

# A Study on the Understanding and Treatment of Dizziness based on Theories Related to the Yellow Emperor Internal Classic

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**Abstract:** *This article reviews the understanding and treatment in the field of dizziness based on the theoretical knowledge related to the Yellow Emperor Internal Classic, introduces the etiology of dizziness as well as the dialectical thinking, and summarizes the diverse views of ancient and modern medical practitioners. This paper aims to provide reference for doctors in the field of dizziness and to suggest some ideas and suggestions for follow-up research.*

**Keywords:** Yellow Emperor Internal Classic, Dizziness, Etiology and Pathogenesis, Observation.

## 1. Introduction

Dizziness can be divided into “dizziness” and “vertigo”, which are also common clinical symptoms. “Dazzling” refers to the feeling of blurred vision, often accompanied by mental confusion; “Dizziness” refers to feeling dizzy, like sitting in a car or vessel, standing unsteadily, or feeling the outside scenery rotating. In clinical practice, dizziness and vertigo often occur simultaneously, so they are collectively referred to as “dizziness”. Dizziness is often accompanied by symptoms such as tinnitus, nausea, vomiting, and even sudden fainting. The Yellow Emperor Internal Classic is the earliest medical literature to record symptoms of dizziness. Later generations of medical physicians, when discussing dizziness, partially adopted the original discourse of the Yellow Emperor Internal Classic, while others created new terms. Chao Yuanfang mainly focuses on “wind glare” in his book “Various pathogenic” [1]. In the Song Dynasty, Chen Wuzhe first explicitly proposed the name “dizziness”. In summary, the understanding of dizziness by medical physicians from ancient times to modern times has gone through a deepening process from symptom description to exploration of etiology and pathogenesis.

## 2. Understanding and Research on Etiology and Pathogenesis

### 2.1 The Understanding of the Etiology and Pathogenesis of Dizziness by Ancient Physicians under the Guidance of the Yellow Emperor Internal Classic

#### 2.1.1 Emotional Upset

In traditional Chinese medicine theory, the liver is regarded as a rigid organ, and its physiological characteristics are manifested as “belongs to Yin in physique and Yang in function”, which essentially belongs to yin and functionally exhibits masculinity. Long term emotional depression and anger can easily cause liver failing, leading to liver qi stagnation. Dysfunction of qi, and fire due to qi stagnation can turn fire into wind, disturb up of wind and yang, and cause dizziness symptoms.

#### 2.1.2 Old and Weak

For the birth of the kidney, the main bone of health and possession of refined pulp of blood, and the brain is the sea of marrow. If the old age of kidney essence deficiency, not to nourish the medulla oblongata; or no regulation in living, excessive depletion of nourishing yin; or physical weakness, suffering from many diseases, further damage to the kidney essence, can produce the disease of dizziness.

#### 2.1.3 Improper diet

Improper diet is also the cause of dizziness. Long-term alcoholism, diet, excessive intake, can damage the spleen and stomach transport function, resulting in the normal transformation of water and grain, gathered into dampness, dampness stagnation in the middle energizer, so that the disorder of yang qi and turbidly of yin.

#### 2.1.4 Exerting internal injuries

Spleen and stomach of the day after tomorrow, the source of qi and blood biochemistry. Prolonged illness, overwork, excessive blood loss and other factors can deplete qi and blood, affecting the function of the spleen and stomach, resulting in the lack of a source of qi and blood biochemistry.

#### 2.1.5 Falling injury

Trauma should not be ignored, such as head injury from falling, or prolonged illness resulting in blood stasis, blocked meridians, making it difficult for qi and blood to reach the head, and loss of nourishment for the upper orifices, which can also lead to dizziness, and is often accompanied by localized pain.

### 2.2 Modern Physicians' Understanding of the Etiology and Pathogenesis of Dizziness under the Guidance of the Yellow Emperor Internal Classic

Based on the theory of “all winds and dizziness belong to the liver” in the Neijing, Zhou Shizhang [2] further put forward

the viewpoint of “no dizziness without depression”, emphasizing the role of dizziness. Qi Xianghua [3] developed the understanding of exogenous dizziness on the basis of the theory of inheriting the theory of “Miraculous Pivot”. In the early treatment of dizziness, Prof. Zhang Zhiyuan [4] followed the guiding principles and emphasized the pathogenesis of liver yang hyperactivity, and mostly used the prescriptions of clearing and purging, and declining to regulate the disease. Professor Yan Zhenghua [5], after in-depth study and integration of the Yellow Emperor Internal Classic’s discussion on dizziness, combined with his own clinical experience, summarized the etiology of dizziness into four aspects: mental factors, improper diet, internal injuries and deficiencies. Prof. Wu Liwen [6] believes that in addition to the many causes of dizziness described in the Yellow Emperor Internal Classic, dampness and blood stasis also play an important role in the pathogenesis of dizziness, and he points out that dampness can breed blood stasis, and blood stasis is often accompanied by dampness, and the two are interrelated in the pathogenesis of dizziness.

### **3. Dialectic Guided by the Yellow Emperor Internal Classic**

#### **3.1 Ancient Physicians’ Dialectic Guided by the Yellow Emperor Internal Classic**

As the core of TCM diagnosis and treatment, the theoretical origin of Viscera syndrome differentiation can be traced back to the pre-Qin Dynasty medical text, The Yellow Emperor Internal Classic. It has been discussed in detail in the book, pointing out that there is a close correlation between dizziness symptoms and the five internal organs. Specifically, the text describes the interplay between dizziness and the functional states of the heart, liver, spleen, lungs, and kidneys, reflecting a deep understanding of the holistic concept of Chinese medicine and the relevance of the internal organs. Through this discussion, we can see the early elaboration of “the Yellow Emperor Internal Classic” on the idea of identification of internal organs, which provides an important theoretical basis for the identification and treatment of dizziness and other diseases in the clinical practice of Chinese medicine in later generations, as described below:

##### **3.1.1 Liver and Dizziness**

In the classic treatise “Plain Questions”, the phrase “all winds and dizziness belong to the liver” profoundly reveals the close connection between dizziness and liver function. This assertion laid an important foundation for the development of later medical theories, prompting physicians to further explore the pathological mechanism of how endogenous liver wind as the source of endogenous wind triggers dizziness, and accordingly established the treatment principle of calming the liver and suppressing the hyperactive yang, and quenching the wind by suppressing the liver as the core of the treatment. Zhang Jingyue creatively introduced the theory of “no dizziness without deficiency”, emphasizing that the deficiency of liver blood, which cannot nourish the head and eyes, is another important cause of dizziness. At the same time, Zhang also noted the synergistic role of the liver and the lungs in the Qi-movement. Liver qi is responsible for ascending while lung qi is responsible for descending, and a balance

between the two is essential for maintaining smooth qi throughout the body. If the liver qi is over-dispersed, resulting qi-movement disturbance, it may also be a cause of dizziness.

##### **3.1.2 Heart and Dizziness**

“Plain Questions” points out that the hyperactivity of cardiac fire, disturbing the heart, can lead to dizziness, and the heart beats violently. The Han Dynasty medical work “Central Treasury Canon” is an in-depth exploration of dizziness from the point of view of visceral deficiency, put forward the view that heart qi deficiency can lead to dizziness, and further explained that if the heart qi is insufficient, blood flow deficiency, the brain loses nourishment, and all of these factors can lead to the occurrence of dizziness symptoms. If the heart yang is deficient, the qi and blood do not run smoothly, and the head is the meeting of all yangs, and qi and blood yang qi is insufficient, so dizziness [7].

##### **3.1.3 Spleen and Dizziness**

The spleen and stomach, as the root of the body’s innate nature, assume the core function of generating and transporting qi and blood, and are the source of nourishment for the viscera. If the spleen and stomach function abnormally in a pathological state, it may lead to insufficient qi and blood production, which in turn may lead to a series of clinical manifestations, including but not limited to loss of appetite, weakness, and lustreless face. On the other hand, when the spleen is dysfunctional of the spleen, forming the evidence of dampness obstruction, the patient is often accompanied by nausea and vomiting, heaviness of head, and thick fur on the tongue and other signs. In the classical theories of Chinese medicine, Zhang Zhongjing paid great attention to the importance of dampness as a cause of dizziness, and revealed the pathological connection between dampness and dizziness in the Golden Chamber. Further, from the perspective of qi elevation, the spleen and stomach play the role of the hub of qi elevation. Specifically, the ascending function of the liver, the descending function of the lungs, the harmonization of water and fire between the heart and the kidneys, the watercourse regulation of the lungs, and the qi vaporization and transpiration of the kidneys all rely on the pivotal function of the spleen for their normal physiological operation [8].

##### **3.1.4 Lungs and Dizziness**

Lungs as the main division of qi and respiratory organs, is not only responsible for the qi and purging and descending, but also bear the water channel, face the hundred vessels and dominate the whole body of qi and blood operation of the rhythmic function. Lung qi deficiency can be one of the triggers of dizziness. Weak lung qi leads to poor operation of qi, blood and veins, which affects its nourishing effect on the skin, pores and orifices of the whole body, especially when the brain is not adequately nourished, and then dizziness symptoms will be triggered. In the treatment of dizziness caused by insufficient lung qi, emphasis should be placed on tonifying qi and lungs to strengthen the function of the lungs so as to ensure that the qi and blood are sufficient and efficiently transmitted to the brain to nourish the brain orifices and alleviate the symptoms of dizziness. In addition, the theory of dizziness caused by the six evils proposed by Yan

adds a new dimension to the discussion of the etiology of dizziness, makes up for some of the deficiencies in previous discussions, and further enriches the understanding of the etiology and pathogenesis of dizziness in traditional Chinese medicine.

### 3.1.5 Kidneys and Dizziness

For the birth of the kidney, its core physiological functions cover the storage of essence, promote growth and development and reproductive function of the maintenance, regulation of water metabolism, as well as the deepening of breathing gas. The Miraculous Pivot emphasizes the close connection between the kidney essence and the brain marrow: when the kidney essence is full, it produces the essence and marrow, which converge in the brain to form the “Sea of the Marrow”, and the spinal cord serves as a bridge to connect to the brain, which further strengthens this physiological coherence. As the root of yin and yang in the human body, the “congenital essence” stored in the kidneys has a direct impact on the growth curve, developmental process and reproductive potential of an individual, and is also a key factor in maintaining the fullness and development of the spinal cord and the medulla oblongata. When the essence in the kidneys is full, the medulla oblongata can be fully nourished, which in turn ensures that the brain can perform its functions, such as thinking, sensing and other high-level neural activities. On the contrary, if the essence in the kidneys is lacking, the medulla oblongata is not nourished, resulting in a lack of brain marrow, which will easily lead to dizziness and other neurological symptoms, reflecting the profound physiopathological connection between the kidneys and the brain.

## 3.2 Observations of Modern Physicians under the Guidance of the Yellow Emperor Internal Classic

### 3.2.1 Observations from the liver

Mou Yongfang [9] and other based on the theory of “opening, closing and pivoting” of the Yellow Emperor Internal Classic that the liver originally holds the yin and blood and guards, if the loss of excretion will be easily stagnant; Mr. Cao Lin [10] believes that we should follow the characteristics of “belongs to Yin in physique and Yang in function”, not only the opposite but also the characteristics of mutual roots and mutual use, the use of medication should be strong and soft, the treatment of the symptoms should be based on “Zhengan Qianyang”, and the treatment of the root should be based on “Ziyin Tiaogan”, and also pay attention to concurrent symptoms. According to Zhao Ren [11] and others, “all winds and dizziness belong to the liver”, which reveals the possibility of treating dizziness and tremor from the perspective of the liver.

### 3.2.2 Observations from the kidneys

According to Liu [12], from the perspective of kidney observation, dizziness symptoms should be subdivided into three categories: Shuibu Hanmu, kidney essence deficiency, and yin and yang deficiency. Based on the opening and closing pivot theory, Mou Yongfang [9] and others proposed that the main pivot of the Shaoyin Kidney is out of order, and that the Shaoyin Kidney not only serves as the pivot of the

three yin, but also plays the role of the pivot of yin and yang. Accordingly, dizziness symptoms caused by kidney essence deficiency can be further subdivided into two categories: kidney yin essence deficiency and kidney yang essence deficiency. This theory emphasizes the fact that the Shaoyin Kidney first dominates the function of the pivot of yin and then extends to the regulation of the pivot of yin and yang, which reflects the holistic nature of the mechanism of opening and closing the pivot and the sensitivity of its operation.

### 3.2.3 Observations from the Liver and Spleen

Prof. Li Qing [13] believes that dizziness is mostly caused by the liver and spleen, and discusses that dizziness is caused by earth deficiency and wood multiplication, and dizziness is caused by earth congestion and wood depression. Spleen and stomach malfunctions are unable to transport and transform water, grain and essence, and when the spleen is deficient, qi and blood are insufficient, and the liver is unable to be nourished. If the liver is deficient in yin, the deficiency and hyperactivity of yang will lead to dizziness; on the other hand, liver disease affects the spleen, and the liver loses its detachment and violates the earth. The basic principle of “regulating the spleen and dredging the liver is important, emphasizing the treatment of liver and spleen together” should be followed.

## 4. Recognition and Research on Therapeutic Approaches to Dizziness Disease

### 4.1 Acupuncture-moxibustion Treatment

In exploring the principles of acupuncture therapy for the treatment of dizziness symptoms, the ancient book Miraculous Pivot provides a valuable theoretical basis, emphasizing the principle of evidence-based treatment, which is “solid is cathartic, and deficiency is tonic”. Specifically, external evils can lead to dizziness. At this time, acupuncture on Tianzhu point aims to dispel wind evil to stop dizziness; while in the second case, if qi-movement disturbance triggers dizziness or even fainting, acupuncture on Tianzhu and Dazhu can dredge and harmonize qi-movement in the head. Thus, the purpose of stopping dizziness can be achieved. Zhang Zhongjing developed on this basis and advocated the acupuncture of Da Zhui, Fei Shu, Gan Shu and Qi Men. The aim was to relieve the symptoms of dizziness by relieving the symptoms of cold and harmonizing the cardinal organs. In the application of tonics, Zhang Zhongjing adopted Xiao-Chai-hu and other formulas for the treatment of dizziness. It further enriched the treatment of dizziness in heat illness.

### 4.2 Medication

Li Dongyuan in his “The Theory of Spleen and Stomach” [14] further pointed out that: the head for the essence of the House, the five viscera and six bowels of the essence of the upstream gathered here. If the spleen and stomach essence is weak, the source of qi and blood depletion, ultimately leading to the five viscera and six bowels of the essence of the emptiness. Qing Yang can not go up in the head and face, the head is not moistened, resulting in tinnitus, dizziness and other symptoms. In clinical treatment, the main formula of Yi-Qi-Cong-Ming and Bu-Zhong-Yi-Qi can be used for additions and

subtractions. You can also use Astragalus, Bauhinia, Phellodendron Bark, etc. to achieve the effect of benefiting qi and Yang to stop dizziness.

#### 4.3 Modern Physicians' Knowledge and Research on Dizziness Treatment Methods

According to Prof. Li Qing [13], the treatment principle of "regulating spleen and soothing liver" should be followed when treating dizziness that is mainly caused by the liver and spleen. "Regulating the spleen" can be summarized as regulating the spleen and stomach. improper diet damage the qi, blood, yin and yang of the spleen and stomach over time. Insufficient positive qi in the spleen and stomach will result in insufficient transportation and digestion; fatty and sweet products are nourishing and greasy, easily obstructing the spleen and stomach; over time, the spleen loses its ability to regulate its movement, resulting in dampness. Phlegm and dampness are heavy and sticky, obstructing the spleen and stomach, and the spleen's function of promoting and clearing is out of order. In view of the above causes, regulating the spleen and stomach mainly includes two aspects, strengthening the spleen and promoting transportation. Strengthening the spleen involves replenishing the qi of the spleen and stomach with Codonopsis, Atractylodes Macrocephala, Chinese yam, Licorice, Jujube, etc. Strengthening the spleen and transporting refers to strengthening the function of the spleen and stomach to help transport and transform dampness evils. Clinical treatment can be provided by a series of specialized prescriptions such as Ling-Gui-Zhu-Gan, Wu-Ling-San, Ze-Xie, Xiao-Ban-Xia, Ling-Gan-Wu-Wei-Jiang-Xin and so on. Professor Li Qing [13] in the regulation of the spleen and stomach at the same time, but also pay special attention to combing qi, combing qi specifically from the "liver" to start. On the one hand, if the liver qi is smooth, the qi of the whole body is smooth, and the qi of the spleen and stomach is smooth. The spleen's normal function of transportation and digestion, qi and blood have a source, the whole body organs can do their jobs. On the other hand, qi line helps dampness.

#### 5. Summary and Outlook

To summarize, with the progress of the times and the rapid development of science and technology, the development of the pharmaceutical industry has also been very rapid. The understanding, research and application of the Yellow Emperor Internal Classic have become more and more important in later generations, and the understanding and treatment of dizziness have made great progress from ancient times to the present day. The pathogenesis of dizziness is complex, and the mechanism is profound and multidimensional. The Yellow Emperor Internal Classic has many key words for its pathogenesis, and the opinions of scholars are different, which makes it difficult for later scholars to understand. Traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) treats dizziness in a variety of ways, with a large number of prescriptions and formulae, centered on the integer concept and Syndrome Differentiation and Treatment. However, the discussion of Chinese medicine is complicated, and the categorization of evidence types is mostly based on case studies, with insufficient systematic theoretical exploration. Therefore, Therefore, it is necessary to systematically analyze

and summarize the dizziness discourse of the Yellow Emperor Internal Classic, integrate the views of various schools, and refine the practical academic ideas.

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