

Clinical Experience of “Harmonizing Method” based on Usage of Minor Bupleurum Decoction

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Abstract: Minor Bupleurum Decoction is a common TCM compound and a classic prescription that can best reflect the “harmonizing method” of TCM. But there are many differences on the usage and dosage of Minor Bupleurum Decoction. Combined with the clinical treatment experience, this paper summarizes the experience of Minor Bupleurum Decoction in the clinical treatment of diseases. It is hoped that relevant suggestions can be provided for clinicians to improve the clinical therapeutic effect of Minor Bupleurum Decoction.

Keywords: Minor Bupleurum Decoction; Harmonizing method; Lesser Yang disease

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1. Understanding of “harmonizing method” and Minor Bupleurum Decoction

The eight methods of curing diseases in TCM are nothing more than sweating, vomiting, purgation, harmonizing, clearing, warming, dispelling and supplementing, which were proposed by Zhongling Zheng^[1], a great medical scientist in the Qing Dynasty, on the basis of summarizing the previous treatments. Among these eight methods, the “harmonizing method” is particularly special. “Harmonizing method” originates from traditional Chinese philosophy. In traditional Chinese medicine, it emphasizes the balance of Yin and Yang as well as Yin and Yang in equilibrium when curing. These are the embodiment of “harmony”. Huangdi Neijing · Suwen^[2] points out that “under the teachings of ancient saints, it is also called the vacuity evil and bandit wind. it should be avoided in time, the mood should be quiet and peaceful, eliminate distractions and delusions, in order to make the true gas smooth and mental concentration, and then diseases will not come,” “Carry on the recuperation exercise according to the correct health care method to, and live according to the laws of nature,” “When Yin prevails, Yang ails and when Yang prevails, Yin ails. When Yang prevails, there is heat; And when Yin prevails, there is cold. It shows that both inside and outside, Qi and blood, viscera and Yin and Yang are in a dynamic and relative harmonious state. If one side is too rich or too weak, or both are too rich or too weak, it can lead to disharmony of the body and produce diseases. Traditional Chinese medicine believes that this is the root cause of all diseases and the total pathogenesis of all diseases.

“Harmonizing method” is to reconcile the yin and yang of the body, so that the syndromes of cold and heat, deficiency and excess, and the partial prosperity and decline of Yin and Yang of Qi and blood in the viscera can return to peace and reach a state of neutralization. Throughout the history of traditional Chinese medicine, especially the application of “harmony method” in Zhang Zhongjing’s treatise on febrile diseases, is worthy of our study and reference in medication. Among them, the most convenient representative of Zhongjing Zhang’s use of “harmonizing method” is Minor Bupleurum Decoction. It is made up of seven kinds of medicine: Radix Bupleuri, Radix Scutellariae, Rhizoma Pinelliae, ginger, Radix Ginseng, Radix Glycyrrhizae and Fructus Jujubae. In the prescription, Radix Bupleuri and Radix Scutellariae dissipate

lesser Yang and depress heat seminal emission. Rhizoma Pinelliae and ginger powder can protect intestines and stomach and dissipate Qi depression at the same time. Radix Ginseng and Fructus Jujubae can benefit vital energy and strengthen the body resistance. Radix Glycyrrhizae can moderate the property of herbs. The whole description has the effects of harmonizing lesser Yang and regulating three cavities functioning of Qi. With the development of modern medicine and the deepening of scholars' research on Minor Bupleurum Decoction, its clinical indications have been continuously expanded. Pharmacological studies have shown that this prescription has many effects, such as regulating gastrointestinal, anti-bacteria, hypoglycemic, regulating body immunity, reducing urinary protein and anti-tumor^[3-6]. Clinically, as long as the pathogenesis is variated right, the essence of this prescription is grasped and cut according to the syndrome, different diseases can be treated together, and it can be applied to all kinds of clinical diseases and syndromes.

The original text of Treatise on Febrile Diseases^[7] says: Five or six days of typhoid fever, apoplexy, chill and fever alternation, fullness in the chest and rib-side, not wanting to eat, upset and vomiting, or chest felling trouble but not vomiting, or thirst, or abdominal pain, or rib-side is full of tightness, or palpitations below the heart, urination is not good, or not thirsty, body slight feeling heat, or cough, can be treated by Minor Bupleurum Decoction. These syndromes are lesser Yang syndrome analyzed from the dialectical perspective of the six channels, and the syndrome differentiation of the eight principles is half surface and half interior syndrome. Although Minor Bupleurum Decoction has only 7 flavors, its addition and subtraction formula are very flexible. If it can be appropriately modified, its indications can be quite wide and the therapeutic effect is better. The following will briefly describe the author's experience in the clinical application of "harmonizing method" of Minor Bupleurum Decoction from three aspects: the dosage, addition and subtraction method and decoction method of Minor Bupleurum Decoction.

2. Clinical dosage of Minor Bupleurum Decoction

As the main prescription of Lesser Yang disease, Minor Bupleurum Decoction has anti-inflammatory^[8], liver protection, cholagogue and other effects. According to the principle of "treating different diseases together," it has been widely used in clinical practice. In clinic, the author has encountered a patient, has a fever due to careless living in postoperative, eventually the disease enters a deferment state, and it repeats itself. Because it is the patient after the operation, the constitution is weaker than normal, cannot sweat and cannot use the purgative method. This time the author thought they can try to use Minor Bupleurum Decoction add and subtract to discriminate, that is, the traditional Chinese medicine treatment of the "harmonizing lesser Yang". The Treatise on Febrile Diseases mentioned: Typhoid fever and apoplexy, can use Minor Bupleurum Decoction, and we can only use this prescription, not all. Although Minor Bupleurum Decoction applied widely, but when use Minor Bupleurum Decoction we should seize one main symptom. The original reference to the application of Minor Bupleurum Decoction but see a card is. This syndrome, according to the author, emphasizes "fullness in the chest and rib-side", and this patient was postoperative cholelithiasis. The patient complained of distention and oppression in the stomach duct, and physical examination showed tenderness at the intersection of the line between the nipple and umbilical cord and the costal margin, which is just the right symptom. And it is important to note that Minor Bupleurum Decoction anti-febrile, the dosage of Radix Bupleuri must be big, dosage of Radix Bupleuri in Minor Bupleurum Decoction in original text of Treatise on Febrile Diseases is half a catty. If one liang is about equal to 3g to calculate, half jin (that is, eight liang) is 24g, which is still the most conservative conversion standard. If one liang are 15.625g, Radix Bupleuri can even be used to about 100g. The author has also seen the use of 125g Radix Bupleuri in clinical practice, and the anti-febrile effect is especially great. The patient was given Minor Bupleurum Decoction to verify the evidence. The dosage of Radix Bupleuri was up to 50g. The symptoms of repeated low fever were immediately relieved the next day after the taking

medicine, and then the medicine was adjusted and consolidated. After 5 days, the patient no longer had fever.

3. Clinical addition and subtraction of Minor Bupleurum Decoction

The application of the addition and subtraction method of the original text of Minor Bupleurum Decoction in Treatise on Febrile Diseases is also worthy of our research and discussion. After the clinical medication summary, the author concluded that except for Radix Bupleuri and roasted Radix Glycyrrhizae, several other drugs in Minor Bupleurum Decoction can be added or subtracted, because Radix Bupleuri can evacuate and reduce fever, and roasted Radix Glycyrrhizae can be combined and replenish benefits. These two drugs are the main drugs, which reflects “harmony.” For example, if the patient has cold and heat, full chest and flank pain and cough, the original formula of Minor Bupleurum Decoction can be used to remove Radix Ginseng, Fructus Jujubae and ginger, add half jin of Schisandra chinensis and two liang of rhizoma zingiberis. This prescription can not only reconcile lesser Yang, but also astringe lung Qi and relieve cough, which also reflects the method of “harmony.” Although there are no antitussive drugs in the whole prescription, Radix Bupleuri upbear, Rhizoma Pinelliae downbear, rhizoma zingiberis warms, Scutellaria baicalensis cools, Radix Bupleuri evacuates and Schisandra chinensis solidifies, Roasted Radix Glycyrrhizae and other medicines all reflect the wonderful function of “harmonizing method,” which makes the exterior and interior harmony, and the rise and fall of lung Qi can be adjusted, which can naturally achieve the function of eliminating heat and relieving cough. Other addition and subtraction methods of Minor Bupleurum Decoction also reflect this “harmony.”

4. Clinical decoction method of Minor Bupleurum Decoction

Clinically, the decocting method of Minor Bupleurum Decoction is more exquisite. The original text says [7]: “For the seven flavors, take two liters of water in a bucket, boil six liters, remove the waste, fry another three liters, warm one liter, and take it three times a day.” The main reason for removing dross and decocting is that Rhizoma Pinelliae is poisonous. It is advisable to add more water for a long time. Decocting Pinellia ternata also can fully remove the toxicity of Pinellia ternata and makes the drug harmony. In addition, Minor Bupleurum Decoction, as Zhongjing’s main prescription for the treatment of lesser Yang disease, mainly treats that lesser Yang cannot pivot, and the positive Qi and evil beat are bound between the outside and the inside, in a dilemma, or in the membrane, or under the threat, or in interstices. The parts seem different, but they are always in the category of lesser Yang. The pathogenesis of the disease is positive deficiency and evil solid, and the positive and evil stroke in lesser yang. The Neijing says: “thick Qi makes you hot, and thin Qi makes you pass. “So too much warming powder can not only consume healthy Qi and is not conducive to dispelling evil knot, but also lead to Qi blockage, fever and help evil. This is also why Radix Bupleuri is “flat and slightly cold”, but it can pivot Shaoyang instead of using cinnamon with warm Qi to treat lesser Yang syndrome. Therefore, in order to “slow and not precipitous medicinal potential, strengthen the body resistance, emmoved cardiac and fight knot,” Zhongjing achieved the goal by “remove dross and decoct” and “take a breather thick flavor.”

5. Summary

In clinical practice, the prescription compatibility of Chinese medicine, including the dosage and usage of Chinese medicine is a very deep knowledge. The mutual compatibility of drugs is not a messy patchwork, but on the basis of combining the condition, grasping the main contradiction of the condition, giving the main drug pair and reasonable prescription. Clinically, the rational use of “harmonizing method” to treat diseases can often play a multiplier effect with half the effort.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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