

Professor Pei Ruixia's Experience in Treating Diabetes with the "Harmony Method"

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Abstract: This paper introduces professor Pei Ruixia's experience in the treatment of diabetes with the "harmony method." Professor Pei believes that the pathogenic factors of diabetes are mainly divided into emotional and dietary factors, and the essence of diabetes are not in harmony of the human body. Thus, its treatment is to "make it harmonious." It is good to use the method of "clearing and harmonizing," appropriately using Xiaochaihu decoction, paying attention to the compatibility of drugs, and taking care of spleen and stomach, as well as Qi.

Keywords: Diabetes mellitus; Harmony method; Experience of famous doctors; Pei Ruixia

Publication date: July 2021; **Online publication:** July 31, 2021

1. Introduction

Diabetes is a common chronic metabolic disease, the number of patients in China is currently ranked first in the world, and showing a rising trend ^[1]. Diabetes is classified as "Xiao Ke disease" also known as "wasting and thirsting" in traditional Chinese medicine (TCM), and the first two words of "Xiao Ke" are found in Huangdi Neijing. Its clinical symptoms are mainly characterized by "a little more than three diseases."

Professor Pei is a famous TCM practitioner in the province of Shaanxi. Gao Shanglin, a well-known TCM practitioner in China, mentored her. For more than 30 years, she has been involved in clinical research, teaching, and scientific research in traditional Chinese medicine. Her mentor Gao Shanglin's treatment philosophy of "human disharmony, all kinds of diseases are born" influenced her. Professor Pei attaches importance to the idea of "harmony method" in the treatment of diabetes. Now her clinical experience is summarized as follows.

2. The Content of "Harmony Method"

In Han Dynasty, Zhang Zhongjing is regarded as one of the eight methods. People will be peaceful if the five Zang organs are really unobstructed. In a narrow sense, it refers to the treatment of typhoid fever's exterior and interior syndromes, as represented by Xiaochaihu decoction; in a broader sense, it refers to a type of treatment method that means "reconciliation" and is used to treat typhoid fever, hyperthermia, and internal injuries ^[2].

Professor Pei agrees with the broad sense of "harmony method," and thinks that "harmony" refers to the internal balance of human body, also between human and nature. She thinks that the pathogenic factors of diabetes are mainly divided into emotional and dietary factors, and the essence of diabetes is "disharmony of human body," thus the treatment is to "make it harmonious."

3. Using “Harmony Method” to Treat Diabetes

3.1. Clear and harmonious

Professor Pei believes that “heat” is inextricably linked to the pathogenesis of diabetes, and that “heat,” as a pathogenic factor and pathological product, has different features at different phases of diabetes, affecting the Qi, blood, yin and Yang balance. When *Gardenia Jasminoides*, Ellis, *Bupleurum*, peppermint, and others were used in the early stages of diabetes, the heat is “stagnant heat,” and the pathogenesis is Qi imbalance, stagnant and heat. In the middle stage of diabetes, the heat is “dryness heat,” and its pathogenesis is that the Qi mechanism reverses chaos and turns into fire, and the fires’ heat damages the body fluid. We should use *Coptis*, *Scutellaria* and *Gentian* to clear the heat of viscera, and use *Ophiopogon Japonicus*, *Shengdi* and *Trichosanthin* to generate body fluid and moisten dryness. In the later stages of diabetes, its heat is defined as “deficiency heat.” There are two pathogenesis, one is deficiency heat caused by deficiency of Qi, blood, Yin and Yang, and the other is excess heat caused by pathological products such as phlegm, dampness and blood stasis. The treatment to clear the heat should be based on *Cortex Rehmanniae* and *Cortex Moutan*; *Scrophularia*, *Achyranthes Bidentata* and etc.

3.2. Moderate medication, similar to the hospital

Professor Pei paid great attention to the compatibility of drugs, and to harmonize Yin and Yang, she used drugs such as *Bupleurum*, *Pinellia Ternata*, *Paeonia Lactiflora*, etc. The prescription is generally in between 10-12 drugs, simple and specific, and the drug is mild with an appropriate dosage. Similarly, it is good to have “cold and warm,” decoction such as *Radix Ophiopogonis* which is similar to *Pinelliae*, dried ginger which is similar to *Scutellaria*, etc. Professor Pei also paid attention to Qi regulation, and employed additional medications to regulate Qi, such as *Fructus aurantii*, *Pericarpium Citri Reticulatae*, *Magnolia officinalis*, etc., and characterized by “ascending and descending homology,” such as *Pinellia Ternata* with *bupleurum*, *Magnolia Officinalis* with *Zhuru*, etc., to restore the proper operation of Qi.

3.3. Flexible use of “Xiaochaihu decoction”

Xiaochaihu decoction is a classic “reconciliation agent,” modern research shows that Xiaochaihu decoction can treat functional dyspepsia, gastritis, hepatitis B, type 2 diabetes and other diseases [3]. Professor Pei often removed ginger and jujube from the prescription and replaced ginseng with 15g of *Glehnia Littoralis*. The first reason is that *Radix Glehniae* can nourish Yin, clear lung and benefit stomach; The second is that the nature of *Beishashen* is flat, clears heat and nourishing Yin without damaging Zheng. Among them, *Radix Glehniae* 15g, *Radix Bupleuri* 10g, *Rhizoma Pinelliae* 10g and *Radix Glycyrrhizae* 10g were used as basic prescriptions. In the early and middle stages of diabetes, the main symptoms of “dry heat” are often treated with *Coptis* and *Scutellaria*; Adding *Ophiopogon Japonicus* and *Trichosanthin* to nourish Yin. In addition, professor Pei often regulates Qi and blood and Qi mechanism throughout the whole process. He often adds *Yujin*, *Zhimu*, *Chuanxiong* and other herbs to the prescription to clear the Qi and blood.

3.4. Pay attention to body fluid and protect spleen and stomach

The spleen and stomach are the source of Qi and blood biochemistry, as well as the hub of Qi rising in the whole body. Li Dongyuan [4] in the Ming Dynasty believed that “all diseases are caused by the failure of the spleen and stomach.” Therefore, professor Pei also paid attention to the protection of the spleen and stomach in the treatment of diabetes. It is believed that the spleen dominates the body fluid, the stomach dominates the fluid, and the loss of body fluid is more serious when the spleen and stomach are damaged. Secondly, the spleen and stomach are the source of blood biochemistry after the weather. If the spleen and stomach are damaged, the Qi and blood will decline and it is difficult to resist the disease. Therefore, professor Pei often used antipyretic drugs to prevent stomach injury, such as *Rhizoma Anemarrhenae*,

Rhizoma Curcumae, *Radix Rehmanniae*, etc. In antipyretic, *Pinellia Ternata*, *Magnolia Officinalis* and other drugs are often used as spleen strengthening drugs. Fried yam, fried coix seed, *Poria Cocos*, etc., are consumed to protect the spleen and stomach.

4. Conclusion

Although there are increasing number of therapies for diabetes in modern medicine, there are still certain adverse reactions, drug allergies, hypoglycemia, and other dangerous events in Western medicine [5]. TCM has a number of benefits in the treatment of diabetes, as well as a therapeutic effect [6]. Professor Pei in the treatment of diabetes, used the “harmony method,” and mild medication, as well as followed a flexible prescription medication, to attain a significant effect which is worthy of this study.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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