

Clinical Experience of Yan Changhong in the Treatment of Herpes Zoster by Modified Da Qing Ye Tang with Bloodletting and Cupping at the Ashi Acupoint

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Abstract: Prof. Yan Changhong has been practicing medicine for dozens of years, with rich clinical experience, and specialized in the treatment of herpes zoster (HZ) using traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) therapy with obvious clinical effects. He believes that "poison" "fire" "dampness" "deficiency" and "blood stasis" are the main causes of HZ, and that clearing heat and removing toxins, strengthening the spleen and resolving dampness, and benefiting the vital energy and nourishing the blood are the main therapeutic methods of HZ. This article will summarize the clinical experience of Prof. Yan Changhong in the treatment of HZ by using modified Da Qing Ye Tang, acupuncture and bloodletting therapy at Ashi point combined with cupping, which is aimed at providing a new way of thinking for the treatment of HZ.

Keywords: Yan Changhong, Da Qing Ye Tang, Acupuncture, Bloodletting and cupping, Herpes zoster, Famous doctor's experience.

1. Introduction

Herpes zoster (HZ) is an acute infectious skin disease caused by varicella-zoster virus (VZV), which mainly manifests as a blister-like rash on the skin of the innervated area and pain caused by nerve inflammation, and postherpetic neuralgia (PHN) is the most common and severe complication, which is often persistent [1]. It presents as stabbing, burning or electric shock pain, even in severe cases, often as eruptive or touch-evoked pain [2]. Epidemiologic investigation shows that the incidence of HZ in China is as high as 7.7%, and 29.8% of HZ patients will develop into PHN. At present, the treatment of HZ in western medicine is still based on antiviral drug, anti-inflammatory drug, analgesic and nutritive nerves [3], but the clinical efficacy is still not able to achieve the expected results, and the difficulty of treatment is large, and the incidence rate of PHN is relatively high, which seriously affects the daily life of the patients. Studies have shown that the efficacy of using TCM therapies (including oral administration of TCM soup, external application of TCM, acupuncture, cupping, etc.) for the treatment of HZ and PHN is obvious, and the prognosis is better [4].

Professor Yan Changhong, who has been engaged in clinical, teaching and research work for more than 30 years, and specialized in the treatment of HZ with Da Qing Ye Tang, acupuncture and bloodletting therapy at Ashi point combined with cupping, which has obvious clinical efficacy. The treatment experience of Prof. Yan Changhong is shared as follows.

2. Etiology and Pathogenesis

Chinese medicine refers to HZ as "snake string sores", "wrapped waist fire dan" or "snake dan", etc.. And there have been relevant records in the canonical books of past dynasties, in the Sui Dynasty, Chao Yuanfang's "The Origin of All Diseases - Cauldron Sore": "Cauldron Sore is born around the

waist, which is also generated by the wind-dampness and blood-qi, and looks like a Retort belt, so as a name", describes the symptoms and etiology of the disease and mechanism, which is considered to be the earliest record of HZ. In the Song Dynasty, Dou Hanqing "ulcer experience book - fire waist with poison" said: "fire waist with poison, affected by the heart and liver meridians, heat and poison sad flow in the bladder does not work, stay in the skin, this is the wind venom also" suggests that this disease is caused by the fire venom blockage bladder meridian, to wind venom for the disease. Qing Dynasty "Surgery Dacheng": "the first born in the waist, purple and red like a rash, or blisters, pain like fire." Describes in detail its main symptoms as herpes and pain. In Qing Wuqian's "Medical Zong Jinjian - Wrapped Waist Fire Dan", it is said, "This is commonly known as Snake String Sores... This belongs to the wind and fire of the liver and heart meridians", suggesting that this disease develops due to the exuberance of wind and fire of the heart and liver. According to ancient records, the etiology and pathogenesis of the disease are mostly considered to be the retention of wind, dampness, heat and other toxic evils in the skin and meridians [5]. Modern medical practitioner Prof. Yang Enpin believes that liver loss of detachment and qi imbalance is the key to the etiology and mechanism of HZ, and that lack leads to pain, and stagnation leads to pain as the core mechanism of PHN [6]. Prof. Jia Min believed that the disease is dominated by dampness-heat-fire-toxin in the early stage, and in the later stage, it is mostly caused by yin deficiency and fire exuberance, or by qi stagnation and blood stasis with dampness [7].

Prof. Yan believes that HZ is mainly caused by "poison", "fire", "dampness", "deficiency" and "blood stasis". HZ mainly occurs in immunocompromised people, due to old age, body weakness, deficiency of essence and blood, deficiency of positive qi. Invading of dampness and poisonous evil qi, which results in heat, internalization of dampness and heat, accumulation of evil qi, and onset of the disease when the

positive does not overcome the evil. Or because of the seven feelings of internal injuries, liver qi stagnation, fire in the liver meridian, toxic heat overflow muscle surface and the onset of disease. Or due to dietary impurity, the spleen and stomach damage, transport and transformation of the dereliction of duty, the internal generation of dampness and turbidity, the external infection of the evil, dampness, heat, toxicity and evil skin and the onset of the onset of disease. Or the local qi and blood can not be blocked, stagnant blood and onset of the disease. PHN is generated by the two reasons, the first one is "if you are weak, you get pain", insufficient spleen and stomach, deficiency of qi and blood, loss of nourishment for the meridians. Deficiency of kidney essence, weakening of yang qi, weakening of guarding function. Deficiency of essence and blood can't nourish the skin meridians, loss of nourishment for the skin meridians, which results in prolonged disease, and leftover neuralgia. The second is "stagnation leads to pain", which is mainly related to the liver. If the liver loses its detachment, the qi and blood will not be able to get through, and the veins and channels will be closed and blocked, which will result in stagnant blood over time. When the liver is out of control, the qi is in rebellion, and when the liver qi is stagnant or stagnant, it leads to obstruction of qi and blood circulation or internalized fire and heat, and when the skin and meridians are not well nourished, then pain occurs. Therefore, treatment should comply with the disease mechanism, with clearing heat and removing toxins, strengthening the spleen and resolving dampness, benefiting qi and nourishing blood as the main treatment method.

3. Da Qing Ye Tang

Da Qing Ye Tang is from "Zhi Yan Bai Bing Liang Fang", which consists of Da Qing Ye, *Scutellaria baicalensis*, Honeysuckle, *Codonopsis pilosula*, isatis root, *radix lithospermi*, *Corydalis ambigua* Ch., the root of fangji, liquorice, cortex dictam, *Radix Angelica Dahuricae*. The formula uses Da Qing Ye, Honeysuckle, isatis root, *Scutellaria Baicalensis* to clear heat and remove toxins, cool the blood and eliminate spots. *Codonopsis pilosula* is used to benefit Qi, strengthen the spleen and Qi and support the correctness of the body. *radix lithospermi* is to cool the blood and activate the blood, detoxification and penetration of rashes. The root of fangji is to dispel wind and promote dampness. Cortex dictam and *Radix Angelica Dahuricae* are to dispel wind, dry dampness and relieve itching, and *Angelica Dahurica* can also reduce swellings and relieve pain. Licorice is to detoxify the toxins, and to harmonize the various drugs. The combination of all the drugs, the whole formula is to play a total of heat detoxification, cool blood, prevent wind and itching.

Prof. Yan Changhong often uses modified Da Qing Ye Tang to treat patients with HZ. Modern pharmacological research has confirmed that many drug components in Da Qing Ye Tang have the effect of treating VZ. The main components of Da Qing Ye are alkaloids, flavonoids, phenolic acids and other components, which have various pharmacological effects such as antibacterial, anti-endotoxin, anti-inflammatory, etc., and have obvious effect of clearing heat and detoxification [8], and both *radix lithospermi* and Da Qing Ye medicinal components have the effects of anti-inflammation and promotion of healing of wounds [9-10].

The medicinal parts of isatis root and Da Qing Ye are different, and studies have shown that isatis root also possesses antibacterial, anti-inflammatory, antiviral, immunomodulatory, and antioxidant pharmacological effects, especially the antiviral effects are significant [11]. The TLR2/MyD88/NF- κ B signaling pathway is a potential target for the treatment of PHN, and Baicalein, an active ingredient of *Scutellaria baicalensis*, can reduce the production of inflammatory factors by inhibiting this signaling pathway, and block the inflammation of PHN rats [12]. Baicalein is able to fight VZV infection in vitro with similar effects as acyclovir [13]. Many active ingredients contained in *Corydalis ambigua* Ch. have good analgesic and anti-inflammatory effects, and have fewer adverse effects than traditional painkillers, non-addictive, long-lasting analgesic effects, and can effectively relieve pain [14]. Zhang Meifang et al. found that honeysuckle can directly inhibit VZV virus and can be used as a preventive and therapeutic medicine for VZV virus infection [15]. Cortex dictam is also antibacterial, anti-inflammatory and anti-allergic activities, as well as neuroprotective effects, and can be used to treat a variety of skin diseases [16].

It can be seen that Professor Yan's treatment of HZ with modified Da Qing Ye Tang is supported by the evidence of modern pharmacological research, and Da Qing Ye Tang can effectively inhibit viral replication and reduce the inflammatory response, thus accelerating the healing of skin lesions and relieving pain. However, the specific molecular biological mechanism and the effective rate of its treatment of HZ need to be further verified in clinical trials.

4. Bloodletting and Cupping Therapy at Ashi Acupoint

"Ashi" was first recorded in the Tang Dynasty Sun Simiao "Thousand Golden Essentials - Moxibustion": "There is the Ashi, that people have pain, to pinch its on, if it when its place, do not ask the hole, that is, to get will be fast into the (or) the pain..." Acupuncture points according to the patient's feeling, "to pain for the acupoint", that is, the patient consciously pain or pain in the place to turn comfortable that is the moxibustion site. Prof. Yan believes that the main purpose of taking Ashi acupoint is to dredge local qi and blood to eliminate herpes and relieve pain.

Zhang Zihe, a medical doctor in the Jin Dynasty, pioneered bloodletting therapy and advocated the idea that "evil goes away and righteousness is at ease". In Huangdi Neijing, there is also the statement that "fullness is diarrhea, stagnation is removed, and evil is false", which also provides the theoretical basis and treatment principle of bloodletting therapy for later generations of medical practitioners. The method of acupuncture and cupping is a combination of acupuncture and cupping to treat the disease. After the skin is sterilized, a suitable needle is firstly used to carry out scatter puncture or buckle puncture in the local skin of the lesion. Then the site of buckling is rapidly cupped and sucked with a fire pot, which in turn causes the air inside the pot to generate negative pressure on the local skin, causing an increase in bleeding at the site [17]. Qi is the commander of blood, blood is the mother of Qi, Professor Yan believes that qi stagnation and blood stasis is the key to PHN, stasis and qi stagnation

interact with each other, the treatment should activate blood circulation and eliminate blood stasis, and stagnation should be removed, just as contained in Ling Shu - Shou Tian Gang Rou, "If the paralysis does not go away, the person who has been paralyzed for a long time will be able to see the blood channels and get all the blood out of the body". And stabbing and bloodletting cupping can smooth qi, remove blood stasis in the meridians, so that qi and blood harmonization, to achieve the role of the meridians and blood circulation, blood and qi. And local stabbing cupping and bloodletting is good for clearing fire poison and reducing HZ symptoms. Wang Rui summarized the research and found that stabbing and cupping blood cupping for PHN can promote the local blood circulation, so that the fire-heat toxicity can be discharged with the blood, and it has the effect of clearing heat and removing toxins, activating blood circulation and removing blood stasis, and eliminating swellings and relieving pain [18]. It has been shown that stabbing and cupping method for HZ may have the advantage of clinical efficacy without adverse reactions [19]. Professor Yan Changhong has already studied in the previous period that blood-letting therapy at Ashi point and combined with Mongolian copper cisterns in the treatment of PHN achieved the therapeutic effect of blood removal and meridian circulation, removing stasis and generating new blood, effectively relieving PHN, and the therapeutic efficacy was exact [20].

5. Clinical Experience

Prof. Yan clinically used Da Qing Ye Tang combined with Ashi acupoint bloodletting and cupping therapy to treat HZ patients and its sequelae, and added and subtracted the medication flexibly according to the clinical diagnosis, such as for those with blazing heat and toxin, add forsythia and rhubarb to clear heat and fire to detoxify the toxin. For those with phlegm and dampness, add Pinellia ternata, Chen Pi, Cang Zhu, semen coicis, fried silkworm, and Acorus gramineus Soland to facilitate dampness and turbidity removal. For those with herpes occurring in the head and face, add burdock and wild chrysanthemum to ease the wind and relieve the epidermal symptoms, and to remove heat and detoxify the toxin. For those with herpes with heavy dampness-heat and obvious lower body, add Huangbai, Sichuan hyssop, Atractylodes macrocephala, Poria, Zedoaria to promote dampness and detoxify toxin. For fever, add Gypsum, Zhimu. For pain, add Chinaberry fruit, radix curcumae, Chuanxiong, Centipede, Scorpion to activate the blood circulation and alleviate pain. For herpes with hemorrhage, add Mudanpi, Salvia Miltiorrhizae, Paeoniae Lactiflora to cool and activate the blood circulation. For the old and weak, weak qi and blood, add Astragalus, Atractylodes Macrocephala, Poria, Angelica Sinensis, Paeoniae Lactiflora, etc. to replenish the vitality of qi and blood. Kidney yang deficiency with monkshood, cinnamon, dry ginger, cornelian cherry, etc. warm tonic kidney yang. Kidney essence deficiency with the prepared rehmannia root, yam, cornelian cherry, Chinese wolfberry, cuscuta, etc. in order to tonify essence and blood. Liver stagnation with Chaihu, rhizoma cyperi, yujin, fructus aurantii, chuanxiong in order to move the qi to ease the liver. The heart and liver fire with gentian, gardenia, lilyturf root, XuanShen, etc. to clear the heat and diarrhea fire. Acupuncture and bloodletting therapy at Ashi point combined with cupping for 1-2 times a

week treatment is better. The use of modified Da Qing Ye Tang accompanied by bloodletting and cupping therapy at Ashi point is an effective treatment plan, which can not only rapidly relieve the symptoms of patients and shorten the course of the disease, but also improve the quality of life of patients and reduce the occurrence of complications, which is worthy of further promotion and application in clinical practice.

6. Medical Case

Patient Wang, male, 55 years old, presented to the clinic on March 20, 2023, principle action: scattered blisters on the right side of the chest and back with pain for 5 days. Present history: the patient had pain on the right side of chest and back 5 days ago without obvious triggers, followed by scattered blisters, distributed in bands, accompanied by slight itching and burning sensation, then the pain gradually worsened, intolerable pain, herpes increased, Poor sleep, the appetite is ok, dry mouth and bitter mouth, yellow urine, stools are dry. Past history: no history of specific diseases, denied drug allergy history. Physical examination: multiple blisters of different sizes were seen on the right side of the chest and back, some of them had broken, the surrounding skin was red and swollen, and tenderness was obvious. The blisters were distributed along the intercostal nerves in the form of bands. The tongue was red, the moss was yellow and thick, the pulse was stringy. Western medicine diagnosis: herpes zoster, Traditional Chinese medicine diagnosis: snake sores, diagnosis: fever and toxin blazing, damp-heat internalized evidence, treatment: clearing heat and drying dampness, laxative and detoxicating, treatment plan is as follows:

(1) Internal treatment: modified Da Qing Ye Tang for oral administration.

On the basis of Da Qing Ye Tang, add gardenia and forsythia to remove heat and toxin, add mudanpi to cool blood and dissipate blood stasis, add Schizonepeta to remove wind, remove surface and penetrate rash, add chuanxiong to activate blood circulation, add semen coicis and the rhizome of oriental water plantain to promote water and seepage of dampness.

(2) External treatment: bloodletting and cupping therapy at Ashi point.

The patient takes the supine position, fully exposes the chest, and marks out the parts with intense localized pain. After routinely sterilizing the picking point and both hands, use the syringe needle to perform the picking method at the Ashi point, and then quickly release the needle. Cupping with a fire pot was performed at the puncture site for 15 minutes to extract stasis and heat toxins. After finishing, the wound was cleaned, routinely sterilized and the affected area was applied with adhesive tape and cotton swabs. The picking area was instructed not to get wet for 24 hours, pay attention to keep warm and avoid exertion.

At the end of the treatment, the patient's pain score was reduced from 10 to 6. On March 27, 2023, the second consultation, the patient reported that the right side of the chest and back pain was significantly reduced, and the

patient's pain score was 4. The blisters began to crust, no new herpes, accompanied by slight itching, no obvious burning sensation, the night rest was OK, food and nutrition were OK, and the second bowel movement was normal. The tongue is red, the moss is thin and yellow. The pulse is stringy. Abide by the therapeutic method and adjust the prescription, the above remove comfrey, mudanpi, add safflower to activate blood circulation and eliminate blood stasis. And continue to cooperate with the local Ashis point stabbing bloodletting cupping therapy. 2023 April 5, third consultation, the patient pain score of 2 points, continue the original program of treatment. 1 month later telephone consultation, the patient complained that the symptoms of further significant improvement, now no special discomfort.

This medical case achieved remarkable efficacy in the treatment of HZ through the addition and subtraction of Da Qing Ye Tang combined with bloodletting and cupping by stabbing at the Ashi point. For HZ patients, choosing this treatment plan can not only reduce symptoms, accelerate recovery, but also improve the quality of life. However, everyone's condition and constitution are different, so in practical application, the treatment should be personalized according to the patient's specific situation to ensure the efficacy and safety.

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