

Zhang Hongxing's Experience in Exogenous Cough Treatment

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Abstract: Cough is a common clinical symptom, throughout history the medical experts have different discussions on the diagnosis and treatment of cough and put forward different theories on the treatment of cough. Chief physician Zhang Hongxing is a famous old doctor of traditional Chinese medicine in Dezhou city with rich experience in clinical practice and unique academic thoughts. In the treatment of exogenous cough, Director Zhang stressed that the differentiation of syndromes should be focused on 'wind' and pay attention to the role of liver 'wind' in cough. The prescription of medicines should emphasize on dispelling the 'wind' first, to dispel the external 'wind', but also to calm the internal 'wind', and making good use of Uncaria in medicine. Valuable experience for clinical diagnosis and treatment of exogenous cough was provided.

Keywords: Exogenous cough; Wind evil; Liver wind; Uncaria

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1 Introduction

Cough is a common clinical symptom, which can be an independent clinical symptom or a clinical symptom of a variety of lung diseases. The etiology is complicated and there are many syndromes. However, clinically, cough can be divided into the two extremes of exogenous and internal injuries, where exogenous cough is the most common. Zhang Hongxing, a well-known veteran traditional Chinese medicine doctor,

has accumulated rich experience in the clinical diagnosis and treatment of coughs, especially for exogenous coughs. Director Zhang Hongxing has his own unique experience and proposed that "wind evil is the foundation of exogenous cough, and treatment should be focused on expelling 'wind', with good use of Uncaria in the prescription. As a member of Zhang Hongxing's famous traditional Chinese medicine expert inheritance studio, the author has followed the doctor for many years. Now I will summarize Director Zhang's experience in treating exogenous cough.

2 Diagnosis with Focus on 'Wind Evil'

For exogenous coughs, Director Zhang Hongxing advocated dividing them into three categories, namely wind-cold, wind-heat, and wind-dry. The symptom of cough develops in the lung, and as the lungs reside in Shangjiao ("upper burner"), they are delicate and therefore not resistant to cold and heat, especially dryness. The wind is the first of the six evils. "The 'wind evil' enters the body through the head, and the lungs are the first to be invaded. In "The Six Books of Hejian • Theory of Coughing", it was written that "cold, heat, dryness, dampness, 'wind' and 'fire' all make people cough." Other pathogens often enter the human body with 'wind evil', so exogenous coughs are often led by 'wind', accompanied by cold, heat, and dry evil throughout the course of the disease.

According to the nature of the cough, Director Zhang Hongxing would distinguish between thick and thin sputum and the presence or absence of cold, heat and dry evil. If the main clinical symptoms are heavy coughing, itchy throat, thin sputum, and thin white

tongue coating, it is diagnosed as wind-cold cough; if frequent coughing, or hoarseness, sore throat, thick sputum, and yellow tongue coating are the main clinical symptoms, it is classified as wind-heat cough; if it is dry cough, dry lips and nose, dry and sore throat, dry mouth, no sputum, reddish tongue and no coating are the main symptoms, it is classified as wind-dry cough. There is also a category of allergic cough. The clinical symptoms are often irritating dry coughs. As it is mostly related to external allergic factors, combined with the characteristics of "the nature of wind is good at moving and abhors staying put" and "contracture is rapid when the 'wind' is strong", Director Zhang named this disease as "wind cough".

3 Combined Action of Internal and External 'Evil' Liver and Lung often Involved Together in the Same Disease

According to the above, 'wind' is the precursor exogenous cough. However, there is a difference between internal and external 'wind', as Wang Xugao once said: "A human must first develop an internal 'wind' and then attract an external 'wind', but there are also those who have external 'wind' induces an internal 'wind'." As "The Yellow Emperor's Internal Classic" wrote: "All 'winds' and dizziness belong to the liver." It can be seen that the 'wind' and qi flow through the liver. The invasion of external 'wind' is mainly due to the lack of lung qi and the qi guarding the surface not being solid, while the internal 'wind' mostly originate in the liver. The "Clinical Guide to Medical Records • Coughing" wrote that: "The liver 'wind' moves rashly and rotates endlessly, resulting in choking and restlessness." Cough is usually caused by deficiency of liver yin and the dryness of blood that give rise to 'wind'. The yin deficiency and 'wind' movement disturb the lung and cause coughing. In addition, the main qi of the lung is in charge of defence together with the body hair on surface. The "Lingshu • Teachings" pointed out that "the liver is the commander defending against external 'evil'...", indicating that the liver is responsible for defending both the surface and inner of human body from the attack of 'evil'. As Zhang Jiebin said: "The liver holds the rank of the commander, its qi is strong, so it can defend against external 'evil'." The lung governs the skin and serves as a peripheral barrier, and the liver governs the surface. The two together resist the

invasion of external 'evils'.^[1] Therefore, when the 'evil' attacks the lungs and induce internal 'wind', the liver 'wind' will move internally, and the internal and external 'winds' operate together, causing the lungs to lose its clarity and resulting in cough. It can be seen that the site of cough is basically in the lungs, but the relationship with the liver is inseparable.

Lung and liver are closely related in terms of their five elements properties, physiological functions and meridians. First of all, in terms of five elements properties, lung belongs to metal while liver belongs to wood, and lung metal oppresses liver wood, but liver wood can also rise to counterattack lung metal. If the liver and lungs are harmonized, the liver qi is not hyperactive and the lung metal is normal, then the qi operates smoothly; if the liver and lungs are unbalanced, such as hyperactivity of the liver qi, the wood fire will melt the metal (lungs), causing the lungs to become abnormal and result in cough. Secondly, in terms of physiological functions, the lung is the Prime Minister of the body and it is not resistant to cold and heat, while the liver is the commander of the body, its body is yin and it uses yang. The lung is a delicate organ, while the liver is a rigid organ. Only by coordinating softness and rigidity, can the five internal organs be harmonious. The liver controls the flow of drainage and regulates the mechanism of qi, while the lung controls the smooth descent of qi. The liver qi rises to the left, and the lung qi descends to the right, forming a circulation of qi. Coughing is caused by the upside-down of lung qi, which is a disorder of the qi circulation. As a result, if the liver qi does not rise the lung qi will not descend, and the rise of lung qi results in a cough^[2]. Therefore the rise and descend of the qi of liver and lungs are the basic form of ensuring the normal lifting and lowering of the body's qi. The liver stores blood, and the lungs control qi. If the lungs are nourished by blood, it will be able to regulate the whole body, and the circulation of qi and blood can be coordinated to return the blood to the liver; if the liver can store blood, the drainage function will return to normal, which can restrict the liver yang and prevent the it from hyperactivity; the lungs can be nourished by liver blood and exert their function of treating the qi of the whole body, and the power of the liver to transport blood to the whole body depends on the promotion of lung qi. In this way, for the two organs liver and lungs, one regulates qi while the other one regulates the blood, one rising

and the other one descending, which are essential for regulating the body's qi and blood. In terms of the movement of meridians, it was written in "Lingshu • Meridian" that: "The veins of the liver meridian of foot Jueyin, whose branches go from the liver to the diaphragm, and up to the lungs." The blood circulation of the twelve meridians begins in the lung meridian and ends in the liver. The liver meridian and the lung meridian are connected end to end, so that the circulation of qi in the twelve meridians is never-ending^[3].

It can be seen that the lung and liver are closely related. Exogenous coughs are mostly caused by 'wind evil' and liver wind plays a very important role in it. Dispelling wind is an important treatment principle for exogenous cough, but dispelling external wind is not sufficient, and calming the liver wind is equally important in treatment.

4 Syndrome Differentiation, Making Good Use of Uncaria

Director Zhang Hongxing believes that exogenous cough is dominated by external 'wind', and liver 'wind' is the internal cause. Therefore, in the treatment of exogenous cough, the cough will not be eliminated if the 'wind' does not go away. Therefore, we must first dispel the 'wind' and identify the cold or heat of the external evil critically^[4], and pay attention to conditioning the liver. In terms of clinical medication, according to the syndrome differentiation of cough, and based on the of excess of cold, heat or dryness of the evil, the treatment method of warming cold, clearing heat, and moisturizing dryness is adopted, complemented with liver calming and 'wind' dispelling, and making good use of Uncaria. For wind-cold cough, the treatment is to dispel wind and cold, soothe the liver and relieve cough; wind-heat cough is to dispel the 'wind' and heat, soothe the liver to stop coughing; to treat the wind-dry cough, nourish the yin and moisturize the dryness, to clear the lung and relieve the liver. For allergic coughs, 'wind' and phlegm are often cemented, making the cough chronic and difficult to heal. In treatment, dispelling both 'wind' and phlegm is emphasized. If the 'wind' is not dispelled, the phlegm will be difficult to resolve, and if the phlegm is not resolved, the 'wind' cannot be dispelled. Therefore, the treatment is to dispel the 'wind' and clear the lungs, resolve phlegm and moisten dryness.

The "New Compilation of Materia Medica" recorded that: "Uncaria removes the 'wind' very quickly, it should be used if there is 'wind' based disease". It can be seen that Uncaria is an important medicine for treating 'wind'. According to different types of cough, Uncaria can be compatible with dispelling cold, clearing heat, moisturizing dryness, and reducing phlegm. For wind-cold coughs, Director Zhang often used Uncaria in combination with Erchen Decoction. Commonly used medicines include: Poria, tangerine peel, Perilla leaf, Coltsfoot, Platycodon, almond, and roasted Licorice, etc. For wind-heat cough, Uncaria and Sangjuyin are commonly used in combination, and medicines such as mulberry leaf, chrysanthemum, peppermint, forsythia, burdock, honey loquat leaf are often used. For wind-dry cough, Uncaria and Ophiopogon japonicus soup are prescribed, commonly used medicines include Adenophora, Ophiopogon, asparagus, lentil, lily, and Polygonatum odoratum, etc. For allergic cough, Uncaria is commonly used in combination with allergy decoction. Commonly used medicines include silkworm, mint, schisandra, and siler root. Director Zhang Hongxing pointed out that as external evil invades and resides in the lungs, the lungs fail to function smoothly, resulting in abnormal qi circulation and coughing due to the rise of the lung qi. The qi of liver and lungs rise and descend in coordination, and are connected through meridians. Uncaria enters the liver channel to stop the liver 'wind', and restore the circulation of qi of the liver and lungs, then the cough will disappear. Uncaria has the properties of sweet and cool, it belongs to the liver and pericardium meridian, and functions to clear away heat and calm the liver, relieve 'wind' and calm convulsions. The "Huiyan of Materia Medica" recorded that Uncaria "dispels wind and phlegm", "opens up the qi", "eliminates 'wind' evil but is not dry, and is a neutral product of great harmony". For exogenous cough, the addition of Uncaria in prescriptions always yields good results. Due to the coldness of Uncaria, it is especially suitable for coughs with obvious heat symptoms, such as thick sputum, yellowish color, uncomfortable coughing and constipation, and Uncaria can be combined with heat-clearing and phlegm-reducing drugs, such as skullcap, gardenia, gallbladder Nanxing, anemarrhena, fritillaria, and Gualou, etc., to achieve significant effects. It can be seen that Uncaria plays an important role in the

treatment of cough. It was recorded in "Shi Jinmo's Medicine Pairs" that: "Every time you catch a flu or cold, if you have the symptoms of itchy throat and frequent coughing, etc. in the beginning or the near recovery, Teacher Zhu Chenyu often instructs patients to brew this pair of medicines (Uncaria, peppermint) and drink in place of tea, the treatment efficacy is very good." Uncaria clears heat, calms spasm and extinguishes 'wind'; while peppermint clears heat, promotes sweating, clears the throat and soothes the liver. When the two drugs are used in combination to treat itching and coughing, it functions to calm the liver, extinguish the spasm and relieve coughing. Modern pharmacological studies have confirmed that the isorhynchophylline in Uncaria can inhibit the proliferation of pulmonary artery smooth muscle cells, relieve pulmonary vascular remodelling^[5], and play a positive role in the treatment of cough.

In conclusion, Director Zhang Hongxing fully grasps the etiology and pathology of exogenous cough in clinical practice, and established the unique clinical style of using Uncaria to treat exogenous cough. He treats the symptoms by clearing the lungs, resolving phlegm and relieving cough, and cures the

root cause by dispelling 'wind' and calming the liver. He is flexible in clinical practice, which is worth learning and promoting.

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