

## Trauma and Shock in Chinese Medicine

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Published in Traditional Chinese Medicine World, Volume 5, Number 3

Purpose: The object of this article is to introduce Chinese medical concepts and procedures that have assisted me during the past 32 years to successfully diagnose and treat difficult medical problems of the 20-21<sup>st</sup> century. Except for pain, acupuncturists are still the last resort of the severely chronically ill and must be prepared to go beyond the textbooks to succeed treating this growing population. What follows is based on Dr. John H.F. Shen's 70 years and my thirty-two years experience.

### 1. Trauma and Shock in Chinese Medicine

#### A. Etiology and Pathogenesis

Trauma and shock are often overlooked as profoundly important physiologically disturbing events in diagnosis and treatment. Physical trauma causes the circulation of qi and blood to diminish [contract]. A minor trauma affects only local circulation. A major trauma affects the circulation of qi and blood of the entire organism and ultimately drains qi and blood of the Heart in its attempt to compensate for the decrease in circulation. Every cell in the body is affected by a decrease in the nutrients and increase in waste products.

All major physical trauma also causes an emotional shock to the Heart. While daily stress tends to affect the Liver, shock affects the Heart. Emotional shock depletes the yin of the Heart, and the ability of qi and blood to either enter or leave the Heart. Diminished Heart function leads to decreased peripheral circulation. The physiological effect is the same as with trauma in reverse order, the Heart affecting circulation rather than circulation affecting the Heart.

The trauma and shock to which we refer and which we can treat can have occurred as long ago as pregnancy and birth. Examples are toxemia, placenta previa, poor nutrition, drugs, physical trauma including surgery, emotional trauma etc.. During birth, prematurity, caesarian section, breech, cord around the neck, delayed birth, high forceps, anesthesia, etc., and shortly after birth [incubation etc.] are all trauma and shock affecting the Kidneys and the Heart.

Some, as illustrated by the case described below, occur during childhood that is often forgotten, and some in adulthood such an auto accident, breakup of a marriage or loss of a loved one that are clearly recalled. There are signs of these traumas and shocks, especially on the pulse, and some on the tongue and eyes, which lead us to inquire more deeply into the patient's history. Accurate data about pregnancy, delivery and early childhood are often obscured by a mother's need to put the painful past to rest, and require focused investigation by the patient, from which the information is almost always forthcoming.

I have found that within the hierarchy of management, after treating structure first when possible, the treatment of the effects of trauma and shock is a next high priority, the resolution of which often eliminates many other projected stages of treatment.

## B. Symptoms

The principal best-known short-term symptom of trauma is of course pain. This can become chronic. The medium and long term effect is difficulty with healing and the onset of migrating joint pain both associated with decreased circulation. Another important consequence is structural defect, often manifested as pain and discomfort in other parts of the body.

While we often treat the pain, that is often local, we usually ignore the long-term effects since the patient is long gone from our practice and showing up instead years later in the office of a rheumatologist or orthopedic surgeon.

Other later manifestations of the effect on circulation and the Heart are sleep and `shen' disturbances, chronic fatigue and fibromyalgia.

## C. Signs

Signs are most important because often trauma and shock are forgotten or never known. Pregnancy and birth trauma is an extremely important event, affecting people for their entire life about which they often know nothing. Many people, in particular athletes, do not associate the terms shock or trauma with accidents and will protest that all the kicks to the head by a horse was neither, even when they have intractable headaches. Others, especially those who were physically abused and raped do not wish to discuss or even recall the events.

Pulse: The immediate effect of trauma and shock is a significant increase in Rate and a very Tight quality on the entire pulse if the trauma is great, or in positions associated with a particular area with a localized shock. With emotional shock to the heart the Rate can stay elevated for many years until the qi of the heart diminishes significantly to Slow the Rate. The long term most dependable pulse sign is a Rough Vibration<sup>1</sup> felt as a first impression upon taking the entire radial pulse with both hands.

With some patients where the shock occurred at birth, or as a severe loss early in life, the effect is a Flat or Inflated quality at the left distal position. The Flat quality is found with a cord around the neck at birth, the loss of a loved one in childhood or physical trauma to the chest early in life. The Inflated quality is associated with a breech birth

When the problem begins during parturition or at birth frequently the proximal positions are Deep or Feeble-Absent indicating a Kidney Yang-Jing deficiency. This is one dependable sign of an early physiological insult.

Tongue: With physical trauma there can be a long lasting ecchymosis or purple blister at the same side of the body. With emotional trauma affecting the Heart, the tip might have raised red spots and be contracted. A purple color can eventually pervade the entire tongue.

Eyes: Under the lower eyelid on the side of the physical trauma at the base of the red vertical lines there will be a red horizontal line.

Structural: Long Leg syndrome

Asking: A detailed probing history of the patient's parturition and birth and subsequent trauma during life is a very important part of the Asking diagnosis, often overlooked.

Face: With birth trauma there is a pronounced blue-green color around the mouth. When there has been significant oxygen deprivation as a form of birth trauma the entire face may be blue. These colors last the entire life.

When there is shock later in life a blue color can appear at Yintang and in the temples [Taiyang].

Face and Hands: When the face is more red than the hands the Heart is affecting circulation [heart shock]. When the hands are red and the face pale, the circulation is affecting the Heart [physical trauma].

Patients: There will be a series of cases in subsequent issues illustrating the different kinds of trauma including the diagnosis and treatment of each. We will begin with a patient who I saw many years ago who illustrates several of the issues we will encounter as we examine this subject.

#### Patient One:

Asking: Mr. R. was a 45 yr. old college professor who was accompanied by his wife. His complaint was long-standing knee and low back pain that interfered with his ability to engage in his favorite exercise, tennis. He had been treated unsuccessfully by every relevant form of biomedicine and alternative medicine, including acupuncture. He denied any past physical trauma or emotional shock.

#### Signs:

Pulse: When I took his pulse I was most impressed by his left distal position that was Flat and a little Slippery. His Rate was Slow. He showed no signs of physical trauma [very Tight] or sudden heart shock [Rough Vibration] on the pulse and particularly the Proximal Positions [Kidneys] were not remarkable.

Tongue: Slightly pale; some contraction and redness at the tip. No purple blister

Eyes: Under lower eyelids, slightly pale and no horizontal line.

Face and Hands: Face slightly more red than hands

Structure: No Long Leg Syndrome or subluxations.

#### Formulation

The Flat quality at the left distal position indicates that the Qi [and possibly blood], of the Heart is stagnant. The contraction and redness at the tip of the tongue supports this impression. The Slipperiness is a sign of Phlegm Misting the Orifices, a common finding in this condition indicating diminished awareness.

Since the Proximal Positions [Kidneys] were relatively sound and the Lungs not Flat, the event that caused the 'Heart Closed' condition did not occur at or before birth. However, the Flat quality indicates that at the time of insult to the heart Mr. R.'s energy was low, usually a finding in growing children up to the age of 14-18, when all the qi is being used for maturation.

Questioning regarding a possible emotional shock during childhood revealed, when reminded by his wife, that Mr. R's mother died when he was five years old. At that age a child is unable to cope emotionally with such an emotional trauma and the feelings of loss and abandonment are repressed which appears as the Flat quality at the Heart positions. Qi is subsequently relatively unable to easily enter the Heart. At a later age when Qi is stable the quality would have been Inflated.

The stagnant Heart qi diminishes the peripheral circulation necessary to heal his damaged knee.

Management: Primarily to open the heart and renew peripheral circulation of qi and blood and open the Heart orifices [Phlegm], related to awareness and supplement Heart qi.

Herbs:**Move Qi in Upper Jiao and Open the Heart**

Xi Yang Shen	9 gr	American Ginseng [Panacis Quinquefolli]
Xie Bai	4.5 gr	Bu. Allii
Gua Lou Pi	9 gr	Fr. Trichosanthes
Chuan Xiong	4.5 gr	Rx. Ligustici Wallichii
Sang Ji Sheng	9 gr	Rm. Loranthis seu Visci
Zhi Shi	4.5 gr	Citrus Aurentium l.
Yuan Zhi	4.5 gr	Rx. Polygalae Tenufoliae
Wu Wei Zi	4.5 gr	Fr. Schisandrae Chinensis
Yu Jin	9 gr	Tu. Curcumae
Xiang Fu	4.5 gr	Rz. Cyperi Rotundi
Lu Lu Tong	12 gr	Fr. Liquidambaris Taiwanianae
Shi Chang Pu	2.4 gr	Rz. Acori Graminei
Ding Xiang	3 gr	Fl Caryophylli
Fu Shen	9 gr	Poria cocos
Chen Xiang	2.1 gr	Lignum Aquilaria

Acupuncture: [needles no more than 20 min.] [only 6 points at one time]

Chong Mai	[SP 4 –P-6→SJ 6]	move blood and open heart
Yangchi	SJ-4	move qi in the chest
Daling	P-7	needle, move qi in chest
Tongli→Shenmen	HT 5→7	needle, move blood & qi into heart
Xin Shu	BL-15	moxa, nourishes heart-opens chest
Gaohuangshu	BL-43	moxa
Geshu	BL-17	needle [even], move qi in chest
Shenshu	BL-23	moxa, support kidneys
Funglung	ST-40	moxa, phlegm from heart
Jianshi	P-5	needle [even], phlegm from heart
Taichong	LIV-3	needle [even], move qi
Zhongwan	Ren-12	needle [even], acute childhood fright
San Yin Jiao	SP-6	moxa, calms spirit; leg pain

Results:

The patients' knee [and back] healed within three weeks. The result was probably so quick because he was otherwise healthy and had many other therapeutic interventions previously. I followed him for about two years. He resumed tennis with no recurrence of pain.

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<sup>i</sup> Chinese Pulse Diagnosis; Leon Hammer, M.D.; Eastland Press; . P. 370