

# Spleen Patterns

DSY class 5

- Spleen's most important function is transporting and transforming food and fluids. Any Spleen disharmony will always influence the digestive process, with such symptoms as abdominal distension, lack of appetite and loose stools.
- The Spleen controls muscles and is responsible for transporting Food-Qi to the muscles throughout the body and in particular to the four limbs. A disharmony in this sphere often causes tiredness, which is a common symptom of Spleen deficiency.
- Finally, the Spleen controls Blood and a weakness of Spleen-Qi often causes bleeding.

# GENERAL ETIOLOGY

- EXTERIOR PATHOGENIC FACTORS
- The Spleen is easily attacked by external Dampness. This can invade the body in different ways due to environmental circumstances or life habits. Women are particularly prone to exterior Dampness especially at certain times of their life, i.e. during each period and after childbirth.
- An invasion of the Spleen by exterior Dampness will give rise to abdominal distension, lack of appetite, nausea, feeling of heaviness, thick-white tongue coating and a Slippery pulse.
- Exterior Dampness can be combined with Heat or Cold giving rise to symptoms of Damp-Heat or Damp-Cold.

- MENTAL FACTORS
- The excessive use of the mind in thinking, studying, concentrating and memorizing over a long period of time tends to weaken the Spleen. This also includes excessive pensiveness and constant "brooding".

- DIET
- Since the Spleen is in charge of transforming and transporting food, diet plays an extremely important role in Spleen disharmonies.
- The Spleen is said to prefer warm and dry foods. By "warm" is meant warm in terms of both temperature and food energy.
- An excessive consumption of cold foods will impair the Spleen transformation and transportation function causing digestive problems and interior Dampness.

# Deficiency patterns

# SPLEEN-QI DEFICIENCY

- Clinical manifestations
- Poor appetite, abdominal distension after eating, tiredness, lassitude, desire to lie down, pale complexion, weakness of the limbs, loose stools, depression, tendency to obesity.
- Tongue: Pale.
- Pulse: Empty.
- Key symptoms: Poor appetite, tiredness, loose stools.

- Pathology
- This is by far the most common Spleen disharmony and probably the most common pattern in general.
- The pattern of Spleen-Qi deficiency is also central to all Spleen disharmonies as all its other Deficiency patterns are but a variation of it.
- The impairment of the Spleen transformation and transportation function causes the various digestive symptoms, as well as the weak limbs, tiredness and lassitude.



- The inability of Spleen-Qi in transforming fluids can give rise to Dampness which obstructs the chest and epigastrium. Dampness is heavy and difficult to get rid of: it accumulates in the muscles causing a feeling of heaviness (which could be of the head or limbs). Nausea is caused by the obstruction of Dampness in the epigastrium preventing Stomach-Qi from descending.
- On the tongue, a chronic deficiency of Spleen-Qi is often manifested with a swelling of the sides. In even more severe cases, the sides will be swollen and have small transversal cracks.
- The Empty pulse reflects deficiency of Qi.

- Etiology
- *Diet*: Excessive consumption of cold and raw foods, eating at irregular times, excessive eating, eating too little or eating a protein-deficient diet can all cause Spleen deficiency.
- *Mental strain*: Excessive thinking or mental strain over a long period of time can cause Spleen-Qi deficiency.
- *Climate*: Prolonged exposure to dampness can weaken the Spleen and lead to Spleen-Qi deficiency.
- *Chronic disease*: Any protracted disease will tend to weaken the Spleen and lead to Spleen-Qi deficiency.

# Treatment

- Principle: tonify Spleen-Qi.
- Formula: Si Jun Zi Tang (Four-Gentlemen Decoction)
- Points: Ren-12, ST-36, SP-3, SP-6, BL-20, BL-21.
- Method: reinforcing method.
- Explanation
- Ren-12, ST-36, SP-3, SP-6, BL-20, BL-21 tonify Spleen-Qi.

# SPLEEN-YANG DEFICIENCY

- Clinical manifestations
- Poor appetite, slight abdominal distension after eating, tiredness, lassitude, desire to lie down curled up, pale complexion, weakness of the four limbs, loose stools, edema, feeling cold, cold limbs.
- Tongue: Pale, wet.
- Pulse: Weak, Deep.
- Key symptoms: loose stools, feeling cold, cold limbs and tiredness.

- Pathology
- This pattern is substantially the same as Spleen- Qi deficiency with the addition of Cold symptoms, such as chilliness and cold limbs. These are due to the failure of Spleen-Yang to warm the body.
- The edema is due to the impairment of the Spleen function in transforming and transporting fluids.
- The tongue is Pale from Yang deficiency, and wet due to Spleen's inability to transport fluids leading to accumulation of fluids on the tongue.
- The Pulse is Deep and Slow reflecting Yang deficiency.

- Etiology
- The etiology of this pattern is exactly the same as for Spleen-Qi deficiency, the only difference being that this pattern is more likely to be caused by exposure to a cold and damp environment.

# Treatment

- Principle: tonify and warm Spleen- Yang.
- Formula: Li Zhong Wan (Regulate the Middle Pill)
- Points: the same as for Spleen-Qi deficiency, with the addition of SP-9, Ren-9, ST-28, BL-22 which should all be reduced if there is Dampness.
- Method: reinforcing. Moxa should be used.
- Explanation
- SP-9 resolves Dampness in the Lower Burner.
- Ren-9, ST-28 and BL-22 can all stimulate the Spleen to transform and transport fluids and resolve edema.

# SPLEEN-QI SINKING

- Clinical manifestations
- Any of the symptoms and signs of Spleen-Qi deficiency with the addition of: bearing down sensation in the abdomen, prolapse of stomach, uterus, anus or vagina, frequency and urgency of urination, hemorrhagia.
- Tongue: Pale.
- Pulse: Weak.
- Key symptoms: bearing down sensation, Weak Pulse.



- Pathology
- This is exactly the same as for Spleen-Qi deficiency. The main difference is that this pattern reflects the impairment of the Spleen function of raising Qi.
- Hemorrhoids and varicose veins are also partly due to the sinking of Spleen-Qi not being able to keep the veins in their proper place.
- The frequency and urgency of urination are due to the sinking of Qi unable to control urine.

- Etiology
- Same as for Spleen-Qi deficiency. In addition, persons who, because of their work, have to stand long hours every day, are more prone to this pattern if there are other factors in their life that cause Spleen-Qi deficiency.

# Treatment

- Principle: tonify Spleen-Qi, raise Qi.
- Formula: Bu Zhong Yi Qi Tang (Tonify the Middle and Augment the Qi Decoction)
- Points: same as Spleen-Qi deficiency, plus Du-20, Ren-6, ST- 21, Du-1.
- Method: reinforcing. Moxa is applicable.
- Explanation
- Du-20 raises Qi (with moxa), especially for uterus.
- Ren-6 tonifies and raises Qi. It is used for all prolapses.
- ST-21 tonifies Stomach and is used for prolapse of stomach.
- Du-1 is used for prolapse of anus.

# SPLEEN NOT CONTROLLING BLOOD

- Clinical manifestations
- Any of the Spleen-Qi deficiency manifestations, plus: blood spots under the skin, blood in the urine or stools, excessive uterine bleeding.
- Tongue: Pale.
- Pulse: Weak or Fine.
- Key symptoms: Fine Pulse, Pale tongue and bleeding.

- Pathology
- When Spleen-Qi is deficient, it cannot hold the blood in the vessels and bleeding appears from various sources, such as under the skin, in the stools or urine or from the uterus.
- Etiology
- This is the same as for Spleen-Qi deficiency.

# Treatment

- Principle: tonify Spleen-Qi.
- Formula: Gui Pi Tang (Restore the Spleen Decoction)
- Points: same as Spleen-Qi deficiency, plus: SP-10, BL-17, SP-1.
- Method: reinforcing, moxa is applicable.
- Explanation
- SP-10 strengthens the Spleen function of controlling Blood and returns blood to the blood vessels.
- BL-17 tonifies Blood and stops bleeding, if needed.
- SP-1 with moxa cones, strengthens the Spleen function of controlling Blood and stops uterine bleeding.

# Excess Patterns

# COLD-DAMPNESS INVADING THE SPLEEN

- Clinical manifestations
- Poor appetite, feeling of fullness of the abdomen and epigastrium, feeling of cold in the epigastrium which improves with the application of warmth, feeling of heaviness of the head and body, sweetish taste or absence of taste, no thirst, loose stools, white vaginal discharge, lassitude, tiredness, nausea, edema, dull-white complexion, excessive white vaginal discharge.
- Tongue: Pale with sticky-white coating.
- Pulse: Slippery-Slow.
- Key symptoms: abdominal fullness, feeling of heaviness, sticky tongue coating.



- Pathology
- This is an Excess pattern occurring when the Spleen is invaded by exterior Dampness. The above manifestations correspond to the acute stage, but the pattern can also be chronic.
- Dampness obstructs the chest and epigastrium and prevents the normal movement of Qi causing the typical feeling of stuffiness and heaviness. Dampness also prevents the clear Yang from ascending to the head causing the feeling of heaviness of the head.
- The Spleen opens into the mouth and when Dampness obstructs the Spleen, it affects the taste.

- Dampness has a tendency to infuse downwards: when this happens, it will cause vaginal discharge.
- The sticky or slippery tongue coating is indicative of Dampness, as is the Slippery Pulse.
- The pattern presented here derives from invasion of the Spleen by exterior Dampness, but very similar manifestations can arise from a chronic deficiency of Spleen-Qi which leads to the formation of Dampness.
- In case of Dampness from chronic Spleen-Qi deficiency, the pulse would be Fine or Weak and only slightly Slippery (rather than Full-Slippery), and the tongue would be Pale and have a thin coating (rather than a thick coating).

- Etiology
- This is from exposure to exterior Dampness, which would derive either from the weather or living conditions.

# Treatment

- Principle: resolve Damp.
- Formula: Ping Wei San (Calm the Stomach Powder)
- Points: SP-9, SP-6, Ren-12, SP-3, ST-8, BL-22, BL-20, REN-9, REN-11, ST-22, ST-28.
- Method: reducing or even; reinforce points to tonify Spleen.
- Explanation
- SP-9, SP-6 resolves Dampness from the Lower Burner.
- Ren-12, BL-20 tonify the Spleen to resolve Dampness.
- ST-8 resolves Dampness from the head.
- BL-22, REN-9, REN-11, ST-22, ST-28 resolve Dampness

# DAMP-HEAT INVADING THE SPLEEN

- Clinical manifestations
- Fullness of epigastrium & lower abdomen, poor appetite, feeling of heaviness, thirst without desire to drink, nausea, vomiting, loose stools with offensive odor, burning sensation of the anus, scanty dark-yellow urination, feeling of heat, low-grade fever, dull headache with heaviness of the head, dull-yellow complexion, yellow sclera of eyes, oily sweat, bitter taste, itchy skin or skin eruptions, sweating which does not reduce fever.
- Tongue: Red, sticky-yellow coating.
- Pulse: Slippery-Rapid.
- Key symptoms: abdominal fullness, feeling of heaviness, sticky-yellow coating.

- Pathology
- Essentially the same as for Cold-Damp invading the Spleen, with the difference that in this case there is Heat.
- The low-grade fever is caused by the steaming of Damp-Heat and is constant throughout the day. The offensive odor of the stools, burning sensation of the anus and scanty dark-yellow urination indicate Heat.
- Etiology
- Usually due to exposure to hot and humid weather. It can also be due to eating unclean or contaminated food.

# Treatment

- Principle: resolve Dampness, clear Heat.
- Formula: Yin Chen Hao Tang (Artemisia Yinchenhao Decoction)
- Points: SP-9, SP-6, Du-9, L.I.-11, BL-20, G.B.-34, BL-22, REN-9, REN-11, ST-22, ST-28
- Method: reducing method, no moxa.
- Explanation
- SP-9, SP-6 resolve Dampness from the Lower Burner.
- Du-9, G.B.-34 resolve Damp-Heat.
- L.I.-11 clears Heat and resolves Dampness.
- BL-20 , BL-22, REN-9, REN-11, ST-22, ST-28 resolve Dampness

# Combined Patterns



# SPLEEN-(QI) AND HEART-BLOOD DEFICIENCY

- Clinical manifestations
- Palpitations, dizziness, insomnia, dream-disturbed sleep, poor memory, anxiety, propensity to be startled, dull-pale complexion, pale lips, tiredness, weak muscles, loose stools, poor appetite, scanty menstruation.
- Tongue: Pale, Thin, slightly dry.
- Pulse: Choppy or Fine.
- Key symptoms: palpitations, insomnia, poor memory, Pale tongue.

- Pathology & Etiology
- This is a combination of Spleen Qi and Heart Blood deficiency signs, and the pathological manifestations and etiology are the same as for those patterns.

# Treatment

- Principle: nourish Blood, tonify Heart & Spleen, calm Mind.
- Formula: Gui Pi Tang (Restore the Spleen Decoction)
- Points: HE-7, P-6, Ren-14, Ren-15, Ren-4, BL-17, BL-20, Ren-12, ST-36, SP-6.
- Method: all with reinforcing method. Moxa can be used.
- Explanation
- HE-7, Ren-14, Ren-15 nourish Heart-Blood, calm the Mind.
- P-6 tonifies Heart-Qi and calms the Mind.
- Ren-4, BL-17 and BL-20 nourish Blood.
- Ren-12, ST-36, SP-6 tonify Qi and Blood.

# SPLEEN AND LUNG QI DEFICIENCY

- Clinical manifestations
- Poor appetite, slight abdominal distension after eating, tiredness, lassitude, pale complexion, weakness of the limbs, loose stools, depression, tendency to obesity, slight shortness of breath, propensity to catching colds, slight coughing, weak voice, dislike of speaking, spontaneous daytime sweating, dislike of cold.
- Tongue: Pale.
- Pulse: Empty, especially on the right side.
- Key symptoms: poor appetite, tiredness and breathlessness.

- Pathology & Etiology
- This is a combination of Lung Qi Deficiency and Spleen Qi Deficiency
- Deficiency of one often affects the other: a diet poor in nourishment or excessive in cold and raw foods will weaken the Spleen and eventually affect the Lungs.
- If Lung-Qi weakens, not enough Qi from the Lungs is available to produce True Qi thus affecting the Spleen.
- Any causes of Lung and/or Spleen Qi deficiency may cause this pattern.

# Treatment

- Principle: tonify Lung and Spleen Qi.
- Formula: Shen Ling Bai Zhu San (Ginseng, Poria and Atractylodes Macrocephala Powder)
- Points: ST-36, SP-3, SP-6, Ren-12, BL-20, BL-21, LU-9, BL-13, DU-12, LU-7, Ren-6.
- Method: reinforcing.
- Explanation
- ST-36, SP-3, SP-6, Ren-12, BL-20, BL-21 tonify Spleen-Qi.
- LU-9, LU-7, BL-13, Du-12 tonify Lung-Qi.

# OBSTRUCTION OF SPLEEN BY DAMPNESS WITH STAGNATION OF LIVER-QI

- Clinical manifestations
- Oppression and fullness of the epigastrium, nausea, no appetite, loose stools, feeling of heaviness, dry mouth without desire to drink, sallow complexion, hypochondriac pain or distension, jaundice, bitter taste, irritability.
- Tongue: thick-sticky-yellow coating.
- Pulse: Slippery and Wiry.
- Key symptoms: fullness of epigastrium, hypochondriac pain and a thick-sticky-yellow tongue coating.

- Pathology
- When the Spleen fails in its function of transformation and transportation, Dampness accumulates and obstructs the flow of Qi in the Middle Burner interfering with the proper direction of flow of Qi.
- After a long period of time, the obstruction of Dampness gives rise to Heat.
- Dampness begins to interfere with the smooth flow of Liver-Qi and the flow of bile: Liver-Qi stagnates in the Middle Burner and the Gall-Bladder cannot secrete bile.



- Etiology
- This pattern is caused by the excessive consumption of greasy foods which tend to create Dampness in the Spleen.

# Treatment

- Principle: resolve Dampness, promote the smooth flow of Liver-Qi, clear Heat.
- Formula: Long Dan Xie Gan Tang (Gentiana Longdanco Decoction to Drain the Liver)
- Points: Ren-12, SP-6, SP-3, SP-9, BL-20, LIV-13, LIV-14, G.B.-24, G.B.-34, LIV-3, ST-19.
- Method: reducing for points of Liver & Gall-Bladder channels as well to resolve Dampness; reinforcing for points to tonify the Spleen.
- Explanation
- Ren-12, SP-6, SP-3, SP-9, BL-20, ST-19 resolve Dampness.
- LIV-3, LIV-13, LIV-14, G.B.-24, G.B.-34 promotes the smooth flow of Liver-Qi.