomach, so the lung has no way to descend; the origin of the failure of the liver blood to ascend lies in the spleen, which is suppressed by the stagnation of the spleen, so the liver has no way to reach the liver. so the qi and blood will be stagnant" [1]. In a nutshell, Huang believed that malfunctioning of the spleen and stomach is the core cause of disease, and among the spleen and stomach, because "the foot Taiyin spleen is dominated by wet Tu, and the foot Yangming stomach transforms qi through dry gold, so the dryness of Yangming is no match for the wetness of Taiyin", so people with diseases, "at least eight or nine out of ten are due to wetness" "among the ten people, wet living in eight or nine and not only" [1] 52.

3. Explaining the pathogenesis of edema with the theory of "one qi circulation."

3.1 Deficiency of the middle earth and water-dampness flooding

Suwen - angry Tongtian said: "The equilibrium of Yin and Yang makes the vitality well-conserved; the divorce of Yin and yang essence-qi exhausted." [3]. Huang believes that "the essence of yin and yang is the change of the middle i" the middle qi is the origin of man, and if the middle qi is abundant, it will make a qi flow in order, and the body will remain healthy. If the middle qi is weak, the spleen and stomach are weak, and it will produce all kinds of diseases because the foot Taivin spleen is in charge of damp earth, and the Foot Yangming stomach helps lung gold produce dryness, so the majority of people who are sick are because the spleen is weak and damp. The pathogenesis of edema is "spleen deficiency and dampness." First, dampness is dominated by the spleen, so spleen diseases are easily transformed into dampness; second, if the spleen is deficient, the pivot of the flow of gi becomes obstructed, and the rise and fall of qi are abnormal, so the body's fluids cannot be transported normally, and pathological water and dampness will flood the body and produce edema. In Yiyuan, there is a statement that "Dampness is sticky in nature and therefore causes the most illnesses and is most easily transformed into other diseases, with the longest healing period" [4]. The deficiency of the middle earth will cause water and dampness to stay, and the evil of water and dampness can further injure Yang and consume Qi, forming a vicious circle that will lead to a deficiency of the right and evil and makes the disease difficult to heal over time. Most of the clinical symptoms are recurrent episodes of edema of the whole body or lower limbs, with the skin of the edematous parts not lifting when pressed, poor spirit, weakness and heaviness of the extremities, swelling of the chest and abdomen, nausea, poor appetite, reduced food intake, thin stools, fat tongue, thin white or white greasy tongue coating, sunken thin pulse, and weak pressure.

3.2 The difficulty of combining water and fire will lead to a deviation between Yin and Yang

Based on the theory of "one qi flowing around," Huang believes that water and fire intersect, the middle jiao mediates the qi flow, liver qi rises to the left, and lung qi descends to the right. Only when

the flow of qi is smooth water and fluid can normally run. Otherwise, water and fluid will overflow on the skin, resulting in edema. According to "The Source of the Heart of the Four Sages - Explanation of Miscellaneous Diseases," qi descends from above. However, the root of qi is in the "Yang of Kan," and Kan water rises to the left to help Lihuo through the qi of the liver, which is "qi rising in water"; water rises from below, but the root of water is in the "Yang of Kan," and the Kanhuo helps the water of the kan through the descending qi of the lungs. If Kan and Li do not fit together, the heart and kidneys do not intersect, and one qi is not allowed to flow around, then " The water of the Yang Fen spreads and moves upward in a retrograde direction, while the qi of the Yin Fen is depressed and sinks downward" [1] 73, eventually leading to edema. Great doctor Zhang Zhongjing also discussed this long ago, and the "Jin Kui Yao Lve - Water qi Disease Pulse Evidence and Treatment" said that "for kidney water, the abdomen is large, the umbilicus is s wollen and the waist is painful, and difficult urination In the case of heartwater, the body is heavy and less gi, hard to fall asleep, irritable and agitated, and the person is edematous" [5]. Clinically, refractory edema in cardiorenal syndrome has been one of the difficulties in treating edema disease, which is often treated in Chinese medicine. Clinical symptoms include generalized swelling, palpitations, irritability and restlessness, and in severe cases, dizziness, dizziness and tinnitus, thin coating on the tongue, and sunken pulse.

3.3 Gold and wood imbalance can lead to Qi disturbance

Ye Tianshi said: the lung qi runs down from the right side, the liver qi runs up from the left side, the gi runs up and down in harmony, and the gi runs smoothly^[6]. This shows the critical role of the liver ascending and lung descending in the flow of qi. According to Huang, the core of qi's upward and downward movement lies in the middle qi. The leftward rotating movement of the middle qi is called the clear qi of the spleen. This movement is slightly weaker is called the qi of the liver wood, and the running of the middle qi from the right downward rotating running is called the turbid qi of the stomach, and the slightly weaker running is called the qi of the lung gold; the coordinating role of the spleen in the running of the qi depends on the role of the gold wood in astringency and diffusion. "Water does not move on its own, but relies on gas to move" the water drink depends on the fumigation of the Yang Qi of the Middle Earth into the fog, up to the lungs, lung gold by its clear and suave characteristics, can promote water "filling in the meridians, fumigation in the skin, into rain and dew"; down the water "transmission in the bladder, liver qi spreading and ventilating, water flow, in order not to appear swollen. "If the middle qi is deficient, liver qi cannot rise from the left, and lung qi cannot descend from the right, so the lung cannot remove the waste matter, and the liver cannot play the role of unblocking and regulating, so water and fluid do not flow smoothly, which will produce water-dampness; at the same time, "water cannot flow properly, which will lead to qi stagnation," and water is a vin evil, which can easily obstruct gi, and the two are mutually causal [7]. Clinical symptoms include swelling of the eyelids and extremities, cough, and other symptoms of external sensation; or swelling of the whole body, with indentation of the edematous area after pressure but immediate rebound, accompanied by swelling and pain of the chest and breasts on both sides, fullness of the abdomen, chest tightness, physical sleepiness, inability to urinate, white and greasy tongue coating, and slow and weak pulse.

4. Application of "One Qi Circulation" theory in treating edema

Regarding understanding the location and mechanism of edema, Huang Yuan-you and the medical practitioners of the past generations basically share the same view. He believes the disease is mainly caused by the lungs, spleen, and kidneys and is also related to the bladder and Sanjiao. However, his insight is unique in that, based on the theory of "One Qi Circulation," he believes that the cause of edema is due to the obstruction of the Qi circulation in the "circle," which is "centered in the middle

earth and has the four dimensions as the wheel." so the treatment of edema is also based on this idea.

4.1 Tonify the middle and dry the earth, and water will disappear

In "Danxi Xinfa - Edema," it is mentioned that "edema is caused by a deficiency of the spleen that cannot control the water and moves delusively, so Ginseng and Atractylodes should be used to replenish the spleen so that the spleen is replenished and it can rise and fall normally, and the movement of water is normal [8]. Huang also believes that the root cause of edema lies in the "deficiency of the Zhongqi, and the presence of dampness and water in the earth." Middle earth is "the root of the four dimensions," and the disease is "easy for the yin to progress to yang to retreat, and there are more people with dampness" [1]25, so the treatment favors "supporting the yang of the middle earth," and strengthening the spleen and drying dampness as the zhi'l. The representative formula is "Huang Ya Tang." This formula is derived from Zhang Zhongjing's "Li Zhong Decoction," but Huang considered Atractylodes Macrocephala to be "very congested in nature" and therefore deleted Atractylodes Macrocephala. Radix Glycyrrhizae Preparata "enters fifth heavenly stem earth and benefits stomach qi, goes to sixth heavenly stem earth and helps spleen yang, Rhizoma Zingiberis "dry heat is compatible with damp-cold, and healthy movement can help it to push forward," Poria cocos "draining water and drying earth is suitable for all diseases," Radix Glycyrrhizae Preparata "enters both gold and wood and belongs between water and fire qi, and has a good tonic effect on liver, heart, spleen, lung, and kidney" [9]. This formula is called "yellow bud," which means "the earth is the sprout of all things." This formula uses fewer and more precise medicines, and is very clever in its composition, which can "remove water and replenish the fire, replenish yang and suppress yin, so that the middle gi can rotate normally and clear and turbid can be reset, which is the way to remove diseases and prolong life" [1] 52. In addition, the author's mentor also likes to use Astragalus in clinical practice, as mentioned in the book "This Classic": "Astragalus acts directly on the spleen and stomach and travels through the three jiao, so it can tonify the middle qi inwardly, move the camp qi inwardly, and move the guard qi downwardly, so as long as the obstruction between the camp and guard can be removed." Astragalus is one of the most essential herbs for tonifying qi, which has the effect of tonifying qi to elevate Yang qi, removing water-dampness, and reducing swelling. In combination with Atractylodes Macrocephala, it can tonify qi and strengthen the spleen, and in combination with Stephania Tetrandra, it has the effect of diuresis and eliminating edema [10].

4.2 Harmonizing Yin and Yang, Cardiac and renal coordination

According to Huang Yuan Yu, the root of qi is "Yang in Kan," and the root of water is "Yin in Li."If Kan and Li do not match, on the one hand, the water in Yang will flood and rise, which will lead to edema above the navel, and on the other hand, the qi in Yin will stagnate and fall, which will lead to edema below the navel. For treatment, Huang created the two formulas "Tian Hun Tang" and "Di Po Tang" as the basic formulas to harmonize Yang and Yin, both based on "Huang Ya Tang." Based on Huang Ya Tang, Tian Hun Tang adds herbs to warm Yang: Monkshood and Cassia Twig, which can not only nourish the spleen but also warm the kidney Yang; The formula of Di Po Tang uses Liquorice and Radix Ophiopogonis, which nourish the spleen and benefit the qi, to which Pinellia Ternata, Schisandra Chinensis, Radix Ophiopogon, Scrophularia, Ostreagigas Thunb are added, with the purpose of Use Pinellia Ternata, Schisandra Chinensis, Ostreagigas Thunb to astringent the middle qi, Radix Ophiopogon, and Scrophularia to nourish the Yin and lower the fire so that the qi can be normalized and the yin deficiency can be treated^[11]. Harmonization of Yin and Yang, the mutual dependence on water and fire, coordination between heart and kidney, and "One Qi Circulation" to regular operation will be healthy. In clinical practice, Corni Fructus, Semen Cuscutae, stir-baked Cortex Eucommiae, Achyranthes Bidentata, Radix Dipsaci, etc., are often added to the basic formula

of Zhen Wu Tang and Ling Gui Zhu Gan Tang. Suppose edema is accompanied by more obvious insomnia and palpitations in the clinic. In that case, Jiaotai Wan can be added to traffic the heart and kidney, Huang Lian can restrain the hyperactive heart yang by clearing the heart fire, and cinnamon can supplement the deficiency of kidney yang by warming the original qi, thus making the upper and lower Yin and Yang help each other.

4.3 The liver rises, and the lung descends to harmonize the qi activity

Wu Jutong said in "Wen Bing Tiao Bian," "Medical practitioners who are good at treating water usually treat not water but qi in their treatment^[12], Water travels with the gas, "the gas changes, the water also changes." According to Huang, the right to lift and lower the qi is in the middle qi, so "treating qi" should not only start from the liver and lungs but also focus on the treatment of the spleen and stomach in the middle earth. As mentioned in "Sisheng Xinyuan - Miscellaneous Diseases," "water is born in the lungs, governed by the kidneys, stored in the bladder, and excreted by the liver" [1] 75, but the treatment of water diseases should be "excreted in the bladder for those whose root of the disease is in the kidneys, and in the sweat hole for those whose surface of the disease is in the lungs. The treatment of sweat and urine should be based on making the spleen dry so that the liver gi can flow freely". [1]75 In clinical practice, for patients whose lungs have lost the ability to disperse and cleanse and descend due to external evil spirits, we should apply such superficies-resolving formulas as Yue Bi Jia Zhu Tang and Ma huang Lian Qiao Chi Xiao Dou Tang and emphasize the usual application of Yu Ping Feng San to achieve the goal of "if the righteous qi exists within the body, evil spirits cannot invade" [10]. If the evidence is Syndrome of Liver Qi Stagnation, apply Formulae that Regulate the Qi, such as Prosperity San, Chai Hu Shu Liver San, etc. However, no matter the evidence type, it should be based on the evidence type with Astragalus, Codonopsis Pilosula, Chinese yam, Liquorice, and other Chinese herbs to strengthen the spleen and benefit the qi, help the qi to move water, the therapeutic effect is excellent.

5. Case examples

Zhou, female, 73 years old. First diagnosed on March 3, 2021.

Complaint: intermittent bilateral lower extremity edema for more than one year.

The patient developed bilateral lower extremity edema with no apparent cause one year ago, which was evident in the afternoon and reduced in the morning. Symptoms at the time: Facial and bilateral lower limbs edema, stuffiness and discomfort in the stomach and epigastrium, lumbar fatigue, occasional panic, and shortness of breath. Poor sleep, normal stool, and foamy urine. Pale tongue, thin white coating, stringent pulse. Diagnosis: edema. The evidence is due to deficiency of the spleen and kidney and internal stagnation of water and dampness. The treatment is to strengthen the spleen, benefit the kidney, promote water retention and reduce swelling. This formula is based on adding and reducing Bu Zhong Yi Qi Tang.

Prescription: Astragalus 40g, Radix Codonopsis Pilosulae 30g, Pericarpium Citri Reticulatae 15g, Atractylodes Macrocephala 15g, Radix Angelicae Sinensis 12g, Radix Bupleurum Chinense 12g, Rheum Officinale 10g, Drgonsbones 30g break up and be decocted first, Radix Oyster 30g break up and be decocted first, Morinda Officinalis15g, Radix Epimedium Lobatae 30g, Coix Seed 30g, Fried Chinese yam 20g, Fructus Amomi 6g put the medicine next, Cassia Twig 10g, Radix Slippery Rock 30g drug wrapped during decocted, Prepared Licorice 6g.

Second consultation on March 10: All the symptoms have improved after seven consecutive doses. The edema of the face, eyelids, and lower extremities significantly subsided, palpitations, shortness of breath, and stomach fullness and discomfort were relieved more than before, appetite improved, and sleep quality improved. However, the patient still feels weak and has difficulty falling asleep.

The tongue is pale, with a thin white tongue coating and stringy pulse. Based on the last prescription, Radix Slippery Rock, Atractylodes Macrocephala, Radix Epimedium Lobatae, and other herbs were removed, and Fructus Aurantii 15g, Magnolia Bark 15g, Spine Date Seed 30g, Radix Curcumae 15g and other herbs were added and continued to be taken for seven doses.

On March 17, the third consultation: The patient's facial and bilateral lower limbs edema subsided, the fullness of the stomach became less obvious, appetite was normal, sleep was good, weakness improved, occasional shortness of breath, and bowel movements were normal. The patient's usual constitution is weak and vulnerable to evil attack. The patient was advised to take Yu Ping Feng granules 5g/time three times/day, and the prescription was adjusted at two-week intervals.

Author's comments: This patient had facial and bilateral lower limb edema as the primary clinical manifestation, accompanied by palpitations, shortness of breath, lumbar and general weakness, etc. This patient was usually weak, with stomach discomfort, poor appetite, and poor sleep. The formula is based on tonifying the spleen and kidney, promoting water retention and decreasing swelling. This formula uses Bu Zhong Yi Qi Tang plus or minus to regulate the spleen and stomach and to promote the Qi of Middle Earth. The formula uses Astragalus Mongholicus, Codonopsis pilosula, stir-fry Atractylodes Macrocephala and stir-fry Chinese yam to tonify the spleen and benefit the gi and Angelica Sinensis to invigorate the blood and nourish the blood, Cassia Twig to help the Yang and transform the qi, Pericarpium Citri Reticulatae and Radix Bupleuri to make the qi flow without stagnation, and Coptis Chinensis to prevent the qi tonics from being too warm and dry, and added salt Morinda Officinalis and Shorthorned Epimedium Herb to warm the kidney and help the Yang, strengthen the tendons and bones. The patient's loss of appetite and fullness in the stomach area due to spleen deficiency, which leads to reduced transport and transformation functions, and dampness, which hinders the spleen. Amomum villosum Lour and Coix Seed were used to strengthen the spleen and eliminate water-dampness, promote digestion and enhance appetite, while Fructus Aurantii and Cortex Magnoliae Officinalis were used to unblock the qi flow; because the patient was considered insomniac, Drgonsbones, Drgonsbones, Semen Ziziphi Spinosa, and Radix Curcumae were given to improve sleep. The effect was remarkable because the prescription was correct. After the follow-up visit, the prescription was adjusted according to the symptoms, and the patient was advised to take Yu Ping Feng San to enhance immunity. After three months of herbal treatment, the patient's symptoms improved significantly, and after some time, the patient said he did not feel uncomfortable, so he was advised to pay attention to various matters to reduce the recurrence of the disease.

6. Conclusions

Edema is a common and complex disease in clinical practice, and "Jin Gui Yao Yao - Pulse evidence and treatment of water and gas disease" says that "for all those who have water, edema below the waist should be treated by diuresis; edema above the waist should be cured by sweating" [5], which is a symptomatic method. Chinese medicine follows the rule of "treatment based on pattern differentiation," Treatment should be tailored to the disease mechanism and identify the evidence. The pathogenesis of edema is mostly a mixture of deficiency and reality, with deficiency being the leading cause of the disease. "Therefore, treatment should be based on drying the earth and tonifying the middle, followed by promoting the lung, draining the liver, tonifying the kidney, and clearing the heart. This way, the clear and turbid can be reset, the water and fire can help each other, the qi can flow, and the qi can move without edema. Therefore, the entire clinical treatment of edema should focus on nourishing the spleen and stomach. Given the need to control water intake in patients with edema, the author's supervisors use pills that nourish the spleen and stomach, such as Bu Zhong Yi Qi Wan, Shen Ling Bai Zhu San, and Gui Pi Wan, with good clinical results. In addition, Chinese medicine says, "long-standing illnesses have more stasis," so in clinical cases where edema does not

heal for a long time, we can use Wu Ling San and Tao Hong Si Wu Tang to add and reduce. Using qi and blood medicines in the prescription can encourage the operation of other medicines so that the "One Qi Circulation" system can increase the operation momentum and the therapeutic effect. My humble opinion is to look at a leopard through a bamboo tube, which may be biased. I hope you understand.

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