

DIAGNOSIS BY HEARING

- Diagnosis by hearing includes listening to the sound and pitch of the voice, cough, breathing, vomiting, hiccup, borborygmi, groaning, and indeed any other sound emitted by a person.
- As a general principle, a loud sound is indicative of a Full pattern, while a weak sound is indicative of an Empty pattern.

Voice

- Sudden loss of voice is usually due to invasion of exterior Wind-Heat. A gradual loss of voice is due to deficiency of Lung-Qi or Lung-Yin.
- A loud, coarse voice is indicative of an Excess pattern, while a weak and thin voice is indicative of a Deficiency pattern.
- Reluctance to talk usually indicates a Cold pattern, while incessant talking indicates a Heat pattern.

- The type of voice can also be diagnosed according to the 5-Element scheme of correspondences, so that a shouting voice is indicative of a Liver disharmony, a laughing voice of a Heart disharmony, a singing voice of a Spleen disharmony, a whimpering voice of a Lung disharmony and a groaning voice of a Kidney disharmony.

Breathing

- A coarse, loud breathing sound indicates a Full pattern, while a weak, thin breathing sound indicates an Empty pattern.

Cough

- A loud and explosive cough is indicative of a Full pattern, while a weak cough is indicative of an Empty pattern.
- A dry cough indicates Lung-Yin deficiency.

DIAGNOSIS BY SMELLING

- Body smell can be related to different organs within the 5-Elements system of correspondences: i.e. rancid (油脂味) for the Liver, burned for the Heart, sweetish for the Spleen, rank (恶臭的) for the Lungs and putrid (腐化的) for the Kidneys.

- Apart from the type of smell, as a general rule any strong, foul smell is indicative of Heat, while absence of smell is indicative of Cold.
- Bad breath indicates Heat in the Stomach.
- If the stools or urine have a strong, foul smell, it indicates Heat and, in the case of urine, also Dampness.

Questioning

DME class 4-6

1 CHILLS AND FEVER

- In the context of exterior diseases, it is important to distinguish whether the patient has chilliness or fever or both.
- In this context, "chilliness" has a dual meaning: it means that the patient feels cold, but also that he or she has "aversion to cold", i.e. reluctance to go out in the cold.

1 Chills & Fever

- If the person has aversion to cold and feels chilly, it indicates an exterior invasion of Wind-Cold or Wind-Heat.
- Aversion to cold is present in exterior invasions of both Wind-Cold and Wind-Heat because the pathogenic factor blocks the circulation of Defensive Qi which cannot warm the body and hence the patient feels cold.

- In invasions of Wind-Cold, fever may be present simultaneously with the aversion to cold.
- If the fever is predominant and there is only slight aversion to cold, this indicates an exterior invasion not of Wind-Cold, but Wind-Heat.

- It is worth noting here that what is usually translated as "fever" from Chinese medical books indicates more a subjective feeling of heat rather than an actual temperature.
- Chinese Medicine was mostly unconcerned with objective measurements and relied primarily on observation of symptoms and signs.

- In other words, a person may have a pronounced feeling of heat without an actual fever. Conversely, one may have an actual temperature but have no feeling of heat.
- If there is a fever without aversion to cold, this indicates an interior Heat pattern.

- In the context of interior diseases, if the patient feels chilly, it indicates Interior Cold from deficiency of Yang.
- Chilliness from deficiency of Yang can be distinguished from that from exterior Wind-Cold, in so far as the former is alleviated by covering oneself up and the latter is not.

- A low-grade fever getting worse in the afternoon, or only occurring in the afternoon, indicates Yin deficiency.
- A constant low-grade temperature indicates a Damp-Heat pattern.
- A fever in the middle of the night in an adult indicates Yin deficiency, and in a child it indicates retention of food.

2 SWEATING

- Evaluation of sweating must be made by considering if it is part of an exterior or interior pattern.
- In Exterior conditions, sweating indicates a relatively deficient condition.
- For example, in exterior invasion of Wind-Cold, if there is sweating the condition is of a Deficient nature, if there is no sweating, it is of an Excess nature.

- In the context of interior conditions, sweating may be caused by deficiency of Yang, deficiency of Yin, excess of Yang (i.e. Heat or Fire) or Damp-Heat.
- One must distinguish sweating by the area of body, time of day, conditions and quality of sweat.

- a. Area of body:
- Only on head: Heat in the Stomach or Damp-Heat
- Oily sweat on forehead: collapse of Yang
- Only on arms and legs: Stomach and Spleen deficiency

- Only on hands: Lung-Qi deficiency or nerves
- Whole body: Lung-Qi deficiency
- On palms, soles and chest: Yin deficiency (called 5-palm sweat")

- b. Time of day:
- In day-time: Yang deficiency
- At night-time: Yin deficiency (in some cases it can also be from Damp-Heat).

- c. Condition of illness:
- Profuse cold sweat during a severe illness: collapse of Yang
- Oily sweat on forehead, like pearls, not flowing: collapse of Yang, danger of imminent death.

- d. Quality of sweat:
- Oily: severe Yang deficiency
- Yellow: Damp-Heat.

3 HEAD AND BODY

- Head
- The head is the area where all the Yang channels meet bringing clear Yang to the head and orifices, thus enabling the person to have clear sight, hearing, taste and smell.
- Headache
- Distinguished according to onset, time, location, character of pain, condition.

- a. Onset:
- Recent onset, short duration: headache from exterior attack of Wind-Cold
- Gradual onset, in attacks: interior type.
- b. Time of day:
- Day-time: Qi or Yang deficiency
- Evening: Blood or Yin deficiency

- c. Location:
- Nape of neck: Greater Yang channels (can be from exterior invasion of Wind-Cold, or from interior Kidney deficiency)
- Forehead: Bright Yang channels (can be from Stomach-Heat or Blood deficiency)

- Temples and sides of head: Lesser Yang channels (can be from exterior Wind-Cold or Wind-Heat in the Lesser Yang, or from interior Liver and Gall Bladder Fire rising)
- Vertex: Terminal Yin channels (usually from deficiency of Liver-Blood)
- Whole head: exterior invasion of Wind-Cold.

- d. Character of pain:
- Heavy feeling: Dampness or Phlegm
- Pain which is "inside" the head, "hurting the brain": Kidney deficiency
- Distending, throbbing: rising of Liver-Yang
- Boring, like a nail: stasis of Blood.

- e. Condition:
- With aversion to wind or cold: exterior invasion
- Aggravated by cold: Cold pattern
- Aggravated by heat: Heat pattern
- Aggravated by fatigue, improved by rest: Qi deficiency.

- Dizziness
- Dizziness can be due to four factors which can be summarized as: Wind, Fire, Phlegm, Deficiency.
- The main way to distinguish the various types of dizziness is by integration with the accompanying symptoms and signs.

- Severe giddiness when everything seems to sway and the person loses the balance is usually due to internal Wind.
- Slight dizziness accompanied by a feeling of heaviness and muzziness of the head indicates Phlegm obstructing the head and preventing the clear Yang from ascending to the head.

- Slight dizziness aggravated when tired, indicates Qi deficiency.
- A sudden onset of dizziness points to a Full pattern.
- A gradual onset points to an Empty pattern.

- **Body**
- Pain in the whole body
- Sudden onset, with chills and fever: exterior Wind-Cold
- Pain all over, with feeling of tiredness: Qi-Blood deficiency
- In women after childbirth: if the pain is dull, Blood deficiency. If the pain is severe, Blood stasis.

- Pain in arms and shoulders experienced only when walking: Liver-Qi stagnation
- Pain in all muscles, with hot sensation of the flesh: Stomach-Heat
- Pain with feeling of heaviness: Dampness obstructing muscles.

- Pain in joints
- Wandering from joint to joint: from Wind
- Fixed and very painful: from Cold
- Fixed, with swelling and numbness: from Dampness.

- Backache
- Continuous, dull: Kidney deficiency
- Recent onset, severe, with stiffness: sprain of back causing stasis of Blood
- Severe pain, aggravated during cold and damp weather, alleviated by application of heat: invasion of exterior Cold and Damp to the back channels

- Boring pain with inability to turn the waist:
stasis of Blood
- Pain in the back extending up to the
shoulders: exterior attack.

- Numbness
- Numbness of arms and legs or only hands and feet on both sides: Blood deficiency
- Numbness of fingers, elbow and arm on one side only (especially of the first three fingers): internal Wind and Phlegm (this may indicate the possibility of impending Wind-stroke).

4 THORAX AND ABDOMEN

- The thorax is under the influence of Heart and Lungs, while the flanks are under the control of the Liver and Gall-Bladder.
- The abdomen is influenced by the Liver; Intestines, Spleen, Kidneys and Bladder.

- Pain in the chest is often due to stasis of Blood in the Heart, which, in turn is usually due to deficiency of Yang.
- Chest pain accompanied by cough with profuse yellow sputum is due to Lung-Heat.
- Distension and stuffiness of the hypochondrium = stagnation of Liver-Qi.
- If pain is severe = stasis of Liver-Blood.

- Epigastric pain can be either retention of food in the Stomach or to Stomach-Heat.
- If the pain is very dull and not very severe, it is due to Deficient-Cold in the Stomach.
- If the pain is alleviated by eating, it is of the Empty type; if it is aggravated by eating, it is of the Full type.
- A feeling of fullness in the epigastrium is due either to Spleen deficiency or to Dampness.

- Lower abdominal pain can be due to many different causes, the most common of which are internal Cold, stagnation of Liver-Qi or Liver-Blood, Damp-Heat, stasis of Blood in the Intestines or Uterus.
- These various conditions can only be differentiated on the basis of the accompanying symptoms and signs.

- An abdominal pain which is relieved by bowel movements is of a Full nature; if it is aggravated by bowel movements, it is of an Empty nature.
- Hypogastric pain is usually due to Damp-Heat in the Bladder or sometimes Liver-Fire infusing downwards to the Bladder.

5 FOOD AND TASTE

- These questions are aimed at establishing the state of Stomach and Spleen.
- Food
- In general, a condition that is relieved by eating is of an Empty nature; if it is aggravated by eating, it is of a Full nature.

- Lack of appetite indicates Spleen-Qi deficiency.
- Being always hungry = Heat in the Stomach.
- A feeling of fullness and distension after eating indicates retention of food.
- A preference for hot food (in terms of temperature) indicates a Cold pattern; preference for cold food indicates a Heat pattern.

- Taste
- A bitter taste indicates a Full-Heat pattern, either of Liver or Heart.
- If it is due to Liver-Fire, the bitter taste is more or less constant.
- If it is due to Heart-Fire, it is associated with insomnia, and is only present in the morning after a sleepless night, and not after a good night's sleep.

- A sweet taste indicates either Spleen deficiency or Damp-Heat.
- A sour taste indicates retention of food in the Stomach or disharmony of Liver and Stomach.
- A salty taste indicates Kidney-Yin deficiency. Lack of taste sensation indicates Spleen deficiency. A pungent taste indicates Lung-Heat.

- VOMIT
- Sour vomiting: invasion of Stomach by Liver
- Bitter vomiting: Liver and Gall-Bladder Heat
- Clear-watery vomiting: Cold in the Stomach with retention of fluids
- Vomiting soon after eating: Heat pattern.
- Sudden vomiting with loud noise = Full pattern. Vomiting which is slow in coming with weak noise = Empty pattern.

6 STOOLS AND URINE

- These are two important questions to establish the Full or Empty and Hot or Cold character of a condition.

- Stools
- Constipation
- Aggravation of a condition after a bowel movement suggests an Empty pattern; amelioration of a condition after a bowel movement suggests a Full condition.
- Acute constipation with thirst and dry yellow coating indicates Heat in the Stomach and Intestines.

- Constipation in old people or women after childbirth is due to deficiency of Blood.
- Constipation with small, bitty stools like goat's stools indicates stagnation of Liver-Qi and Heat in the Intestines.
- If the stools are not dry, difficulty in performing a bowel movement indicates stagnation of Liver-Qi.

- Constipation with abdominal pain indicates internal Cold and deficiency of Yang.
- Constipation with dry stools, without thirst, indicates Yin deficiency, usually of Kidneys and/or Stomach.
- Alternation of constipation and diarrhea indicates that stagnant Liver-Qi is invading the Spleen.

- Diarrhea
- Pain accompanying diarrhea suggests Liver involvement or the presence of Heat.
- Foul smell = Heat, no smell = Cold.
- Most common cause of chronic diarrhea is either Spleen-Yang, or Kidney-Yang deficiency or both.

- Chronic diarrhoea occurring every day in the very early morning is due to Kidney-Yang deficiency and is called "cock-crow diarrhoea" or also "5th-hour diarrhoea".
- If the diarrhoea is accompanied by abdominal pain, it indicates the presence of interior Cold in the Intestines.

- Diarrhea with mucus in the stools indicates Dampness in the Intestines. If it has blood too, it indicates Damp-Heat in the Intestines.
- Loose stools with undigested food indicate Spleen-Qi deficiency.
- A burning sensation in the anus while passing stools indicates Heat.

- If the stools are not loose or only slightly loose but are very frequent and the person cannot hold them easily, it indicates deficiency of Middle Qi, i.e. the Qi of Stomach and Spleen: it also indicates sinking of Spleen-Qi.

- Black or very dark stools indicate stasis of Blood.
- If the blood comes first, and is bright-red splashing in all directions, it indicates Damp-Heat in the Intestines.
- If the blood comes first and is turbid and the anus feels heavy and painful, it indicates Heat in the Blood.

- If the stools come first and then the blood, and this is watery, it indicates that Spleen-Qi is deficient and is unable to control Blood.
- Borborygmi (gurgling sounds in the abdomen) with loose stools indicate Spleen deficiency.
- Borborygmi with a feeling of abdominal distension and without loose stools, indicate stagnation of Liver-Qi.

- Flatulence is generally due to stagnation of Liver-Qi.
- If there is a foul smell, it indicates Damp-Heat in the Spleen or Stomach-Heat.
- If there is no smell, it indicates interior Cold from Spleen-Yang deficiency.

- Urine
- The salient diagnostic features to be considered here are the function, pain, color and amount of urine.
- Function
- Enuresis or incontinence indicate Kidney deficiency. Retention of urine indicates Damp-Heat in the Bladder.

- Difficulty in urination indicates either Damp-Heat in the Bladder or deficiency of Kidney (the latter is more common in old people).
- Very frequent and copious urination indicates Kidney deficiency, frequent and scanty urination is usually caused by Qi deficiency.

- Pain
- Pain before urination indicates stagnation of Qi in the Lower Burner, pain during urination indicates Heat in the Bladder and pain after urination indicates deficiency of Qi.

- Color
- Pale urine indicates a Cold pattern, usually of the Bladder and Kidneys.
- Dark urine indicates a Heat pattern.
- Turbid or cloudy urine indicates Dampness in the Bladder.

- Copious, clear and pale urination during an exterior invasion of Wind-Cold or Wind-Heat indicates that the pathogenic factor has not penetrated into the Interior (if it had, the urine would be dark).
- Amount
- Large amounts of urine indicate Kidney-Yang deficiency. Scanty urination indicates Kidney- Yin deficiency.

Sleep and Energy

- Insomnia
- Sleep depends on the state of Blood and Yin. Blood and Yin are the "residence" of the Mind: without Blood and Yin, the Mind has no residence and it floats at night causing insomnia.

- Insomnia in the sense of not being able to fall asleep, but sleeping well after falling asleep, indicates deficiency of Heart-Blood.
- Insomnia in the sense of waking up many times during the night indicates deficiency of Kidney-Yin.
- Dream-disturbed sleep indicates Liver-Fire or Heart-Fire.

- Restless sleep with dreams indicates retention of food.
- Waking up early in the morning and failing to fall asleep again indicates deficiency of Gall-Bladder.
- As people grow older, it is to some extent normal to wake early, due to the physiological decline of Qi and Blood.

- Lethargy
- Feeling sleepy after eating indicates Spleen-Qi deficiency.
- A general feeling of lethargy and heaviness of the body indicates retention of Dampness.
- If there is also dizziness, it indicates Phlegm.

- Extreme lethargy and lassitude with a feeling of cold, indicates deficiency of Kidney-Yang.
- Lethargic stupor with exterior Heat symptoms indicates invasion of Pericardium by Heat.
- Lethargic stupor with rattling in the throat, a Slippery pulse and a sticky tongue coating, indicates blurring of the mind by Phlegm.

8 EARS AND EYES

- The Kidneys open into the ears, but not every ear problem is related to the Kidneys.
- The Lesser Yang channels flow to the ear and some exterior Heat conditions can cause ear problems.
- In addition, Dampness and Phlegm obstruct the rising of clear Yang to the upper orifices and this can affect the ears.

- **Tinnitus**
- Onset
- A sudden onset suggests a Full condition (usually Liver-Fire or Liver-Wind).
- A gradual onset suggests an Empty condition (usually deficiency of the Kidneys).

- Pressure

- If the noise is aggravated by pressing with one's hands on the ears, it suggests a Full condition; if it is alleviated, it suggests an Empty condition.

- Character of noise

- A loud, high-pitch noise like a whistle indicates Liver-Yang, Liver-Fire or Liver-Wind rising.
- A low-pitch noise like rushing water indicates Kidney deficiency.

- **Deafness**
- Sudden onset = Full; gradual onset = Empty.
- In chronic cases, apart from Kidney deficiency, deafness can also be due to:
- Heart-Blood deficiency
- Deficiency of Qi of the Upper Burner
- Yang Qi deficiency

- **Eyes**
- Pain like a needle and with redness of the eye associated with headache indicates Fire-Poison in the Heart channel.
- Pain, swelling and redness of the eye indicate either invasion of the eye channels by exterior Wind-Heat, or interior Liver-Fire.

- Blurred vision and "floaters" in the eyes indicate Liver-Blood deficiency. Photophobia also indicates Liver-Blood deficiency.
- A feeling of pressure in the eyes indicates Kidney-Yin deficiency.
- Dryness of the eyes indicates Liver and/or Kidney Yin deficiency.

9 THIRST AND DRINK

- Thirst with desire to drink large amounts of cold water indicates a Full-Heat pattern, which can be of any organ.
- Absence of thirst indicates a Cold pattern, usually of the Stomach or Spleen.

- Thirst but with no desire to drink indicates Damp-Heat (the Heat gives rise to the thirst, but the Dampness makes one reluctant to drink).
- Thirst with desire to sip liquids slowly, or to sip warm liquids indicates Yin deficiency (usually of Stomach or Kidneys).
- Desire to drink cold liquids suggests a Heat pattern; desire to drink warm liquids suggests a Cold pattern.

10 PAIN

- Pain can be caused by Full or Empty conditions.
- The Full or Empty character of pain should always be ascertained, especially with relation to pain experienced in the head, chest or abdomen.

- Aetiology and pathology of pain
- Pain can be due to the following Excess conditions:
- Invasion of exterior pathogenic factors
- Interior Cold or Heat
- Stagnation of Qi or Blood
- Obstruction by Phlegm
- Retention of food.

- All these conditions cause an obstruction to the circulation of Qi in the channels and therefore pain.
- These are all Full types of pain.
- There is a saying in Chinese Medicine that goes: "If the channels are free there is no pain; if the channels are obstructed there is pain".

- Pain can also be due to Deficiency conditions:
- Deficiency of Qi and Blood
- Consumption of Body Fluids from Yin deficiency.
- These conditions cause malnourishment of the channels and hence pain. This is an Empty type of pain and would tend to be duller than the previous type

- Stagnation of Qi causes distention more than pain, or a distending pain, having no fixed location.
- Stasis of Blood causes a severe, boring pain, with a fixed location in a small area.

- **Characters of pain**
- Pressure
- Empty: alleviated
- Full: aggravated
- Cold: —
- Heat: —

- Food
- Empty: alleviated
- Full: aggravated
- Cold: —
- Heat: —

- Type
- Empty: dull-lingering
- Full: sharp
- Cold: cramping
- Heat: burning

- Temperature
- Empty: —
- Full: —
- Cold: better with heat
- Heat: better with cold

- Bowel movement
- Empty: aggravated
- Full: alleviated
- Cold: aggravated
- Heat: alleviated

- Posture
- Empty: better lying down
- Full: better sitting
- Cold: —
- Heat: —

- Onset
- Empty: slow, gradual
- Full: sudden
- Cold: —
- Heat: —

- Vomiting
- Empty: aggravated
- Full: alleviated
- Cold: aggravated
- Heat: alleviated

- Rest/movement
- Empty: better with rest
- Full: better with movement
- Cold: better with movement
- Heat: worse with movement

WOMEN

- Special questions need to be asked of women regarding menstruation, discharges, pregnancy and childbirth.

- Menstruation
- The condition of menstruation gives a very vivid idea of a woman's state of Qi and Blood. One must ask about the cycle, amount of bleeding, color of blood, quality and pain.

- Cycle
- If the periods always come early it indicates either Heat in the Blood or Qi deficiency.
- If the periods always come late, it indicates either Blood deficiency or stagnation of Blood or Cold.
- If the periods are irregular, coming sometimes early and sometimes late, it indicates stagnation of Liver-Qi or Liver-Blood, or Spleen deficiency.

- Amount
- A heavy loss of blood indicates either Heat in the Blood or Qi deficiency (see under color of blood below).
- Scanty periods indicate either Blood deficiency or stagnation of Blood or Cold.

- Color
- A dark-red or bright-red color indicates Heat in the Blood. Pale blood indicates Blood deficiency.
- Purple or blackish blood indicates stasis of Blood or Cold.
- Fresh-red blood indicates Empty-Heat from Yin deficiency

- Quality
- Congealed blood with clots indicates stasis of Blood or Cold.
- Watery blood indicates Blood or Yin deficiency.
- Turbid blood indicates Blood-Heat or stagnation of Cold

- Pain
- Pain before the periods indicates stagnation of Qi or Blood.
- Pain during the periods indicates Blood-Heat or stagnation of Cold. Pain after the periods indicates Blood deficiency.
- These questions and their answers have limited value with regard to women who take contraceptives or in multiparous women.

- Leucorrhoea
- This must be distinguished according to color, consistency and smell.
- Color
- A white discharge indicates a Cold pattern. This could be from Spleen or Kidney-Yang deficiency, or exterior Cold-Damp, or sometimes from stagnation of Liver-Qi.

- A yellow discharge indicates a Heat pattern, usually Damp-Heat in the Lower Burner.
- A greenish discharge indicates Damp-Heat in the Liver channel.
- A red and white discharge also indicates Damp-Heat.
- A yellow discharge with pus and blood in a woman after menopause indicates toxic Damp-Heat in the uterus.

- Consistency
- A watery consistency suggests a Cold-Damp pattern, whilst a thick consistency suggests a Damp- Heat pattern.
- Smell
- A fishy smell indicates Damp-Cold; a leathery smell indicates Damp-Heat.

- Pregnancy
- Infertility can be due to Empty conditions such as Blood or Kidney-Essence deficiency, or to Full conditions such as Damp-Heat in the Lower Burner or stasis of Blood in the uterus.
- Vomiting during pregnancy indicates Stomach and Penetrating Vessel deficiency.

- Miscarriage before three months indicates Blood or Essence deficiency and is associated with a Kidney deficiency; after three months it indicates Liver-Blood stasis or sinking of Spleen- Qi.

- Childbirth
- Nausea and heavy bleeding after delivery indicates exhaustion of the Penetrating Vessel.
- Sweating and fever after delivery indicate exhaustion of Qi and Blood.
- Post-natal depression is usually due to Blood deficiency leading to Heart-Blood deficiency.