

# Analysis of the Chinese and Western Medical Academic Theory of Thyroid Disease and Zhiqidao Lingli Moxibustion Regulation System

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**Abstract:** Thyroid diseases fall under the category of “goiter, goiter tumor, and goiter Qi” in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM). The core pathogenesis primarily involves liver Qi stagnation, with phlegm coagulation and blood stasis as the clinical manifestations, and spleen-kidney yang deficiency as the root cause. Qi stagnation, phlegm coagulation, and blood stasis interconnect at the cervical liver meridian pathway, accompanied by emotional stagnation, dual deficiency of Qi and yin, and alternating cold and heat, constituting a common chronic visceral and meridian dysfunction disorder in clinical practice. Zhiqidao Lingli Moxibustion is grounded in TCM’s holistic view and meridian theory, integrating the essence of emotional regulation to innovatively establish a systematic physiotherapy system: “energy oil acupoint massage + graphene energy patch penetration + compound moxa stick medicinal moxibustion + Wuji differentiation tablet precision energy guidance + physician-patient mental resonance + constant-temperature controlled-time deep moxibustion therapy.” This system, based on standardized physiotherapy, adheres to the principle of fixed main acupoints and syndrome-differentiated complementary points, achieving effects of “warm without scalding, penetrating without injury, precise energy accumulation, and mind-body coordination” through standardized procedures. Concurrently, it constructs a tripartite regulation plan combining moxibustion therapy, nutraceutical intervention, and healthy lifestyle correction. Moxibustion is administered in three progressive treatment courses, while nutraceutical intervention employs a fixed foundation of “Ganqing Bao + Changwei Bao + Shenqin Bao” combined with syndrome-differentiated matching, supplemented by lifestyle correction and health exercise guidance. This multidimensional approach addresses core pathogenic mechanisms to achieve regulatory goals such as soothing liver Qi and activating blood circulation to resolve stasis. This article systematically explores its academic theory and physiotherapy system, providing comprehensive academic support and practical references for external TCM treatment of thyroid diseases, as well as novel insights for complementary regulation between TCM and Western medicine.

**Keywords:** Zhiqidao Lingli Moxibustion; Thyroid diseases; Goiter; Moxibustion therapy; Mind-body harmony; Course of treatment regulation

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## 1. Introduction

Thyroid diseases, as prevalent endocrine disorders, encompass conditions such as thyroid nodules, hyperthyroidism, hypothyroidism, and Hashimoto's thyroiditis. These diseases are characterized by prolonged courses, high recurrence rates, and refractory treatment, significantly impacting patients' physical and mental health. In modern populations, the incidence of these disorders has been rising annually due to factors such as emotional anxiety and disrupted sleep patterns, with a trend toward younger age groups. This has made them a critical research focus for both traditional Chinese and Western medicine <sup>[1]</sup>.

Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) has a long-standing understanding of goiter. The "Huangdi Neijing" established the core association between anterior neck goiter and liver dysfunction in Qi regulation, while ancient texts such as the "Treatise on the Origins and Symptoms of Various Diseases" further elucidated the core pathogenesis of "qi stagnation, phlegm coagulation, and blood stasis", laying the theoretical foundation for external TCM treatments. Moxibustion, as a classic external TCM therapy, aligns well with the pathogenesis of thyroid diseases due to its purely yang nature. However, conventional moxibustion suffers from limitations such as superficial penetration and low precision.

The Western medical treatment system focuses on local lesion intervention and hormonal regulation, demonstrating significant advantages in emergency management but exhibiting limitations in long-term management of chronic thyroid diseases. Zhi Qi Dao Ling Li moxibustion is not merely an application of traditional moxibustion but represents a comprehensive upgrade and systematic construction guided by Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) theory. Its core "Ling Li" manifests as multidimensional advantages, including precise syndrome differentiation and thorough meridian unblocking. Furthermore, it establishes a complete system of "external treatment + internal nourishment + holistic body-mind coordination," addressing the root causes of disease triggers and pathological mechanisms <sup>[2]</sup>.

## 2. Core cognitive approaches and academic discrepancies between Traditional Chinese Medicine and Western medicine in thyroid diseases

### 2.1. Core cognitive framework and pathogenesis in Western medicine

Western medicine, grounded in modern medical theories such as anatomy, adopts a core perspective of "local organ pathology + endocrine hormone imbalance", positing that thyroid diseases essentially involve organic lesions or functional abnormalities in the thyroid gland, which subsequently trigger systemic metabolic disorders. The pathogenesis primarily includes: organic lesions such as thyroid follicular cell hyperplasia; functional disorders caused by abnormalities in thyroid hormone synthesis and secretion; and identifiable triggers such as genetic factors and iodine intake abnormalities, all of which ultimately act on the thyroid gland. The cognitive logic follows a "local → systemic" approach, consistently focusing on the thyroid itself.

### 2.2. Mainstream treatment approaches and characteristics of Western medicine

Western medicine adheres strictly to the cognitive logic of "local lesions as the core", aiming to address localized issues and regulate hormonal indicators. It has developed three primary treatment modalities: pharmacological intervention, surgical treatment, and radiation therapy <sup>[3]</sup>. These approaches are characterized by precise targeting and rapid onset of action, but they also exhibit significant limitations: treatment focuses on localized areas while neglecting systemic imbalances and factors such as emotional and lifestyle influences, addressing symptoms

rather than root causes; they are predominantly symptomatic interventions requiring long-term or even lifelong medication, with irreversible damage associated with surgery and radiotherapy; they emphasize physiological indicators while overlooking patients' emotional and physical discomfort, making it difficult to achieve holistic mind-body harmony.

### **2.3. Core pathogenesis and syndrome differentiation in Traditional Chinese Medicine**

Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) categorizes thyroid disorders under the umbrella of “goiter disease”, with its core perspective being “holistic view + syndrome differentiation and treatment”. It posits that thyroid lesions are external manifestations of systemic visceral dysfunction, meridian and blood Qi disorders, and emotional stagnation, closely related to the dysfunction of the liver, spleen, and kidney. This forms the core pathogenesis of “deficiency root with excess manifestation, mixed deficiency and excess”.

The core pathogenesis can be summarized as follows: The initial trigger is the dysfunction of the liver meridian's free flow, which leads to emotional imbalance, causing liver Qi stagnation. This further results in Qi stagnation and blood stasis, with phlegm and blood clots accumulating in the anterior neck region. Spleen deficiency generates phlegm, while impaired kidney yang Qi transformation exacerbates the condition. Emotional stagnation forms a vicious cycle, and persistent unhealthy habits continuously deplete the visceral Qi and blood. The cognitive logic follows a “whole-body → local” approach, fundamentally differing from Western medicine.

Clinical differentiation is clearly defined: Thyroid nodules are predominantly characterized by phlegm-stasis interaction and Qi stagnation with phlegm coagulation; hyperthyroidism often manifests as liver depression transforming into fire or yin deficiency with hyperactivity of fire; hypothyroidism is frequently attributed to spleen-kidney yang deficiency or Qi deficiency with blood stasis. On the other hand, Hashimoto's thyroiditis is fundamentally marked by deficiency of vital Qi, phlegm-stasis interaction, and mixed cold-heat patterns.

### **2.4. Core academic comparisons between Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) and Western medicine**

- (1) Cognitive Level: Western medicine emphasizes local treatment, structural analysis, and quantitative indicators; TCM focuses on holistic understanding, functional mechanisms, and disease pathogenesis.
- (2) Intervention Level: Western medicine adopts symptomatic treatment and localized interventions, primarily addressing symptoms; TCM employs syndrome differentiation and holistic regulation, aiming at root-cause treatment.
- (3) Goal Level: Western medicine pursues physiological parameter normalization. TCM seeks visceral harmony, physical-mental well-being, and self-repair. The two approaches complement each other. The Lingli Moxibustion technique, grounded in TCM's holistic perspective, fills the gap in Western medicine's chronic condition management.

## **3. The academic connotation and core technology system of Zhiqidao Lingli Moxibustion**

Zhiqidao Lingli Moxibustion is rooted in the classical theories of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM). Its core “spiritual power” manifests as “spiritual presence in syndrome differentiation, spiritual presence in unblocking, spiritual presence in penetration, spiritual presence in focusing, spiritual presence in compatibility, and spiritual

presence in resonance,” which translates into six core technologies, forming a complete technical closed loop <sup>[4]</sup>.

### **3.1. Energy oil acupoint fixed-number massage: Meridian dilation as the foundation of moxibustion**

A specially formulated energy oil with effects such as promoting blood circulation and unblocking meridians is applied to the main acupoints, auxiliary acupoints, and thyroid lesions. Using standardized techniques, each acupoint is precisely massaged 99 times. The energy oil penetrates and warms cold congealed areas, while the fixed-number massage stimulates meridian Qi flow, preemptively resolving core pathogenic mechanisms, clearing obstructions for subsequent procedures, and enhancing energy penetration efficiency. This achieves the fundamental effects of “meridian unblocking and acupoint activation”.

### **3.2. Acupoint application of graphene energy tablets: Enhancing efficacy through penetration to empower moxibustion**

After an acupoint massage, graphene energy tablets are applied to the acupoints and affected areas. Their physical properties, such as far-infrared resonance, can rapidly conduct the pure yang energy of moxibustion and medicinal energy to the deep meridians, avoiding skin burns and addressing the common pain point of “superficial scalding and deep cooling” in conventional moxibustion. This creates a synergistic effect with acupoint massage, achieving “deep penetration to acupoints and direct reach to the lesion site”.

### **3.3. Customized compound mugwort pillar + temperature-adjustable moxibustion copper box: Constant temperature and timed control as the foundation of moxibustion**

The moxibustion copper box is filled with a proprietary compound mugwort pillar, where the mugwort herb, a pure yang substance, is combined with three traditional Chinese medicines, safflower, frankincense, and myrrh, to promote blood circulation and dissipate nodules, achieving a dual effect of “moxibustion energy + medicinal efficacy” that directly targets the core pathogenesis. The customized moxibustion copper box allows free temperature adjustment, with a preset golden moxibustion temperature of 42°C. A single mugwort pillar can sustain combustion for approximately 60 minutes, providing hardware assurance for precise timing control and ensuring continuous and stable thermal penetration.

### **3.4. Oppositional placement of non-differentiated tablets: Directional energy concentration for moxibustion enhancement**

Non-differentiated tablets are placed opposite core acupoints and corresponding areas of thyroid lesions. Based on the theory of meridian circulation in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), this method directs various energies to the lesion site, preventing energy dispersion and guiding the elimination of phlegm, blood stasis, and cold pathogens. This creates a “dynamic energy influx and pathogen expulsion” bidirectional circulation, achieving “energy reaching the lesion site for precise nodule dispersion”, which differs from the “energy dispersion” characteristic of conventional moxibustion.

### **3.5. Synchronized mind-body coordination: Resolving stasis and dispersing knots as the essence of moxibustion**

This represents the core characteristic of the system, aligning with psychological and neuroscientific mechanisms <sup>[5]</sup>.

Prior to moxibustion, the therapist and patient achieve positive mental resonance through concepts such as “resolving stasis and dispersing knots, regulating liver Qi”, leveraging effects like self-fulfilling prophecy and emotional contagion to synchronize respiratory, heart rate, and brainwave patterns. Under semi-hypnotic conditions, brainwaves transition into alpha/theta waves, enhancing energy penetration efficiency and achieving the synergistic therapeutic effect of “pharmacological resolution of bodily stasis and mental alleviation of emotional stagnation”.

### **3.6. Semi-hypnotic deep sleep moxibustion therapy: Enhancing meridian permeability as the advanced form of moxibustion**

Adhering to the principles of “standardized unified physiotherapy + fixed main acupoints + syndrome differentiation with auxiliary points,” moxibustion copper boxes are placed simultaneously at the affected area, main acupoints, and auxiliary points, with a standardized treatment duration of 45–50 minutes. The physiotherapist guides the patient into a semi-hypnotic deep sleep state, during which Qi and blood nourish the liver and meridians become permeable, significantly enhancing the penetration efficiency of moxibustion energy and medicinal efficacy. Simultaneously, negative emotions are alleviated, ultimately achieving the optimal therapeutic effect of “meridian unblocking, Qi stagnation dispersion, and phlegm-stasis resolution.”

## **4. The core academic logic of Zhiqidao Lingli Moxibustion for thyroid disease regulation**

The core academic logic can be summarized as a 24-character general principle: “Holistic Regulation, Simultaneous Treatment of Symptoms and Root Causes, Meridian Mediation, Energy Accumulation at Acupoints, Somatic-Mental Coordination, and Support of Healthy Qi to Eliminate Pathogenic Factors”.

The holistic regulation is manifested as “regulating the thyroid without treating it”, which does not directly target local lesions but instead regulates the acupoints of the liver, spleen, and kidney meridians, alleviates emotional disturbances, corrects sleep patterns, and stimulates the body’s self-repair capacity, aligning with the Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) principle of “treating the person rather than the disease”.

The specimen Tongzhi adheres to the logic of “first unblocking collaterals, then resolving stagnation, followed by transforming blood stasis, consolidating the root, and finally harmonizing the system”, which perfectly corresponds to the six core technologies. It not only eliminates pathogenic factors such as “phlegm, blood stasis, and Qi stagnation” but also replenishes deficiencies in “spleen-kidney yang Qi”, while simultaneously addressing emotional regulation and reinforcing vital energy <sup>[6]</sup>.

Meridian-mediated transmission serves as the core carrier of therapeutic efficacy, through which various energies are conducted directly to the lesion site. Moxibustion targeting specific meridians and acupoints achieves targeted effects such as soothing the liver and regulating Qi, resolving phlegm, and dispelling dampness, ensuring precise energy delivery.

## **5. Acupoint selection standards and syndrome differentiation for Zhiqidao Lingli Moxibustion**

### **5.1. Core consolidation and essence-strengthening main points**

A total of 6 points universally applicable to all thyroid disorders, including: Taichong (regulating liver Qi), Zusanli

(strengthening spleen and resolving phlegm), Sanyinjiao (harmonizing liver, spleen, and kidney), Guanyuan (warming and replenishing primordial yang), Dazhong (regulating Qi and expanding chest), and Yongquan (nourishing yin and tonifying kidney). The entire process is compatible with a complete technical protocol, aiming to harmonize visceral functions and consolidate the essence from the root.

## **5.2. Symptomatic dispersal of nodules with local primary acupoints**

A total of 3 points, universally applicable for patients with nodules/swelling, including Tiantu (for resolving phlegm and dispersing nodules), Renying (for activating blood circulation and resolving stasis), and Futu (for unblocking Qi flow). These points directly target phlegm-stasis masses in the anterior neck region, complementing the core fundamental consolidation points.

## **5.3. Syndrome differentiation and acupoint**

Combination: Precise addition of moxibustion points based on different syndrome types: Hyperthyroidism with moxibustion at Taixi and Neiguan; Hypothyroidism with moxibustion at Mingmen, Pishu, and Fenglong; Hashimoto's thyroiditis with moxibustion at Qihai, Taixi, and Geshu; Significant Qi stagnation with moxibustion at Xingjian, Fenglong, and Xuehai, embodying the essence of "differentiation and treatment of the same disease" in Traditional Chinese Medicine.

# **6. Comprehensive "Three-in-One" treatment protocol for thyroid disorders**

## **6.1. Standardized moxibustion with staged therapeutic courses**

To address chronic and refractory conditions, a standardized 3-course, stepwise treatment plan is implemented, totaling 30 sessions:

- (1) First Course (Tumor-Dispersing Phase): 10 sessions, administered daily, aiming to rapidly dissipate nodules and alleviate liver stagnation, laying a foundation for subsequent regulation; -
- (2) Second Course (Recovery and Consolidation Phase): 10 sessions, administered every other day, focusing on warming and tonifying the spleen and kidneys while restoring visceral functions, avoiding excessive moxibustion that may deplete yin fluids;
- (3) Third Course (Consolidation and Prevention Phase): 10 sessions, administered every other day, targeting yin-yang harmony and recurrence prevention, ultimately restoring the body to a balanced yin-yang state <sup>[7]</sup>.

## **6.2. Syndrome-differentiated food-drug integration nutritional intervention**

Adhering to the principle of "food and medicine share the same origin, and food and medicine share the same therapeutic effects," we have developed a syndrome-specific combination regimen comprising "Ganqing Bao + Weichang Bao + Shenqin Bao Fixed Base Formula + Syndrome-Specific Formula." All supplements are formulated with pure herbal extracts, containing no Western pharmaceutical ingredients or additives.

- (1) Fixed Basic Formula with Triple Efficacy: Ganqing Bao (Liver-Clearing Treasure) regulates liver Qi and clears liver fire; Gastric Intestine Bao (Stomach-Gastric Treasure) strengthens the spleen and harmonizes the stomach, replenishes Qi and dispels dampness; Shenqin Bao (Kidney-Soothing Treasure) warms and tonifies primordial yang, nourishes yin and benefits the kidneys, directly targeting the core pathogenesis of dysfunction in the liver, spleen, and kidney.

- (2) Precision Customized Formula Based on Syndrome Differentiation: For nodular patients, add Nodular Treasure (to promote blood circulation, resolve stasis, soften hardness, and disperse nodules); for hyperthyroidism patients, add Hyperthyroid Treasure (to nourish yin, reduce fire, soothe the liver, and relieve depression); for hypothyroidism patients, add Hypothyroid Treasure (to warm and tonify the spleen and kidneys, replenish Qi and nourish blood); for Hashimoto's thyroiditis patients, add Hashimoto Treasure (to replenish Qi and nourish yin, strengthen the body, and disperse nodules).

Moxibustion externally resolves the symptoms while internal nourishment consolidates the root cause. The combination of these two approaches forms a closed-loop mechanism of internal-external coordination, accelerating lesion resolution and indicator recovery, thereby reducing recurrence rates.

### 6.3. Targeted correction of unhealthy lifestyle habits

- (1) Incorporate Chinese Health-Preserving Exercises: Perform Baduanjin (Eight-Section Brocade) daily upon waking and before bedtime, practice 30-minute standing meditation daily, and advance to Tai Chi. These exercises align with disease pathogenesis characteristics while simultaneously promoting meridian circulation and calming the mind.
- (2) Core requirements for habit correction: Abstain from tobacco and alcohol, avoid staying up late (sleep before 23:00), regulate emotional states, standardize dietary structure (reduce intake of spicy, stimulating, and high-iodine foods), and block the root causes of disease onset and recurrence.

## 7. Clinical case studies

### 7.1. Case 1: Bilateral multiple benign thyroid nodules (phlegm-stasis interaction type)

Patient Li XX, a 41-year-old female corporate executive, presented with a 3-month history of anterior neck mass sensation accompanied by emotional irritability, insomnia, chronic sleep deprivation, and occasional alcohol consumption. Western medical examination revealed bilateral multiple solid nodules (left largest  $1.8 \times 1.2$  cm, right largest  $1.5 \times 1.0$  cm, TI-RADS 3 category), with normal thyroid function. Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) diagnosis identified liver Qi stagnation with phlegm coagulation and blood stasis pattern<sup>[8]</sup>.

The patient underwent standardized 3-course moxibustion therapy combined with “Ganqing Bao + Gaoshui Bao + Shenqin Bao + Jiedie Bao” plus habit correction and health-preserving exercises. After the treatment, follow-up examination showed that the nodules had reduced to  $0.6 \times 0.4$  cm on the left side and  $0.5 \times 0.3$  cm on the right side, with complete resolution of symptoms. The condition remained stable during 6 months of follow-up.

### 7.2. Case 2: Hashimoto's thyroiditis (hypothyroidism stage, spleen-kidney Yang deficiency pattern)

Patient Wang XX, a 35-year-old female teacher, presented with cold intolerance, fatigue, and edema for 6 months, accompanied by memory impairment and scanty menstrual flow. She had a history of chronic sleep deprivation and emotional anxiety. Western medical examinations revealed a TSH level of 78.23 mIU/L, with FT3 and FT4 levels below normal, and significantly elevated TPOAb and TgAb. Color Doppler ultrasound showed coarse echogenicity in the thyroid parenchyma. Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) differentiation diagnosed the pattern as Spleen-Kidney Yang Deficiency with Qi Deficiency and Blood Stasis.

The patient underwent standardized 3-course moxibustion therapy combined with “Ganqing Bao + Gaoshui

Bao + Shenqin Bao + Qiaoben Bao” plus habit correction and health-preserving exercises. After the treatment, follow-up tests showed that TSH decreased to 5.12 mIU/L, FT3 and FT4 returned to normal levels, antibody titers significantly declined, and symptoms completely resolved. The condition remained stable during 3 months of follow-up.

### **7.3. Case 3: Hyperthyroidism (Yin deficiency with exuberant fire type)**

Patient Zhang XX, a 29-year-old female new media professional, presented with palpitations, excessive sweating, and hand tremors for 4 months, accompanied by insomnia, night sweats, and mild exophthalmos. She had a long-term history of circadian rhythm disruption and late-night overtime work. Western medical examinations revealed a TSH level of 0.02 mIU/L, significantly elevated FT3 and FT4, and a color Doppler ultrasound showed diffuse thyroid enlargement. Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) syndrome differentiation identified the pattern as liver Qi stagnation transforming into fire and yin deficiency with exuberant fire type<sup>[9]</sup>.

The patient underwent standardized 3-course moxibustion therapy (with reduced temperature) + “Ganqing Bao + Gaoshui Bao + Shenqin Bao + Jiaqiang Bao” + habit correction and health-preserving exercises. After the treatment, follow-up examination showed normalization of thyroid function indicators, resolution of enlargement, and significant improvement in symptoms, with no recurrence observed during 4 months of follow-up.

### **7.4. Case summary**

Three patients with different types of thyroid disorders achieved triple improvements in imaging, laboratory parameters, and clinical symptoms through the three-in-one protocol, demonstrating the efficacy of this system in the simultaneous treatment of thyroid disease specimens and the scientific validity of complementary regulation between traditional Chinese and Western medicine.

## **8. Conclusion**

Zhiqidao Lingqi Moxibustion is a comprehensive traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) moxibustion therapy system that integrates theoretical foundation, technological innovation, standardized procedures, and clinical efficacy. Its academic basis is rooted in TCM classics, with core technologies progressively advancing to address common pain points in conventional moxibustion. The treatment protocol is scientifically standardized, featuring precise nutritional interventions and comprehensive lifestyle corrections, forming a complete closed-loop system of “external treatment + internal nourishment + habit correction”.

Western medicine demonstrates significant advantages in emergency treatment, whereas Zhiqidao Lingqi Moxibustion, grounded in the holistic perspective of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), fills the gap in root-cause regulation for chronic thyroid diseases, with the two approaches complementing each other. This system provides novel insights for external TCM treatment of thyroid disorders, offers academic references for the innovative development of traditional moxibustion, and establishes practical evidence for complementary regulation between TCM and Western medicine, warranting further research and promotion.

## **Disclosure statement**

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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