

Application of Five Elements in Treatment of Depression



Introduction

Depression is one of the common complaints often encountered in the daily practice, especially in the West. The chief mechanism of depression in TCM is rooted in retardation of Qi harmonization and distribution. When either acupuncture treatment or Chinese herbal treatment is given based upon the theory of Five Elements, the therapeutic results is much better.

Often, clients come to us with the Western diagnosis of depression. A major depressive episode implies a prominent and relatively persistent (nearly every day for at least two weeks) depressed or dysphoric mood that usually interferes with daily functioning, and includes at least five of the following nine symptoms:

- depressed mood
- loss of interest in usual activities
- significant change in weight and/or appetite
- insomnia or hypersomnia
- psychomotor agitation or retardation
- increased fatigue
- feelings of guilt or worthlessness
- slowed thinking or impaired concentration
- suicide attempt or suicide ideation

In TCM alone, there are many approaches to the same problem. The scope of this lecture is on the five elements and their significance in diagnosing and treating depression. Each element encompasses a symptomological picture that varies from the others. Becoming aware that a patient is depressed does not suffice. It is important to understand and address the

individual and unique manifestations of that person's depression. The five elements provide a clear and interesting framework in which many cases of depressive illness can fit, be diagnosed and treated. For the sake of clarity, this lecture will present each element and its unique manifestations, without addressing the interactions of the elements. Although elemental interdependence is fundamental to the five element theory, it is the goal of this lecture to highlight the differences among the elements in order to present a clear theoretical model. It should be understood that cases of purely Wood-element depression, for example, would be rare. Usually there is a combination of elements in the same person, which will hopefully become more decipherable through deeper understanding of each element.

Goal

This seminar provides the relative complete information in order to treat depression according to the Five Elements, including:

- How to establish a diagnosis
- How to analysis the complaints
- How to combine the acupuncture with Chinese herbs as well as dietary advices

The lecture also will attempt to demonstrate that disorder of Fire and Wood Elements is the primary causative factor for depression, and thus the key success is the regulation of Fire and Wood. The treatment is mainly focusing on application of acupuncture.

By the end of the lecture, attendants could discover that they could be widely used in the daily practice to deal with wide range of complaints.

