

Clinical Thoughts and Cases of Jianpi Yishen Sechang Decoction Combined with Acupuncture in the Treatment of Functional Diarrhea

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Abstract: Functional diarrhea (FDr) accounts for a relatively high proportion of digestive diseases. It is an infection that is not accompanied by abdominal pain and shows negative results in laboratory tests for bacteria and viruses. The main symptoms are persistent or recurrent discharge of watery and soft stools. The course of the disease is prolonged and recurring, and the treatment cost is higher and greatly affects the patient's daily life. The incidence rate has a gradual increase in the trend. Its pathogenesis is complex where Western medicine is mostly used in symptomatic drug treatment. The treatment can be fast-acting and effective in relieving diarrhea. However, the long-term use of Western medicine poses a high risk in terms of side effects and a high chance of recurring upon stopping medication. At the same time, some diarrhea patients show the existence of drug-resistant strains of bacteria, and the overall efficacy of the drug is limited. Chinese medicine is mild and able to provide excellent treatment of diarrhea. With its lower price and cost, most families can afford it. Fengliang Tian, director of traditional Chinese medicine, implemented the "needle and medicine" method, which combines medicine and acupuncture, involving the usage of Jianpi Yishen Sechang Decoction and acupuncture in the treatment of functional diarrhea. The method has a low price, fewer side effects, is easy to accept, and can significantly reduce the recurrence rate with high efficacy. The study would like to share the clinical thinking and cases as follows to provide ideas and methods for the treatment of functional diarrhea by traditional Chinese medicine.

Keywords: Functional diarrhea; Jianpi Yishen Sechang Decoction; Acupuncture; Experimental cases

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1. Introduction

The incidence of diarrhea remains high in China under the influence of many factors, such as the fast pace of life, changes in dietary habits, deterioration of living environment and reduction of exercise time. In addition, long-term diarrhea can lead to patients with reduced vitamin content in the body and even secondary anemia, malnutrition and other serious diseases. At the same time, it can reduce the body's resistance, increasing the risk of other types of diseases. However, there are still some diarrhea patients with insufficient knowledge of diarrhea and not taking medication in time to control it. Diarrhea is a common digestive disease, with the onset

of a significant increase in the number of bowel movements, thin stools, and increasing stool water content. In addition, most patients with diarrhea have a daily volume of more than 200 g, anal discomfort and urgency before defecation, and incontinence in severe cases.

2. Functional diarrhea

Functional diarrhea accounts for a relatively high proportion of digestive system lesions and refers to an infection that is not accompanied by abdominal pain and shows negative results in laboratory tests for bacteria and viruses, together with persistent or recurrent watery soft stools as the main manifestation of diarrhea. It is usually caused by gastrointestinal motility, and the disease lasts 6 months and above. At the same time, it should be excluded from ulcerative colitis, Crohn's disease, and other pathologies ^[1]. At present, the clinic has not yet clarified the specific causes of functional diarrhea, some scholars believe that this disease is related to the decline of gastrointestinal dynamics, mental stress, infection of germs, internal organ dysfunction, intestinal flora disorders, the deterioration of the living environment, poor dietary structure, insomnia, food intolerance, family history and other factors ^[2].

3. Western medical treatment of functional diarrhea

Because the cause of functional diarrhea is unknown, Western medicine mostly adopts symptomatic drugs to treat functional diarrhea while correcting the patient's bad behavior, supplemented by psychological and spiritual treatment. Western medicine has the characteristics of quick effect and good efficacy, but the persistence of efficacy is not good, the recurrence rate is high, the side effects are large, and it is easy to develop drug resistance ^[3]. In addition, during the drug treatment, some drugs have obvious side effects, suggesting that there are still limitations in controlling diarrhea with purely Western drugs. Therefore, it has become imperative to choose a timely and effective method to treat functional diarrhea ^[4].

4. Traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) treatment for functional diarrhea

Chinese medicine has the characteristics of low price, good effect, long duration, low recurrence rate and lower side effects. From the identification of evidence of the efficacy of precise, Chinese medicine treatment of this disease has become a safe and reliable method of treatment of functional diarrhea. Functional diarrhea belongs to the category of "diarrhea" in Chinese medicine. Often due to the feeling of external evil, emotional and internal injuries, dietary injuries, visceral disorders and other factors leading to the weakness of the spleen qi, dampness and evil within the spleen and stomach, spleen and stomach and rise, spleen deficiency for a long time, transport and transformation of the water and grain essence and micro-periods of malfunction, the latter does not nourish the first day, for a long time, the kidney qi is not enough, and turbid and unclear, and then the attack of diarrhea ^[5].

Chinese medicine scholars treat functional diarrhea with evidence-based treatment, which can effectively relieve abdominal symptoms safely and efficiently. In Chinese medicine theory, the symptoms of this disease are considered "diarrhea," which can be classified into five categories based on the patient's tongue and pulse signs and accompanying symptoms. It is commonly classified as cold and heat mixed type of diarrhea, internal dampness and heat type of diarrhea, weak spleen and stomach type of diarrhea, weak liver and spleen type of diarrhea, spleen and kidney Yang deficiency type of diarrhea and so on. TCM scholars mostly treat diarrhea with formulae to dispel dampness, clear heat, benefits Qi, strengthen the spleen, evacuate the liver, tonify the

kidneys and strengthen the spleen^[6]. Shenling Baizhu Powder is a commonly used formula in Chinese medicine for treating diarrhea to stop diarrhea, seep away dampness, strengthen the spleen, and benefit Qi.

Acupuncture is a common therapeutic solution in traditional Chinese medicine, which can regulate the Qi, strengthen the function of the body's internal organs and identify acupuncture points, which can enhance the therapeutic effect towards diarrhea. Tianshu acupoint is the foot Yangming stomach meridian point. This position signifies the convergence of the large intestine Wu acupoints and the convergence of the large intestine meridian gas. The Chinese medicine masterpiece "Acupuncture and Moxibustion" has a relevant record of "the large intestine is bloated, Tianshu is the main focus point," which is considered to optimize the function of the bowels and is a key point for alleviating intestinal diseases^[8]. Zhongwan acupoint is the stomach meridian, small intestine meridian and many other convergence points. It can also regulate the function of the internal organs, and this point has the effect of dredging the Qi, tonifying Qi and stomach. The Wu acupoints are the acupoints where the Qi of the internal organs is gathered in the chest and abdomen. For example, in "Sutra of Difficulties: The 45 Difficulties," there are related description about Fuhui Taicang, where the said "Taicang" refers to the epigastric cavity^[9]. Chinese medicine theory stated that the stomach is the sea of water and grain, the source of the six viscera, with the epigastric cavity particularly suitable for treating spleen and stomach dysfunction^[10]. The spleen, diarrhea, and regulating function of the bowels are useful in all kinds of bowel disease treatment. Chinese medicine scholars believe that diarrhea is a disease of the bowels of the large intestine. Based on the theory of "Combined Treatment of Internal Organs," the Shangjuxu acupoint regulates the diarrhea condition with excellent results^[11].

Fengliang Tian conducted a study on functional diarrhea over the past five years, and the results suggest that spleen deficiency with kidney yang deficiency is the main type of functional diarrhea. Based on years of clinical experience, Fengliang Tian prepared his own formula of Jianpi Yishen Sechang Decoction, targeting this type of diarrhea. The ingredients involved are Codonopsis root, fried atracylodes, China root, licorice, white Hyacinth bean, Coix seed, *Amomum villosum*, cardamom, prickly waterlily fruit, lotus seed, yam, five-flavor berry, *Psoralea corylifolia*, dry ginger, etc. The combination of traditional Chinese medicine and acupuncture (Tianshu, Zusanli, Zhongwan, Shangjuxu) was effective in treating functional diarrhea. In follow-up for some patients with functional diarrhea, it can be seen that the combined program of traditional Chinese medicine and acupuncture intervention, the control effect is better than a single acupuncture intervention, a single traditional Chinese medicine intervention, or a single Western medicine intervention.

5. Case example

Yang, female, 75 years old, was first seen on January 3, 2023. The patient had repeated diarrhea for more than 2 years, usually loose stools, 7–8 times/day. The number of defecations increases after eating slightly greasy food or emotional stress, with the stools containing indigestible food. A similar situation occurs when ingesting a little more food with significant abdominal distension, accompanied by tiredness and fatigue, weak lumbar and knee, obvious intestinal sound, poor appetite, light red tongue, thin white tongue coating and sinking pulse. She has sought medical treatment from many places and has had no obvious abnormality in colonoscopy and abdominal CT for many times. The treatment is not effective in terms of liver, spleen or kidney, and she has taken berberine, *Bacillus subtilis* enterosoluble capsules, Shishenwan, Levofloxacin tablets and other medications intermittently, but her symptoms were not well-controlled, and she could not be cured, which affects her life. Dr. Fengliang Tian, the director of Chinese medicine, added the following formula to strengthen the Jianpi Yisheng Sechang Decoction: fried atracylodes, yam, fried malt, 30 g each; *Psoralea corylifolia*, five-

flavor berry, cardamom, Coix seed, white Hyacinth bean, China root, Codonopsis root, nut grass 15 g each; Bupleurum, *Polyporus umbellatus*, *Amomum villosum*, 10 g each; licorice 6 g; dry ginger 5 g. A total of 7 doses, 150mL/session, 3 times/day. Together with acupuncture treatment of Wu acupoints and the large intestine meridian gas gathered in the Tianshu acupoint, stomach collection points for the Zhongwan acupoint, one of the main points of gastric diseases of Zusanli acupoint, the large intestine on the lower meridian Shangjuxu acupoint, the treatment of these acupoints are following the principle of heavy insertion and light lifting, gentle movement, acupuncture to the degree of numbness, distension, pain, and left for 30 minutes. The patient was instructed to close his eyes, relax and breathe evenly, 1 time/day for 1 week. After treatment, the patient's bowel movement was significantly reduced to 2–4 times/day, intestinal sound was reduced, appetite was improved, and his mood was relaxed, but he still had more abdominal distension after eating. On the basis of the original formula, dry ginger, berberine and nut grass were removed, and 15 g of burnt hawthorn, 15 g of burnt Liushenqu and 15 g of chicken gizzard were added. 14 doses of 150 mL/times, 3 times/day, were given, and the treatment was continued with acupuncture for 2 weeks. The patient was cured after treatment, and the diarrhea did not recur in the follow-up for half a year.

Based on the patient's advanced age, slow onset, long course, diarrhea for more than 2 years, weak digestion, abdominal distension, intestinal sound, tiredness, fatigue, loss of appetite, weak lumbar and knee, Chinese medicine diagnoses this as diarrhea. Its pathology is complex, with multi-signs, spleen deficiency and dampness as the main pathology. The disease in the intestines, mainly in the spleen, and the liver, and the kidneys, are closely related to spleen deficiency is the key to the occurrence of diarrhea. From the course of the disease, it is inferred that the patient has had diarrhea for a long time, spleen disease, kidney Yang deficiency, the spleen loses warmth and cannot digest the water and grains, the stool contains undigested food, intestinal sound, so the treatment of chronic diarrhea is fundamentally in the spleen and kidneys, and this treatment concept is in line with the Chinese medicine "treating the disease to seek the root of the spirit." The second diagnosis of patients with spleen has risen, kidney Qi enough, comfortable, but still complain of abdominal distension, so go to berberine, nut grass, dry ginger, plus use of burnt hawthorn, burnt Liushenqu, chicken gizzard for digestion, in order to prevent the disease from recurring, to be served for 2 weeks, consolidation of therapeutic effect. In the formula, False Starwort strengthens the spleen and enhances Qi, atracylodes is sweet and warm, strengthens Qi, strengthens the spleen, dries dampness and induces diuresis, China root is sweet and light, induces diuresis and seeps out dampness, and strengthens the spleen and calm the heart, *Amomum villosum* is sweet and warm, tonifies the spleen and neutralizes dampness, Coix seed is sweet and light, induces diuresis and seeps out dampness, strengthens the spleen, *Polyporus umbellatus* is pungent and warm, resolves dampness and moves qi, Yam is sweet and flat, benefits Qi, nourishes the spleen and kidneys, five-flavour seed is acidic, sweet and warm, astringent and fixes astringency, benefits Qi, nourishes the kidney and calms the heart, *Psoralea corylifolia* is pungent, warm, tonifying the kidney and Yang, warming the spleen and stopping diarrhea; dry ginger is pungent, hot, warming the middle warmer and dispersing cold; China root dredges the liver to relieve depression and elevate Yang; nut grass is pungent, slightly sweet, dredging the liver and relieving depression, regulating the Qi; fried malt is sweet and flat, eliminating food and fortifying the stomach as an adjuvant; licorice is sweet and flat, tonifying and benefiting Qi, and regulating the various medicines as an enabling medicine. The whole formula can strengthen the spleen, benefit the kidney, astringe the intestines and dredge the liver. At the same time, supplemented with intestinal recruitment points and the large intestine meridian gas gathered in the Tianshu acupoint, the stomach of the recruitment points of Zhongwan acupoint, gastric diseases main points of the Zusanli acupoint, the large intestine of the lower meridian on the Shangjuxu acupoint, carry out the spleen and kidney double complementary function. Patients are advised to regulate

emotions and moods, take care of living, light diet, appropriate exercise, and spleen Qi transportation; with enough kidney Qi, then the symptoms disappear.

6. Conclusion

Functional diarrhea has a slow onset and a long course. Through long-term clinical practice, Director Fengliang Tian found that functional diarrhea is mainly caused by spleen deficiency with kidney Yang insufficiency, and the treatment of functional diarrhea is to strengthen the spleen and kidney and astringent intestines as well as to dredge the liver and other symptomatic treatments, which captures the key points of functional diarrhea, and the modification of the decoction, and the use of acupuncture to dredge the meridians and pass the collaterals and to replenish the spleen and benefit the kidneys. The combination use of acupuncture and medication is a remarkable treatment for diarrhea. The treatment of functional diarrhea is effective. It provides ideas and methods for the treatment of functional diarrhea by traditional Chinese medicine.

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