

# METHODOLOGY AND TREATMENT

# Herbal Prescriptions

# Corresponding to the Eight

# Methods

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## CLINICAL STRATEGIES

### History and Definition

Therapeutic principles and methods are an important part of the theory and practice of Chinese medicine. Principles are the reason or rationale of treatment; methodology is the strategy or how to treat.

The original references for methodology were first recorded in the *Nei Jing Su Wen*, or 'Simple Questions', but were not codified until the period of the Qing dynasty (1644-1910) by Doctor Cheng Zhong-ling, who organized a system of eight basic strategies called the "Eight Methods in Therapy" (*yi men ba fa*). Although there are many other individual and combined strategies of treatment, these are the fundamental approaches to treatment and are still in use today.

### Rules of Treatment

In Chinese medicine, diagnosis and treatment are based on an overall analysis of symptoms and signs, aetiology, the nature and location of the illness, and consideration of the patient's overall energy status and constitution, (*bian zheng lun zhi*). Diagnosis guides treatment principle and method of therapy. In general, there are two basic directions of treatment: i. Reinforce the body's own natural resistance by enhancing its energy and nutritional status (*fu zheng qu xie*), and ii. Direct treatment of the disease process itself by using herbs of an opposite nature to the condition (*zheng zhi*). The eight methods encompass both of these principles.

Herbal formula selection is based upon diagnosis, principle, and methodology. These should be consistent with one another, and the prescription should be consistent with the rules of treatment. In Chinese medicine it is said that when taking into consideration all the conventional principles above, remember to remain flexible by paying attention to the individual needs of the patient and the changing nature of the disease.

### Classifications

The eight methods (*ba fa*) are classified by their therapeutic action upon the bodily functions. There are also numerous other methods used for specific pathogenic substances

or entities, as well as combined, complex, and associated methods. Each method uses specific herbal prescriptions to attain a therapeutic goal. The combined methods often depend on complex combinations of herbs from several therapeutic categories.

The following material presents a description of each of the eight methods and representative formulas of choice listed by main method and combined strategies.

## FORMULAS

### Sweating Method (*han fa*)

This method induces perspiration, which aids in regulating the Lung Qi; facilitates interaction between the nutritive (*ying*) and protective (*wei*) energies; and releases pathological influences from the body's surface through the pores (*jie biao*). It is used for externally contracted excess hot or cold conditions caused by wind. It is useful in the treatment of the common cold, upper respiratory tract infections, influenza, bronchitis, asthma, measles, chickenpox, allergic sinusitis, hives and allergic rashes, acute upper body oedema, certain types of headaches, and early-stage arthritic conditions.

The sweating that is produced should be mild or short lived, and the patient should feel better shortly after the treatment. If the perspiration is excessive or lasts too long, the patient may become depleted of yin, resulting in exhaustion and a worsening of the condition. The basic contraindications are: interior conditions; extreme deficiency conditions, especially of yin; severe vomiting or diarrhoea; treatment during hot summer weather.

#### Main methods

- Spicy warm, release surface - *Ma Huang Tang* (Ephedra Decoction)
- Spicy cool, release surface - *Yin Qiao San* (Honeysuckle and Forsythia Powder)

#### Combined methods

- Release surface, expel dampness - *Jiu Wei Qiang Huo Tang* (Nine Herb Decoction with Notopterygium)
- Release surface, transform phlegm - *Xiao Qing Long Tang* (Minor Bluegreen Dragon Decoction)
- Release surface, clear interior - *Da Qing Long Tang*

(Major Bluegreen Dragon Decoction)

- Regulate Qi, release surface - *Xiang Su San* (Cyperus and Perilla Leaf Powder)
- Support yang, release surface - *Ma Huang Xi Xin Fu Zhi Tang* (Ephedra, Asarum and Prepared Aconite Decoction)
- Nourish yin, release surface - *Jia Jian Wei Rui Tang* (Modified Polygonatum Odoratum Decoction)
- Benefit Qi, release surface - *Ren Shen Bai Du San* (Ginseng Powder to Overcome Pathogenic Influences)
- Promote eruptions, release surface - *Sheng Ma Ge Gen Tang* (Cimicifuga and Kudzu Decoction)

### Vomiting Method (*tu fa*)

This method induces vomiting to rapidly remove stagnant or toxic food, phlegm, or poisonous material from the stomach, throat, or oesophagus. It is used for seriously ill patients when there is substantial pathological material stuck in the upper gastrointestinal tract. Induction of vomiting is a violent reaction that can injure the stomach Qi and yin. It should be used only in acute excess conditions in strong patients and is contraindicated in conditions of stagnation in the lower heater.

#### Main methods

- Induce vomiting - *Gua Di San* (Melon Pedicle Powder)

### Draining Downwards (*xia fa*)

This method purges the lower bowel. It induces defaecation in order to expel accumulation of toxic faeces, rapidly remove excess fluid accumulation in the abdomen, reduce stagnation of blood in the lower heater, remove excess heat, and reduce fever. Purgatives are used in the treatment of constipation, certain febrile disorders, gastrointestinal disorders, ascites, and certain gynaecological conditions. Purgatives are divided into cold or warm types, and by degree of strength of action: mild laxatives, lubricatives, or drastics. The purgative method is contraindicated in external conditions, Shao Yang conditions with vomiting, and patients who are aged or in delicate health. It should be used with caution during pregnancy, parturition, and menstruation.

#### Main methods

- Drain heat, move stool - *Da Cheng Qi Tang* (Major Order the Qi Decoction)
- Warm yang, guide out accumulation - *San Wu Bei Ji Wan* (Three Substance Pill for Emergencies)
- Moistening intestines, unblock bowels - *Ma Zi Ren Wan* (Hemp Seed Pill)
- Drive out excess water - *Shi Zao Tang* (Ten Jujube Decoction)

#### Combined methods

- Simultaneously attack and tonify - *Zeng Ye Cheng Qi Tang* (Increase the Fluids and Order the Qi Decoction)
- Drain downward, reduce blood stasis and clumping - *Da Huang Mu Dan Tang* (Rhubarb and Moutan Decoction)

### Harmonizing Method (*he fa*)

This method is used to regulate the functions of the different energetic levels and balance the organs. It is the method of choice for the treatment of Shao Yang stage illness. It is useful in the treatment of upper and lower

respiratory conditions, malarial disorders, dysmenorrhoea, premenstrual syndrome, mal-digestive disorders, cholecystitis, chronic hepatitis, and certain types of mental depression. It is contraindicated in conditions that are clearly differentiated as internal or external, and for those patients with a strong constitution accompanied by thirst.

#### Main methods

- Harmonize the Shao Yang - *Xiao Chai Hu Tang* (Minor Bupleurum Decoction)
- Harmonize the Liver and Spleen - *Si Ni San* (Frigid Extremities Powder)
- Harmonize the intestines and Stomach - *Ban Xia Xie Xin Tang* (Pinellia Decoction to Drain the Epigastrium)

#### Combined methods

- Harmonize and release the exterior - *Chai Hu Gui Zhi Tang* (Bupleurum and Cinnamon Twig Decoction)
- Harmonize and purge - *Chai Hu Jia Mang Xiao Tang* (Bupleurum Decoction plus Mirabilium)

### Warming Method (*wen fa*)

This method is used to warm the interior, eliminate chills, vitalize the yang, and unblock the channels due to cold accumulation. It is used to treat gastroenteritis, mal-absorption syndromes, hypometabolic conditions, certain menstrual and gynaecological conditions, hypothermia, some arthritic conditions, and yang Qi devitalized patients. It is contraindicated in yin deficiency heat, excess hot conditions, febrile conditions, excessive dryness of the skin, dry throat, and diarrhoea.

#### Main methods

- Warm the middle and dispel cold - *Li Zhong Wan* (Regulate the Middle Pill)
- Warm the channels and dispel cold - *Dang Gui Si Ni Tang* (Tangkuei Decoction for Frigid Extremities)
- Warm the menses and dispel cold - *Wen Jing Tang* (Warm the Menses Decoction)
- Restore and revive devastated yang - *Si Ni Tang* (Frigid Extremities Decoction)

#### Combined methods

- Warm yang, benefit water - *Zhen Wu Tang* (True Warrior Decoction)
- Warm and transform cold phlegm - *Ling Gui Zhu Gan Tang* (Poria, Cinnamon Twig, Atractylodis Macrocephalae, and Licorice Decoction)
- Warm yang, guide out accumulation - *Yang He Tang* (Yang-Heartening Decoction)

### Clearing Heat Method (*qing fa*)

This method is used to clear heat and drain fire from a patient with fever, excess toxic heat accumulation, and inflammation. It is useful in the treatment of febrile disorders due to bacterial or viral infection, toxic heat or damp heat accumulation in the organs, lymphadenitis, and other infectious or inflammatory disorders. It is contraindicated in deficiency conditions, coldness of the zang, chills, weak digestion, low-grade fever, and diarrhoea.

#### Main methods

- Drain Fire, Relieve Toxicity - *Huang Lian Jie Du Tang* (Coptis Decoction to Relieve Toxicity)

**Clear Heat from the Qi Level**

- Sweet cold, clear heat - *Bai Hu Tang* (White Tiger Decoction)
- Bitter cold, clear heat - *Zhi Zi Dou Chi Tang* (Gardenia and Prepared Soybean Decoction)

**Clear the Ying and Cool the Blood**

- Clear ying, penetrate heat - *Qing Ying Tang* (Clear the Nutritive Level Decoction)
- Cool blood, disperse blood - *Xi Jiao Di Huang Tang* (Rhinoceros Horn and Rehmannia Decoction)

**Clear Organ Heat**

- Drain Heart fire - *Dao Chi San* (Guide Out the Red Powder)
- Drain Liver fire - *Long Dan Xie Gan Tang* (Gentiana Decoction to Drain the Liver)
- Clear Lung fire - *Xie Bai San* (Drain the White Powder)
- Clear intestine heat - *Bai Tou Weng Tang* (Pulsatilla Decoction)
- Clear Stomach heat - *Qing Wei Tang* (Clear the Stomach Decoction)

**Clear Summer Heat**

- *Liu Yi San* (Six-to-One Powder)

**Combined methods**

- Clear heat, benefit Qi - *Ren Shen Huang Qi San* (Ginseng and Astragalus Powder)
- Clear heat, enrich yin - *Qing Hao Bie Jia Tang* (Artemisia Annuua and Soft-Shell Turtle Shell Decoction)

**Tonification Method (*bu fa*)**

This method is used to benefit, enrich, supplement, replenish, or tonify devitalized conditions of the Qi, blood, yin, or yang. It is useful for all types of deficiency disorders; chronic fatigue; rehabilitation after long illness, surgery, or child birth; counteraction of the effects of serious chronic or degenerative diseases; old age; insomnia; impotence; infertility; and weak digestive function. There are few contraindications, but caution should be taken during pregnancy, in conditions that have active pathological influences, in externally contracted conditions, and in cases of poor digestive function.

**Tonify Qi: Main method**

- Tonify Qi, strengthen Spleen - *Si Jun Zi Tang* (Four-Gentlemen Decoction)

**Tonify Qi: Combined methods**

- Benefit Qi, raise yang - *Bu Zhong Yi Qi Tang* (Tonify the Middle and Augment the Qi Decoction)
- Strengthen Wei, consolidate the surface - *Yu Ping Feng San* (Jade Windscreen Powder)
- Tonify Qi, regulate Qi - *Xiang Sha Liu Jun Zi Tang* (Six-Gentleman Decoction with Aucklandia and Amomum)
- Tonify Qi and blood - *Ba Zhen Tang* (Eight-Treasure Decoction)
- Tonify Qi, release the exterior - *Ren Shen Bai Du San* (Ginseng Powder to Overcome Pathogenic Influences)
- Tonify Qi, preserve the yin - *Sheng Mai San* (Generate the Pulse Powder)

**Tonify Blood: Main method**

- Tonify blood, harmonise the Liver - *Si Wu Tang* (Four

Substance Decoction)

**Tonify Blood: Combined methods**

- Tonify Qi, produce blood - *Dang Gui Bu Xue Tang* (Tangkuai Decoction to Tonify the Blood)
- Tonify and nourish Heart and Spleen - *Gui Pi Tang* (Restore the Spleen Decoction)
- Tonify blood, calm the spirit - *Bai Zi Yang Xin Tang* (Biota Seed Decoction to Nourish the Heart)

**Enrich Yin: Main method**

- Even tonification of three yins - *Liu Wei Di Huang Wan* (Six-Ingredient Pill with Rehmannia)

**Enrich Yin: Combined methods**

- Nourish yin, subdue fire - *Da Bu Yin Wan* (Great Tonify the Yin Pill)
- Nourish yin, soothe the Liver - *Yi Guan Jian* (Linking Decoction)
- Nourish yin, clear the Lung - *Yang Yin Qing Fei Tang* (Nourish the Yin and Clear the Lungs Decoction)
- Nourish yin, lower yang - *Da Ding Feng Zhu* (Major Arrest Wind Pearl)
- Benefit the Stomach, generate fluids - *Yi Wei Tang* (Benefit the Stomach Decoction)

**Tonify Yang: Main method**

- Warm and tonify Kidney yang - *Jin Gui Shen Qi Wan* (Kidney Qi Pill form the Golden Cabinet)

**Tonify Yang: Combined methods**

- Tonify Kidney, astringe urination - *Sang Piao Xiao San* (Mantis Egg-Case Powder)
- Tonify Kidney, consolidate Jing - *Jin Sou Gu Jing Wan* (Metal Lock Pill to Stabilize the Essence)
- Warm and tonify Spleen and Kidney - *Si Shen Wan* (Four-Miracle Pill)
- Warm the Spleen, stop diarrhoea - *Zhen Ren Yang Zang Tang* (True Man's Decoction to Nourish the Organs)

**Reducing Method (*xiao fa*)**

This method is used for the treatment of chronic conditions resulting from the accumulation of hard and swollen substances such as blood, phlegm, or food stagnation; Qi stagnation; abscesses; and parasites. Contraindications include: weak patients, especially if deficient in yin; Spleen deficiency with distended abdomen; conditions characterized by loss of blood, and cases of excess sputum.

**Circulate Qi: Main method**

- Circulate Qi, release constraint - *Yue Ju Wan* (Escape Restraint Pill)

**Circulate Qi: Combined methods**

- Circulate Qi, disperse cold - *Tian Tai Wu Yao San* (Top-Quality Linderia Powder)
- Circulate Qi, expel phlegm - *Gua Lou Xie Bai Bai Jiu Tang* (Trichosanthes Fruit, Chinese Chive, and Wine Decoction)

**Regulate Qi: Main methods**

- Lower Qi, arrest wheezing - *Su Zi Jiang Qi Tang* (Perilla Fruit Decoction for Directing Qi Downward)
- Lower rebellious Qi, stop vomiting - *Xuan Fu Dai Zhe Tang* (Inula and Hematite Decoction)

**Vitalize Blood: Main method**

- Vitalize blood, transform blood stasis - *Xue Fu Zhu Yu*

*Tang* (Drive Out Stasis from the Mansion of Blood Decoction)

**Vitalize Blood: Combined methods**

- Drain heat, dispel blood stasis - *Tao He Cheng Qi Tang* (Peach Pit Decoction to Order the Qi)
- Warm menses, vitalize blood - *Wen Jing Tang* (Warm the Menses Decoction)
- Circulate Qi, vitalize blood - *Xue Fu Zhen Yu Tang* (Drive Out Stasis in the Mansion of Blood Decoction)
- Tonify Qi, vitalize blood - *Bu Yang Huan Wu Tang* (Tonify the Yang to Restore Five Tenths Decoction)

**Reduce Food Stagnation: Main methods**

- Reduce food stagnation - *Bao He Wan* (Preserve Harmony Pill)
- Reduce focal distention, transform accumulation - *Zhi Shi Xiao Pi Wan* (Immature Bitter Orange Pill to Reduce Focal Distention)

**Transform Phlegm: Main method**

- Dry dampness, transform phlegm - *Er Chen Tang* (Two-Cured Decoction)

**Transform Phlegm: Combined methods**

- Expel cold, transform phlegm - *Ling Gan Wu Wei Jiang Xin Tang* (Poria, Licorice, Schisandra, Ginger, and Asarum Decoction)
- Clear heat, transform phlegm - *Bei Mu Gua Lou San* (Fritillaria and Trichosanthes Fruit Powder)
- Extinguish wind, transform phlegm - *Zhi Sou San* (Stop Coughing Powder)

**Expel Dampness: Main method**

- Benefit water, leech out dampness - *Wu Ling San* (Five-Ingredient Powder with Poria)

**Expel Dampness: Combined methods**

- Aromatically transform dampness - *Huo Xiang Zheng Qi San* (Agastache Powder to Rectify the Qi)
- Clear heat, expel dampness - *Yin Chen Hao Tang* (Artemisia Decoction)
- Warm and transform water and dampness - *Ling Gui Zhu Gan Tang* (Poria, Cinnamon Twig, Atractylodis Macrocephalae and Licorice Decoction)
- Expel wind, overcome dampness - *Qiang Huo Sheng Shi Tang* (Notopterygium Decoction to Overcome Dampness)

**Expel Parasites**

- Expel parasites - *Wu Mei Wan* (Mume Pill)

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