

Discussion on the Treatment of Ear Vertigo Based on the Theory of "All Winds and Dizziness Belong to the Liver"

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Abstract: The theory of "all winds and dizziness belong to the liver" provides a basis for later physicians to study the etiologic and pathogenesis of vertigo diseases. This theory of pathogenesis suggests that vertigo diseases are most closely related to the liver, so the mechanism can be simply understood as liver and spleen damage. Water dampness is unfavourable for transportation and transformation as dampness gathers phlegm, and liver 'wind' carries phlegm to the ear orifice, causing dizziness; or the ear orifice can be attacked due to the deficiency of yin and hyperactivity of yang in liver and kidney, resulting in sudden dizziness. Based on the pathogenesis theory of liver and spleen damage, the treatment principles should be based on strengthening the spleen and dispelling dampness, eliminating phlegm and extinguishing 'wind'. For 'yang-type' hyperactive liver, nourishing yin and suppressing yang, and the clearing of yang in the ears should always be the standard.

Keywords: All winds and dizziness belong to the liver; Ear vertigo; Pathogenesis; Treatment

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The Classic "Suwen • Essentials on Disease and Therapy" proclaimed that 'all winds and dizziness belong to the liver', concluding that liver 'wood' imbalances accounts for the etiology, pathogenesis and main symptoms of various vertigo diseases. Common otolaryngology and vertigo diseases are

treated effectively by flexibly prescribing drug under the guidance of this dogma, indicating the superiority of Chinese medicine concept in diagnosis and simultaneous treatment of different diseases.

1 Ear vertigo belongs to the scope of "vertigo" in Chinese medicine

Otary vertigo is one of the common and frequently-occurring diseases in otolaryngology. It has various clinical manifestations and prominent features such as: sudden fainting, often accompanied by visual rotation lasting from a few seconds to a few hours. When vertigo occurs, the consciousness is clear and is often accompanied by tinnitus and deafness, autonomic dysfunction such as nausea, vomiting, and sweating. Ear vertigo is a type of vestibular vertigo^[1], including the vertigo caused by inner ear diseases in modern medical science, such as Meniere's disease, benign paroxysmal positional vertigo, vestibular neuritis, drug-toxic vertigo, labyrinthitis, motion sickness, and vestibular migraine, etc^[2-3]. During the Song Dynasty, Yan Yonghe coined the term "Yun Xuan (dizziness)" in his book "Yan's Jisheng Prescriptions • Dizziness". The development of ideas on vertigo in the history of Chinese medicine has been difficult and long. There were arguments for ear as the site of vertigo syndrome in the Chinese medicine. In the medical guidebook "A Guide to Clinical Practice with Medical Record • Dizziness • Hua Xiu Yun An", it proclaims that all 'winds' and dizziness belong to the liver, the head is the principal of the six yangs, the ears, eyes, mouth and nose are the empty apertures, and those suffering

from dizziness are not due to external evils, but the uprising of 'wind' from the liver and gallbladder, and they may be at risk of fainting and falling^[4]. Therefore, modern TCM otolaryngology scientists put forward the concept of "ear vertigo" in combination with clinical needs to show the differences from other causes of vertigo, and it is also more conducive to TCM otolaryngologists to understand this disease^[5].

2 Judging evidences and seeking cause, emphasizing diagnosis and treatment

Common clinical ear vertigo diseases are generally divided into acute attack stage and remission stage. The eight-way syndrome differentiation scheme emphasizes that the symptoms are first divided into yin and yang, and their deficiency or excess, and secondly divided into cold and heat, either superficial or interior. Mr. Yao Yonghong^[6] categorizes vertigo into deficiency type, excess type and a mixed type. Dizziness, which summarizes various types of dizziness, has great clinical guiding significance. According to the classics, "whatever is formed interiorly, will show its symptoms on the exterior". When the function of the liver is dysfunctional deep inside, it will be expressed in the form of the six qi of "wind", just as Zhang Zhicong said: "The five internal organs combine the five elements, and the five elements generate six qi inside. When the qi of the five internal organs is ill inside, the evidence of the six qi will be seen on the outside". "Winds and dizziness" is the phenomenon and form, while the essence of what occurs within is related to the liver. The liver is the internal organ of the 'wind' and 'wood', the commander, the foundation of dismissal. The liver is yin in nature and it uses yang, it is mainly responsible for elevating and moving wind, which usually accounts for liver-related pathology. This pathogenesis theory highly summarizes the importance of treating diseases such as trembling and dizziness from the liver. However, the disease has a syndrome, the syndrome has a cause, and the evidence is examined for the cause, so that the symptoms can be cured. Clinically, ear vertigo is generally divided into four major syndrome types: (1) 'Wind' and phlegm upper disturbance syndrome: This syndrome is mainly due to external 'wind', and the treatment aims to eliminate 'wind' and phlegm, stabilize dizziness and relieve vomiting. Decoction

of *Gastrodia* with additives can be prescribed accordingly. (2) The syndrome of turbid phlegm obstruction: The trial of this syndrome is because of liver 'wood' disharmony, hurting the spleen 'soil', accumulating dampness and producing phlegm. Phlegm obstruction leads to dysfunction of qi, causing liver qi to carry phlegm on the ear orifice, resulting in loss of ear balance function and dizziness. The treatment is to regulate the liver 'wood', invigorate the spleen, and use *Banxia Baizhu* decoction in the prescription^[7]. (3) Syndrome of liver-yang hyperactivity: This syndrome is treated by calming the liver and suppressing the yang, nourishing the liver and kidney, and prescribing the *Tianma Gouteng* decoction accordingly. (4) Internally moving vain 'wind' syndrome: This syndrome is caused by liver disorders, liver and spleen suppression, exhaustion of qi, in heart, failure to nourish the heart, and losing spirit, resulting in uneasiness, liver-qi reversal, hurting of ears, and dizziness. It is suitable to soothe the liver and invigorate the spleen, soothe the nerves and quench the 'wind', and prescribing *Xiaoyao San*. In conclusion, the patients with the four types of ear vertigo are treated from the "liver", which is not only classified into internal and external 'wind', but also into the two ends of the vain and the firm.^[8] Traditional Chinese medicine believes that "the 'wind' is good at moving and changing", which also applies to phlegm and blood stasis. Therefore, to perform diagnosis correctly, it is necessary to look at various evidences and find the main ones, trace the source to the liver, and examine the evidences for the pathological cause. After diagnosis and treatment, the disease will be cured upon administration of appropriate medicines.

3 Flexible use of acupuncture therapy, emphasizing liver meridian diagnosis

Acupuncture and moxibustion play an important role in the treatment of vertigo. The meridian theory of traditional Chinese medicine believes that the meridian is the channel that qi and blood runs through. When qi and blood are not running smoothly and viscera are dysfunctioning, many localized or circulating uncomfortable symptoms will show up as a result. Based on the theory of "diagnosis along the meridian", it is possible to identify the affected meridian easily based on the clinical symptoms of ear vertigo. According to the pathological theory that "all

'winds' and dizziness belong to the liver", the first affected meridian is Jueyin Liver meridian. As "the liver is connected to the eyes", patients often show nystagmus, which indicates that the liver is mainly suffering from 'evil qi' in the Jueyin Liver meridian at foot, so the clinical treatment of acupuncture is also mainly focused on the liver meridian. There have been records of acupuncture and moxibustion treatment of vertigo in the Qin and Han Dynasties. In the Tang Dynasty, acupuncture at the Foot Jueyin Liver meridian was emphasized. Modern medical acupuncture and moxibustion treatment of vertigo is based on local acupoint selection combined with syndrome diagnosis^[9]. For different syndrome types, scientific statistics have been made. The four major acupoints responsible for the "liver" are: (1) Disturbance of uprising phlegm: mainly at acupoints of Fenglong, Zhongyuan, Zusanli, Neiguan, etc.; (2) turbid phlegm syndrome: mainly at the acupoints of Zusanli, Sanyinjiao, Fenglong, Zhongwan, etc.; (3) Liver-yang hyperactive syndrome: mainly at the acupoints of Taichong, Xingjian, Taixi, Ganshu; (4) Syndrome of internally moving vain 'wind': mainly at the acupoints of Shenming, Taixi, Ganshu and Sanyinjiao. Based on the theory of acupuncture and moxibustion in Chinese medicine combined with modern scientific research, acupuncture therapy is used flexibly with emphasis on syndrome diagnosis of the liver meridian, and the advantages of non-drug treatment are further

explored.

4 Thoughts and Discussions

"All winds and dizziness belong to the liver" has been a good guideline for later generations of doctors in the treatment of vertigo, stroke, convulsions, tremor and other diseases with concrete treatment effect. From this, we can see the guiding role and status of the classic provisions of the Internal Classic (Nei Jing) with no doubt, but ignoring its limitations is also the doctor's fault. Lu Hongxian^[15] et al. discussed this article and pointed out that the original term "various (诸, zhu)" does not mean "everything" and "all", but should be understood as "some" or "mostly". Therefore, the etiology and pathogenesis of ear vertigo are simply ascribed to "liver" heuristically, and it is not comprehensive. Factors with low probability such as congenital deficiencies and traumatic illness should also be considered. Physicians should also pay attention to distinguishing priorities when treating patients. The onset of ear vertigo disease is sudden, and the control of its sudden symptoms is the key to its treatment. The combination of Chinese and Western medicine has certain advantages by using modern medical antispasmodics, sedative drugs and manual restoration therapy in conjunction with the Chinese medicine to make full use of their respective fortes.