

Understanding The TCM Dynamics of HIV and Chronic Fatigue Syndrome

By Alan Uretz, PhD.



Aids and HIV Illness

HIV is a infectious virus that attacks the body's immune system leaving the patient vulnerable to other infectious agents. The HIV virus also attacks the nervous system and other body tissues. It is transmitted by sexual contact and exposure to blood and other body fluids.


In terms of TCM, HIV is an epidemic toxic heat pathogen that first attacks the lung causing flu like symptoms and depleting the wei qi. The disease then progresses inward depleting the qi of the spleen and stomach causing spleen qi deficiency and drying the yin fluids of the stomach. Toxic heat also dries the blood causing blood deficiency and eventually yin deficiency. Other syndromes include kidney yang deficiency, liver qi stagnation, lung yin deficiency and heart blood and yin deficiency.



Wen Bing progression

The infectious nature of HIV, AIDS fits the description of epidemic warmth

- Wei level - Flu like symptoms affecting the lung
- Qi level - internal heat drying stomach and depleting spleen qi
- Ying level - internal heat depleting liver blood and kidney yin and failing to nourish organs
- Xue level – heat in pericardium causing psychosis, bleeding and organ failure



Progression according to the Theory of 4 levels (si fen) and San Jiao

- During the Qing dynasty a group of physicians and scholars developed the theory of “Warm Disease” (wen bing) describing disease patterns and progressions related to infections that originated as warm or hot in nature.
- Among the theories of wen bing are:
 - The 4 levels (wei, qi, ying, & blood)
 - The theory of epidemic pestilent disease
 - The theory of progression through the San Jiao

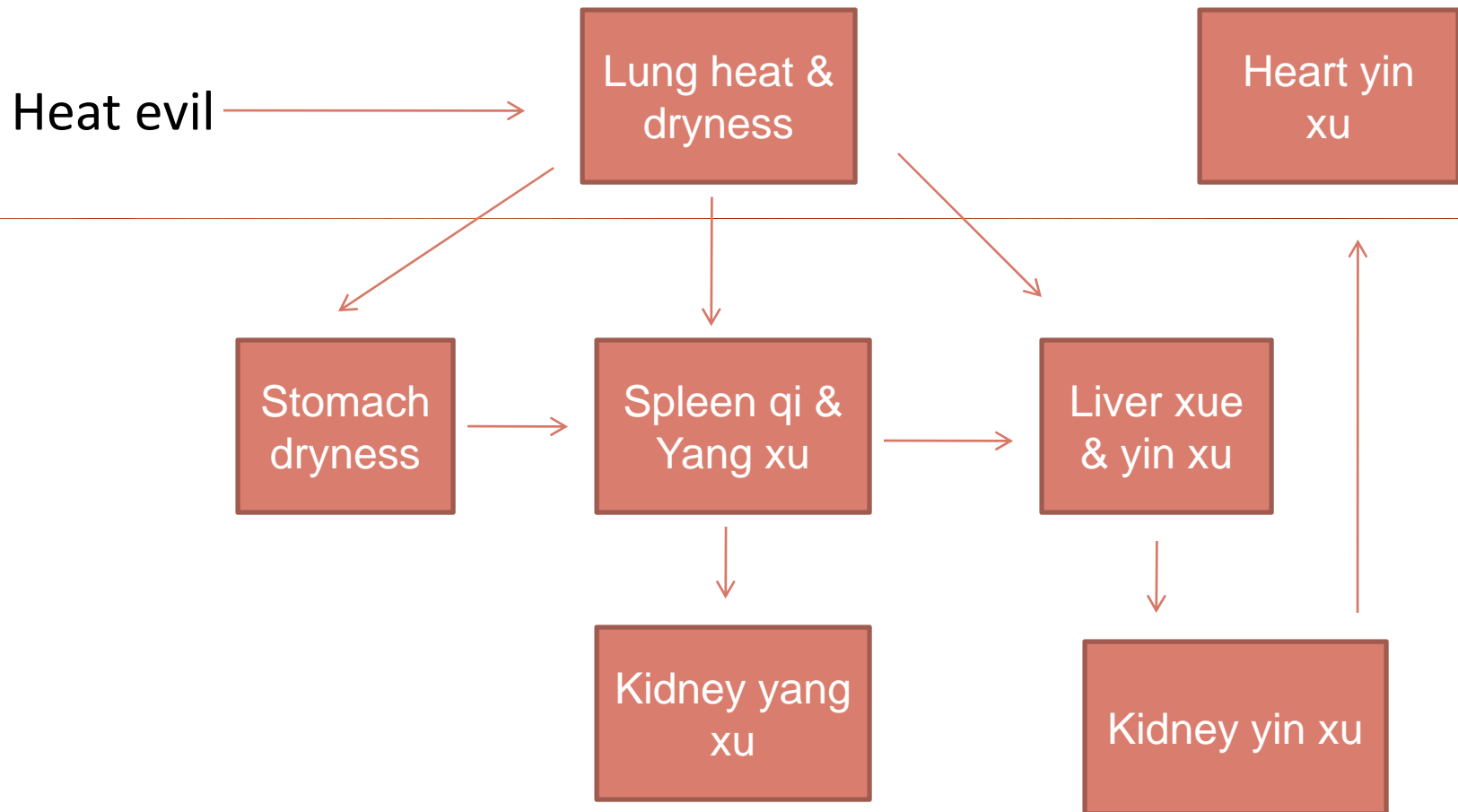



Differentiation of Symptoms

According to the theory of zang fu organs the most common progressions of HIV AIDS are:

- Lung attacked by wind heat
- Spleen qi and yang deficiency
- Liver qi stagnation and liver blood deficiency dryness
- Kidney - Stomach yin deficiency
- Kidney - Heart yin deficiency
- Kidney yang deficiency

San Jiao Progression





Effects of HIV Toxic Heat and Opportunistic Infections on Body Systems

- Lung damp-heat – pneumocystic disease
- Blood dryness – Kaposi's sarcoma
- Spleen xu damp – candidiasis and fungal infections
- Blood and yin deficiency – mycobacterium avium complex
- Liver qi stagnation – AIDS neuropathy
- Heart yin deficiency – AIDS psychosis



LUNG TOXIC HEAT

- Toxic heat attacks the lung causing excess heat symptoms and depleting the yin fluids
- Fever, cough , headache, wheezing, dry mouth and lips, burning sore throat
- Pulse – full, rapid, or slippery, rapid
- Tongue – red with dry yellow or peeling coat
- TX: Clear heat from lung, generate fluids
- LU5, SP3, REN17, LU11 (bleed), DU14, UB43, LI11
- For cough & wheezing add: LU9, UB12-13 (cupping)
- For sore throat add: LU10, REN22, 21, SI17



SPLEEN QI AND YANG DEFICIENCY

- Toxic heat moves inward depleting the qi of the spleen and causing dampness
- Fatigue, heavy sensation, nail fungus, skin lesions that weep, loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, loose stools
- Pulse: Soft or slippery
- Tongue: pale, swollen, wet white or yellow coat
- TX: Tonify spleen. drain damp
- ST36, SP6, SP9, ST40, UB20, 21, LV13, REN12,
- Use moxa
- For nausea and vomiting add PC6
- For diarrhea add REN8 (MOXA), ST25



LIVER QI STAGNATION

- Deficient spleen qi and blood dryness fail to circulate qi and blood
- Tingling or numbness of extremities, transient pain, irritability, dark skin lesions
- Pulse: Wiry or thready
- Tongue: Purplish
- TX: Tonify qi and blood, invigorate stagnant qi and blood
- LV3, LI4, ST36, SP6, GB34, Strong local points
- Tuina, sliding cup (not over lesions)
- For neuropathy add: Local points, tuina, 12 jing-well (theoretically but not all 12)
- For irritability and anger add: Ear: Shenmen, Liver, Heart



Blood Deficiency and Blood Dryness

- Toxic heat pathogen dries blood and depletes spleen qi and blood production.
- Dry skin, cracked nails, hair loss or graying, dry sore throat, blurring or decay of vision.
- Insomnia, dizziness, atrophy and wasting, dry skin lesions.
- Pulse – Thin, wiry
- Tongue – Thin, pale, dry
- TX: Tonify blood, invigorate qi & blood, promote fluids
- KD3, LV8, UB17, SP6, LV3, SP10, SP4, PC6
- For dry skin add: LU5, LI6
- For insomnia add: HT7, ANMIAN
- For dizziness add: SISHENCONG



Stomach/Kidney Yin Deficiency

- Toxic heat pathogen depletes yin fluids of the stomach and kidney
- Reduced appetite or discomfort and nausea after eating, wasting and atrophy, insomnia, fatigue, tidal fever.
- Pulse: Thin, rapid
- Tongue: Peeling or mirror
- TX: Tonify yin, support stomach, spleen & kidney
- LU7, KD6, SP6, LV8, REN12, LU5, ST36
- For difficult breathing add: LU9, REN17, DINGCHUAN
- For loss of appetite add: Ear: Stomach, Appetite
- For insomnia add: ANMIAN, HT7
- For tidal fever add: DU14, LV2



Kidney Yang Deficiency

- Spleen qi deficiency and damp, and exposure to cold progress to kidney yang deficiency
- Somulence, cold sensation over entire body, daybreak diarrhea, edema of ankles, face and abdomen, loss of appetite.
- TX: Tonify kidney and spleen yang, drain damp.
- UB23, UB52, DU4, REN4, 6, 8, (MOXA)
- SP9, SP3, KD7, KD10, LU7, LV13, REN12



Heart Blood and Yin Deficiency

- Toxic heat pathogen dries blood and reaches pericardium causing heat and deficiency in heart
- Palpitations, fatigue, insomnia and dream disturbed sleep, disorientation, inappropriate speech and behavior, paranoia and anger
- TX: Tonify yin and blood, clear heat, calm spirit
- REN17, REN14, KD3, KD6, PC6, HT8, GB34,
- For paranoia and anger add: LV3, LV2, Ear: Shenmen, LV, HT
- For disorientation and confusion add: GB39, DU16, DU20
- For agitation and insomnia ad:; dingchuan, Ear: Shenmen, HT

Chronic Fatigue Syndrome

Chronic Fatigue Syndrome is an illness characterized by lack of energy and constant fatigue. It further called Chronic fatigue immune deficient system when there are frequent infections and chronic fatigue fibromyalgia when there is chronic pain associated.

Symptoms associated with the syndrome often include diarrhea, loose stools, and constipation often alternating, as well as insomnia, depression, and generalized pain.

As a rule chronic fatigue is due to deficiency of one or more aspect of the correct qi . However, secondary excess syndromes may arise.

Predominant root syndromes include: Qi deficiency, qi and blood deficiency, yin deficiency and yang deficiency.

Although Chronic fatigue syndrome is an established diagnosis other disorders may exhibit similar symptoms including: Epstein-Barr, hypothyroid, depression and others.



Etiology and Progression

According to TCM theory Improper diet, lack of sleep, overwork, excessive sexual activity, and the use of alcohol and recreational drugs, deplete the bodies correct qi, and may cause accumulation of damp and heat.

Overuse of antibiotics and some other medications deplete the lung qi and cause heat and dryness in the body. Prolonged illness depletes the qi and yin of the body. Other lifestyle and environmental factors may also contribute.



Methods of Therapy

- Whereas acu-moxa and Chinese Herbal medicine are effective in the treatment of chronic fatigue in order to insure recovery, other methods should be included
- Nutrition is essential to build correct qi
- Massage invigorates sluggish movement of qi and blood and enhances immunity
- Taijiquan increases, balances and circulates qi
- Lifestyle changes and rest



Spleen Qi Deficiency

- Fatigue with loose stools, constipation or diarrhea, loss of appetite or craving for sweet or salty foods, weight loss or gain of soft tissue, bloating after eating, sweating on slight exertion.
- Pulse – Weak, soft or slippery
- Tongue – Pale, scalloped
- ST36, SP6, SP3, REN6, REN4, UB20, UB21
- For constipation or diarrhea add: ST25, REN12, SP15
- For predominant damp add: SP9, REN9, LU7



Spleen and Lung Qi Deficiency

- Fatigue with frequent catching of colds, weak voice, panting on slight exertion, sadness
- Pulse: Deep, weak
- Tongue: Pale, swollen
- ST36, SP3, REN6, REN17, LU9
- With current URI add: GB20, LU7, LI4



Qi and Blood Deficiency

- Fatigue with wasting of muscle, graying or thinning hair, cracked nails, dim vision, dry skin, anxiety.
- Pulse: Thin, deep
- Tongue; Thin, pale
- UB17, SP6, ST36, SP4, PC6, LV8



Yin Deficiency

- Fatigue with, afternoon fever or hot flashes, dry skin, tinnitus, insomnia.
- Pulse: Thready, rapid
- Tongue: Red with little or no coat.
- LU7, KD6, KD3, SP6,
- For heat symptoms add: LI11, DU14, LV2
- For insomnia add: ANMIAN, HT7, DU24



Yang Deficiency

- Fatigue with somnolence, morning diarrhea, cold sensation, heaviness of limbs or edema, pale blue complexion, depression.
- Pulse: Deep, weak and slow
- Tongue: Pale, swollen
- UB20, UB23, UB52, DU4, DU20, ST36, REN4 MOXA
- For diarrhea add: MOXA REN12, LV13, REN6, REN8