

# Class 4: Diarrhea, Dysentery, and Constipation

Xianhui Li

# Diarrhea

## Xie xie

- The frequency of bowel movements is increased, stools are soft and runny or, in severe cases, the stools are like water
- Includes:
  - Acute and chronic enteritis, indigestion, intestinal parasitic diseases, disorders of the pancreas, liver or gallbladder, endocrinic and metabolic disorders and emotional stress

# Etiology and pathogenesis

- Disruption of the normal functioning of the spleen and stomach
- Acute diarrhea: improper diet, external evils (cold, heat, dampness and summerheat or emotional stress)
- Chronic diarrhea: chronic spleen and kidney

# Patterns

- Attack by external cold and dampness
- Attack by external damp-heat
- Obstruction by food stagnation
- Disharmony of liver and spleen
- Vacuity of spleen and stomach
- Vacuity of kidney yang

# Attack by external cold and dampness

- **Key symptoms:**
  - Diarrhea with watery stools. Borborygmus, abdominal pain, congestion in the epigastrium and loss of appetite. white slimy tongue coating and tight or soft pulse.
- **Treatment method:** dispel cold, transform dampness, and relieve diarrhea
- **Formula:** Huo xiang zheng qi san
- **Acupuncture:** ST25 tian shu, SP9 yin ling quan, ST36 zu san li, Ren12 zhong wan, LI4 he gu,

# Formula and modifications

- Huo xiang zheng qi san
  - Huo xiang, zi su ye, bai zhi, da fu pi, fu ling, bai zhu, chen pi, ban xia, hou po, jie geng, zhi gan cao, sheng jiang, da zao
- Modifications:
  - Wind cold exterior symptom are severe, add jing jie, fang feng
  - Dampness is prevalent, add wei ling tang

# Attack by external damp-heat

- **Key symptoms:**
  - Diarrhea with abdominal pain, urgent bowel movement or diarrhea with difficulty in defecation, burning sensation at the anus. Thirst, irritability, scanty dark urine. Thick yellow coating, slippery, rapid pulse.
- **Treatment method:** clear heat, eliminate dampness and relieve diarrhea
- **Formula:** Ge gen huang qin huang lian tang
- **Acupuncture:** ST25 tian shu, SP9 yin ling quan, ST36 zu san li, ST44 nei ting, LI11 qu chi

# Formula and modifications

- Ge gen huang qin huang lian tang
  - Ge gen, huang qin, huang lian, gan cao
- Modifications:
  - To increase heat-clearing, add jin yin hua
  - To strengthen damp-draining, add fu ling, mu tong, che qian zi
  - Dampness is prevalent, add ping wei san
  - For food stagnation, add shen qu, mai ya, shan zha
  - For diarrhea from summerheat-dampness, add huo xiang, bian dou, he ye

# Obstruction by food stagnation

- **Key symptoms:**
  - Abdominal pain relieved after bowel movement, borborygmus, foul smell stools, belching with foul gas, acid regurgitation, loss of appetite. Thick sticky tongue coating, slippery pulse.
- **Treatment method:** disperse food, abduct stagnation and relieve diarrhea
- **Formula:** Bao he wan
- **Acupuncture:** ST25 tian shu, Ren12 zhong wan, ST36 zu san li, M-LE-1 li nei ting

# Formula and modifications

- Bao he wan
  - Shan zha, shen qu, jiang ban xia, fu ling, chen pi, lian qiao, lai fu zi
- Modifications:
  - For severe cases, use Zhi shi dao zhi wan: zhi shi, shen qu, bai zhu, huang lian, huang qin, fu ling, ze xie, da huang

# Disharmony of liver and spleen

- **Key symptoms:**
  - Hypochondrium distention, belching, poor appetite, abdominal pain and diarrhea brought on by emotional disturbance, no relief of pain with bowel movement. Thin white coating, wiry pulse.
- **Treatment method:** soothe the liver, tonify the spleen and relieve diarrhea
- **Formula:** Tong xie yao fang
- **Acupuncture:** ST25 tian shu, Ren12 zhong wan, ST36 zu san li, UB18 gan shu, GB34 yang ling quan, LV3 tai chong

# Formula and modifications

- Tong xie yao fang
  - Bai zhu, bai shao yao, chen pi, fang feng
- Modifications:
  - For raising spleen qi, add sheng ma

# Vacuity of spleen and stomach

- **Key symptoms:**
  - Loose stools which is worse with consumption of greasy foods, poor appetite, epigastric fullness after eating, sallow complexion, lack of vitality, fatigue. Pale tongue white coating, weak thready pulse.
- **Treatment method:** strengthen the spleen, benefit the stomach, relieve diarrhea
- **Formula:** Shen ling bai zhu san
- **Acupuncture:** ST25 tian shu, Ren12 zhong wan, ST36 zu san li, UB20 pi shu, UB26 guan yuan shu, SP3 tai chong

# Formula and modifications

- Shen ling bai zhu san
  - Ren shen, fu ling, bai zhu, gan cao, shan yao, bian dou, lian zi, yi yi ren, sha ren, jie geng
- Modifications:
  - For vacuity of spleen yang with internal cold, use fu zi li zhong wan
  - For diarrhea with weakened spleen qi leading to anal prolapse, use bu zhong yi qi tang

# Vacuity of kidney yang

- **Key symptoms:**
  - Diarrhea before dawn, physical cold, sore weak lower back and knees.
- **Treatment method:** warm yang, and relieve diarrhea
- **Formula:** Si shen wan
- **Acupuncture:** ST36 zu san li, UB23 shen shu, UB21 pi shu, DU4 ming men, Ren4 guan yuan, KI3 tai xi

# Formula and modifications

- Si shen wan
  - Bu gu zhi, rou dou kou, wu wei zi, wu zhu yu
- Modifications:
  - To increase the kidney and spleen warming effect, add zhi fu zi, pao jiang
  - For spleen qi deficiency, add huang qi, dang shen, bai zhu

# Dysentery

## li ji

- Dysentery is a contagious intestinal infection that commonly occurs in summer and autumn
  - Frequency of bowel movements, tenesmus, abdominal pain and stool mixed with mucus, pus and blood
- Includes:
  - Bacterial and amoebic dysentery

# Etiology and pathogenesis

- Epidemic heat and dampness, or the intake of raw, cold or contaminated foods--  
-stagnation of qi and blood---connecting vessels are injured

# Patterns

- Damp-heat dysentery
- Epidemic toxic dysentery
- Cold and dampness dysentery
- Yin vacuity dysentery
- Vacuity cold dysentery
- Chronic intermittent dysentery

# Damp-heat dysentery

- **Key symptoms:**
  - Abdominal pain, tenesmus, stools mixed with pus and blood, burning sensation in the anus, dark scanty urine, irritability, thirst, fever. Yellow sticky tongue coating. Rapid slippery pulse.
- **Treatment method:** clear heat, transform dampness, rectify qi and blood
- **Formula:** Shao yao tang
- **Acupuncture:** LI4 he gu, ST25 tian shu, ST37 shang ju xu, LI11 qu chi, SP9 yin ling quan

# Formula and modifications

- Shao yao tang:
  - Bai shao yao, huang qin, huang lian, dang gui, da huang, bing lang, mu xiang, gan cao, rou gui
- Modifications:
  - For damp-heat with exterior, use ge gen qin lian tang, plus jin yin hua
  - For heat toxin, use bai tou weng tang
  - For food stagnation, add shen qu, zhi shi, shan zha
  - For blood heat, add di yu, tao ren, chi shao yao, mu dan pi

# Epidemic toxic dysentery

- **Key symptoms:**
  - Sudden onset, high fever, thirst, headache, loss of consciousness with convulsions in severe cases, acute abdominal pain, tenesmus, stools mixed with pus and blood.
- **Treatment method:** clear heat, cool the blood, disperse toxin
- **Formula:** Bai tou weng tang
- **Acupuncture:** LI4 He gu, ST25 tian shu, ST37 shang ju xu, DU14 da zhui, M-UE-1-5 shi xuan

# Formula and modifications

- Bai tou weng tang:
  - Bai tou weng, huang bai, huang lian, qin pi
- Modifications:
  - To strengthen heat clearing and toxin dispersing add: jin yin hua, huang qin, chi shao yao, mu dan pi, di yu

# Cold and dampness dysentery

- **Key symptoms:**
  - Abdominal pain, tenesmus, stools mixed with pus and blood, pus predominant, aversion to cold, loss of appetite, no thirst. Pale tongue, white sticky coating. Soft slow pulse.
- **Treatment method:** warm and dissipate cold dampness, rectify qi, dissolve stasis
- **Formula:** Wei ling tang
- **Acupuncture:** LI4 He gu, ST25 tian shu, ST37 shang ju xu, SP9 yin ling quan, Ren12 zhong wan

# Formula and modifications

- Wei ling tang:
  - Cang zhu, hou po, chen pi, bai zhu, fu ling, zhu ling, ze xie, gui zhi, zhi gan cao
- Modifications:
  - To rectify qi and dissipate cold, add bing lang, mu xiang, pao jiang
  - Usually delete ze xie, fu ling, add bai shao yao, dang gui

# Yin vacuity dysentery

- **Key symptoms:**
  - Stools mixed with pus and blood, burning pain in the abdomen, loss of appetite, irritability, thirst. Dark red tongue with little coating, rapid thready pulse.
- **Treatment method:** clear heat, nourish yin, relieve dysentery
- **Formula:** Zhu che wan
- **Acupuncture:** LI4 He gu, ST25 tian shu, ST37 shang ju xu, KI6 zhao hai, SP6 san yin jiao

# Formula and modifications

- Zhu che wan:
  - Huang lian, dang gui, e jiao, pao jiang
- Modifications:
  - To reinforce to relieve pain, add bai shao yao, gan cao
  - For vacuity fire injuring fluids, add bei sha shen, shi hu
  - For large amounts of blood in the stool, add mu dan pi, han lian cao, di yu
  - For damp-heat, add huang bai, qin pi

# Vacuity cold dysentery

- **Key symptoms:**
  - Liquid stools mixed with pus, incontinence of stools, dull cold abdominal pain, loss of appetite, fatigue, physical cold, low back pain. Pale tongue, white coating. Deep thready pulse.
- **Treatment method:** warm and supplement the spleen and kidney, relieve dysentery with astringent herbs
- **Formula:** Zhen ren yang zang tang
- **Acupuncture:** LI4 He gu, ST25 tian shu, ST37 shang ju xu, UB20 pi shu, UB23 shen shu

# Formula and modifications

- Zhen ren yang zang tang:
  - Ren shen, bai zhu, bai shao yao, dang gui, mu xiang, he zi, rou gui, ying su ke, rou dou kou, zhi gan cao
- Modifications:
  - To reinforce to tonify yang, add zhi fu zi, pao jiang
  - For vacuous spleen qi leading to anal prolapse, use bu zhong yi qi tang

# Chronic intermittent dysentery

- **Key symptoms:**
  - Recurrent dysentery, Abdominal pain, tenesmus, stools mixed with pus and blood, fatigue, loss of appetite. Pale tongue, sticky coating, thready pulse.
- **Treatment method:** warm and supplement the spleen, clear heat, rectify qi, dissolve stasis
- **Formula:** lian li tang
- **Acupuncture:** LI4 He gu, ST25 tian shu, ST37 shang ju xu, Ren4 guan yuan, ST36 zu san li

# Formula and modifications

- Lian li tang:
  - Ren shen, bai zhu, huang lian, fu ling, zhi gan cao
- Modifications:
  - To reinforce to tonify qi and remove stasis, delete fu ling, add bing lang, mu xiang, zhi shi
  - For extreme vacuity of spleen yang, delete huang lian, zhi fu zi, rou gui
  - For complicated by both heat and cold, use wu mei wan
  - For preventing recurrence, xiang sha liu jun zi tang

# Constipation

## bian bi

- Bian bi refers to conditions in which the bowels have difficulty evacuating stools
- Includes:
  - Habitual constipation, neurosis, during the recovery stages of enteritis, postpartum, after surgery or illnesses that weaken peristalsis or during certain pathological conditions of the rectum or anus

# Etiology and pathogenesis

- Internal heat and dryness
- Qi stagnation
- Vacuity of qi and blood

# Patterns

- Heat constipation
- Qi stagnation constipation
- Qi deficiency constipation
- Blood deficiency constipation
- Cold constipation

# Heat constipation

- **Key symptoms:**
  - Constipation, dark scanty urine, flushed complexion, fever, thirst, halitosis, abdominal distention with pain. red tongue, dry yellow coating, slippery rapid pulse.
- **Treatment method:** clear heat, moisten the intestine
- **Formula:** ma zi ren wan
- **Acupuncture:** ST25 tian shu, UB25 da chang shu, SJ6 zhi gou, KI6 zhao hai, LI4 He gu, LI11 qu chi

# Formula and modifications

- Ma zi ren wan:
  - Huo ma ren, bai shao yao, zhi shi, hou po, da huang, xing ren
- Modifications:
  - For injury to fluids, add sheng di huang, xuan shen, mai men dong

# Qi stagnation constipation

- **Key symptoms:**
  - Constipation, frequent belching, stiff sensation at abdomen, chest and hypochondrium. Thin coat, wiry pulse.
- **Treatment method:** normalize qi, move stagnation
- **Formula:** Liu mo yin
- **Acupuncture:** ST25 tian shu, UB25 da chang shu, SJ6 zhi gou, Ren6 qi hai, Ren12 zhong wan, LV3 tai chong

# Formula and modifications

- Liu mo yin:
  - Chen xiang, bing lang, mu xiang, wu yao, zhi shi, da huang
- Modifications:
  - For prolonged stagnation of qi giving rise to fire, add huang qin, shan zhi zi

# Qi deficiency constipation

- **Key symptoms:**
  - Difficult elimination without hardness, dryness, distention and pain. shortness of breath, spontaneous perspiration, fatigue. Pale tongue, weak pulse.
- **Treatment method:** boost qi, free the stool
- **Formula:** Huang qi tang
- **Acupuncture:** ST25 tian shu, UB25 da chang shu, SJ6 zhi gou, SP6 san yin jiao, UB20 pi shu, ST36 zu san li, Ren4 guan yuan

# Formula and modifications

- Huang qi tang:
  - Huang qi, chen pi, huo ma ren, feng mi
- Modifications:
  - For severe qi vacuity, add ren shen, bai zhu

# Blood deficiency constipation

- **Key symptoms:**
  - Dry hard stool, pale complexion, dizziness and vertigo, palpitation, pale lips.
- **Treatment method:** nourish the blood, moisten the intestine
- **Formula:** Run chang wan
- **Acupuncture:** ST25 tian shu, UB25 da chang shu, ST36 zu san li, SP14 fu jie, Ren4 guan yuan, SP6 san yin jiao

# Formula and modifications

- Run chang wan:
  - Sheng di huang, dang gui, huo ma ren, tao ren, zhi ke
- Modifications:
  - For aged patients or postpartum, add he shou wu, huang qi, rou cong rong
  - For yin vacuity and internal heat, add xuan shen, zhi mu

# Cold constipation

- **Key symptoms:**
  - Difficult elimination with clear copious urine, cold extremities, abdominal coldness and pain, coldness and aching of the lower back and knees.
- **Treatment method:** warm kidney yang, replenish kidney essence, moisten bowels, promote elimination
- **Formula:** Ji chuan jian
- **Acupuncture:** ST25 tian shu, UB25 da chang shu, Ren6 qi hai, UB23 shen shu, Ren4 guan yuan shu, KI6 zhao hai

# Formula and modifications

- Ji chuan jian:
  - Dang gui, rou cong rong, niu xi, ze xie, sheng ma, zhi ke
- Modifications:
  - To warm yang and supplement the kidney, add: rou gui, shu di huang