

# Professor He Fengjie's Clinical Experience in Diagnosis and Treatment of Dysmenorrhea from Traditional Chinese Medicine

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**Abstract:** *Dysmenorrhea is a common gynecological disease in clinical practice, which refers to the periodic occurrence of abdominal pain or accompanied by lower back pain during and before menstruation. The stimulation of various emotional, fear, and other neurological and psychological factors can exacerbate the degree of dysmenorrhea. Physical discomfort during this period can easily affect women's normal life and even their mental health. Modern medicine divides dysmenorrhea into primary and secondary dysmenorrhea. In clinical practice, Western medicine mainly uses prostaglandin synthase inhibitors and short acting contraceptives to treat dysmenorrhea, which have many side effects and limited use. Professor He Fengjie, a nationally renowned traditional Chinese medicine practitioner, has been engaged in gynecology for over 46 years and has his own experience in the clinical diagnosis and treatment of dysmenorrhea. Professor He Fengjie believes that the fundamental cause of dysmenorrhea is blood stasis, and diagnosis and treatment often focus on removing blood stasis and adjusting according to the symptoms. The article introduces Professor He Fengjie's clinical experience in treating dysmenorrhea, in order to provide new ideas for the clinical diagnosis and treatment of dysmenorrhea.*

**Keywords:** He Feng Jie, Traditional Chinese medical science, Algomenorrhea, Clinical experience.

## 1. Introduction

Dysmenorrhea is a common gynecological disease in clinical practice, commonly referred to as "abdominal pain during menstruation" in traditional Chinese medicine. According to the survey, the incidence rate of dysmenorrhea among Chinese women accounts for 33.1%, of which the primary dysmenorrhea accounts for 53.2% [1]. Dysmenorrhea can be divided into primary dysmenorrhea and secondary dysmenorrhea. The primary dysmenorrhea is mostly seen in adolescent women, without organic lesions, and most of them occur 1-2 years after menarche. Secondary dysmenorrhea is more common in women of childbearing age, caused by organic lesions such as adenomyosis and endometriosis. Modern medicine believes that the core pathogenesis of dysmenorrhea is "pain if not understood, and pain if not honored". Traditional Chinese medicine has various methods for treating dysmenorrhea, including traditional Chinese medicine decoctions, combined with external treatment methods and other psychological therapies, and has significant therapeutic effects [2].

He Fengjie, a second level professor, chief physician, expert enjoying special allowances from the State Council, mentor of the sixth and seventh batch of senior traditional Chinese medicine experts nationwide, leader of the high-level key discipline of traditional Chinese medicine - Traditional Chinese Medicine Gynecology of the State Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine, expert in the evaluation of the National Natural Science Foundation of China, vice chairman of the Gynecology Professional Committee of the Chinese Society of Traditional Chinese Medicine, and vice chairman of the Gynecology Professional Committee of the Chinese Ethnic Medicine Association. I have been engaged in traditional Chinese medicine gynecology for over 46 years and am skilled in treating difficult and complicated gynecological diseases. Especially unique in the diagnosis and treatment of menstrual disorders, dysmenorrhea,

menopausal syndrome, male and female infertility, and recurrent miscarriage, with significant therapeutic effects. Professor He Fengjie combines theory with practice and has his own unique insights and treatment ideas for gynecological diseases, with significant therapeutic effects. I am fortunate to learn from my teacher and would like to share Professor He's clinical experience in treating dysmenorrhea.

## 2. Traditional Chinese Medicine Cognition

"Difficulty in removing menstrual fluids... less abdominal pain, see you again after one month..." can be found in "Synopsis of the Golden Chamber: Treatment of Women's Miscellaneous Diseases and Meridians". During the Han Dynasty, Zhang Zhongjing was the first to propose a discourse on dysmenorrhea. At that time, only the symptoms of lower abdominal pain were described and not defined [3]. The description of a woman's menstrual cycle in "Su Wen: On the Innocence of Ancient Times" is as follows: on the twenty seventh day, the Heavenly Gui arrives, the Ren meridian is connected, the Tai Chong meridian is strong, and the monthly events are in the present. The Chaoyuan Fang's "Treatise on the Origin and Etiology of Various Diseases" refers to menstrual abdominal pain in women as "abdominal pain caused by menstrual water in women", and for the first time elucidates the etiology and pathogenesis of dysmenorrhea, laying a theoretical foundation for later medical practitioners to treat dysmenorrhea [4]. In the "Hua Tuo Shen Fang", dysmenorrhea is defined as "when a woman is menstruating, her abdominal pain is like strangulation." The name of dysmenorrhea was widely used in the Qing Dynasty, and Ye Tianshi recorded in the "Clinical Guidelines for Medical Cases" that dysmenorrhea is "... dysmenorrhea is caused by depression and injury, and stagnation of qi and blood." [5].

## 3. Etiology and Pathogenesis

The occurrence of dysmenorrhea is closely related to the Chong Ren uterus and Qi and blood. The loss of nourishment and obstruction of blood flow in the Chong Ren uterus lead to "lack of honor and obstruction", resulting in dysmenorrhea. "The diseases of women are caused by deficiency, accumulation of cold, and accumulation of qi" in the "Synopsis of the Golden Chamber" [6]. Professor He Fengjie believes that women's illnesses cannot be separated from weak qi and blood, cold coagulation, and qi stagnation. Women invade their bodies due to their appetite for raw and cold foods, as well as external cold pathogens such as wind and cold, leading to cold induced stagnation. Dysmenorrhea is caused by spasms and blockages in the meridians, leading to abdominal pain and the formation of blood stasis. Women usually experience irritability and depression, which can lead to liver qi stagnation. Qi stagnation leads to blood stasis, and poor blood flow and blocked cellular channels can cause pain. Women who suffer from prolonged illness and are physically weak consume qi and blood. In addition, the weather and blood biochemistry are depleted, causing the uterus to lose nourishment. If not honored, it will cause pain. Therefore, in clinical treatment of dysmenorrhea, He Fengjie mainly focuses on "tonifying and tonifying". Professor Shi Yumin [7] believes that cold coagulation, qi stagnation, dampness and heat can cause dysmenorrhea, and the main pathogenesis of its occurrence is a combination of deficiency and excess. Professor Wang Qi [8] believes that the important pathological product of dysmenorrhea is blood stasis, which is often caused by cold coagulation, yang deficiency, and other factors. Professor Xiong Li [9] believes that the occurrence of dysmenorrhea lies in qi, blood, and stasis, and the treatment should be based on the principle of "unblocking" and treat it from the perspective of the liver.

#### 4. Diagnosis and Treatment based on Syndrome Differentiation

Professor He Fengjie, in the process of clinical diagnosis and treatment of dysmenorrhea, not only follows the diagnostic and treatment ideas and concepts of ancient and modern medical experts for dysmenorrhea, but also combines his own understanding and diagnostic and treatment concepts for dysmenorrhea. It is believed that pain relief should be the main focus during premenstrual and menstrual periods, and the principle of "treating the root cause when it is mild" should be implemented to seek the cause and treat the root cause. In clinical diagnosis and treatment, dysmenorrhea is mainly characterized by three types of syndromes: qi stagnation and blood stasis, cold coagulation and blood stasis, and qi and blood weakness.

##### 4.1 Qi Stagnation and Blood Stasis

People who are usually irritable and prone to depression may experience liver qi stagnation, obstructed blood circulation, and pain if not functioning properly. The clinical manifestations are mainly bloating and pain in the lower abdomen, breasts, and hypochondriac region, refusal to press, presence of blood clots, relief of menstrual pain caused by clots, and dullness and petechiae on the tongue. Diagnose multiple strings in the pulse. In terms of treatment, Professor He Fengjie often uses his self-designed formula "diaphragmatic and liver five flavors" for clinical

modification. Composed of: Vinegar Wuling Ester, Angelica Sinensis, Peach Kernel, Chuanxiong, Peony Peel, Roasted Licorice, Vinegar Xiangfu, Safflower, Braised Fructus Aurantii, White Peony, Wuyao, Acacia bark, Yujin, Yanhusuo, Chaihu. To soothe the liver, promote qi circulation, promote blood circulation, and relieve pain.

##### 4.2 Cold Coagulation and Blood Stasis

Women usually indulge in eating raw and cold food or feel cold, and fail to adapt to the four seasons and adapt to cold and heat. Cold evil stagnates and affects the cellular vessels, causing pain if not blocked. Clinically, it often presents as abdominal cold pain, reluctance to press with warmth, fear of cold, and a heavy and tight pulse. He Fengjie's self formulated formula "Warm Meridian and Pain Relieving Block" is modified according to the symptoms, with the aim of warming the meridians, dispersing cold, removing blood stasis and relieving pain. Composed of: peach kernels, safflower, ripe Rehmannia, white peony, Angelica sinensis, Chuanxiong, vinegar frankincense, vinegar myrrh, typhus, fennel, asarum, prepared Fructus Evodiae, Cinnamomum cassia, vinegar Xiangfu, dried ginger, and Corydalis yanhusuo.

##### 4.3 Qi and Blood Weakness

Long term illness usually consumes qi and blood, resulting in congenital deficiency and later weather leading to a lack of blood biochemistry. The uterus loses nourishment, and if not honored, it will be painful. Clinically, it often presents as dull abdominal pain, fatigue and weakness, liking to press, with a dull complexion, less volume, light red color, and thin or weak pulse. Sheng Yu Tang is commonly used in clinical practice with modifications. To achieve the goal of relieving pain by supplementing qi and nourishing blood.

#### 5. Other Treatments

Dysmenorrhea patients with poor sleep, lack of concentration, anxiety, emotional impatience, and other psychological emotions need emotional comfort and elimination of anxiety in order to alleviate dysmenorrhea. Kirca [10] et al. conducted a study evaluating the impact of yoga on the degree of dysmenorrhea pain. The experimental group received 3 months of yoga exercise, while the control group did not take any measures. The study found that the degree of dysmenorrhea in the control group was significantly higher than that in the experimental group, proving that yoga is a useful measure for reducing dysmenorrhea. In recent years, research on the treatment of dysmenorrhea with traditional Chinese medicine acupoint application has shown that traditional Chinese medicine acupoint application often uses drugs with properties that are mostly warm and warm, with the effect of warming the inside and dispersing cold, and promoting the development of yang qi. By promoting the circulation of qi and blood, it can achieve smooth flow of meridians without pain [11]. At present, there are various methods for treating dysmenorrhea in traditional Chinese medicine, including internal and external treatments, all of which have significant therapeutic effects. In addition, the occurrence of dysmenorrhea is closely related to the local climate and environment, the patient's physical condition, and the patient's lifestyle habits [12]. Therefore, dysmenorrhea

patients should follow the changes of the four seasons in their daily lives, not indulge in raw and cold foods, and have a regular lifestyle. Pay attention to adjusting emotions, do not be too hasty, and prevent diseases before they occur.

## 6. Examples of Case Verification

A certain woman, 34 years old. Initial diagnosis on November 10, 2023, with menstrual pain worsening for over 20 years and one year. The patient reported that they had a regular menstrual cycle of 30 days and 5 days, with a large amount, dark red color, a small amount of blood clots, and dysmenorrhea (+++). During menstruation, they had lower back pain and fatigue, and their lower abdomen was bloated and cool during menstruation. The last menstrual period was on October 20, 2023, with a clean period of 5 days and normal color and quality. The accompanying symptoms during menstruation remained normal. Usually irritable and irritable, prone to fatigue and weakness, able to eat well, sleep lightly, wake up easily, and have multiple dreams. The tongue is dark, cracked, with little moss, and there is slight stasis under the tongue. The pulse is slender. Previous adenomyosis of the uterus. Western medicine diagnosis: Dysmenorrhea (primary); Traditional Chinese Medicine Diagnosis: Treatment for abdominal pain (Qi stagnation and blood stasis) is recommended to promote blood circulation, promote Qi circulation, and relieve pain by resolving blood stasis. Administer diaphragmatic drainage, Cangfu phlegm guidance, and amber modification. Composition: 10g Angelica sinensis, 10g Ligusticum chuanxiong, 10g stir fried peach kernels, 15g white peony, 10g linden root, 18g Corydalis yanhusuo, 12g Xiangfu, 10g safflower, 10g stir fried orange peel with bran, 3g amber (taken orally), 12g prepared Radix Polygalae, 10g ginseng (decocted separately), 30g motherwort, 10g frankincense, 10g myrrh, 30g crane grass, 30g acacia bark, 20g yujin, 15g fried sour jujube kernels, and 18g continuous. 14 doses, 1 dose/day, 200ml water decoction, take warm after breakfast and dinner.

On December 5, 2023, during a follow-up visit, the patient reported a decrease in menstrual flow and improvement in dysmenorrhea after taking medication. After taking the medication, the patient developed symptoms such as excessive heat, slight fatigue and weakness, dry mouth, and decreased bowel movements. Last menstrual period: November 20, 2023. Still using the upper part, remove ginseng, frankincense, myrrh, and sour jujube kernels, and add 15g of jujube kernels, 15g of black ginseng, 15g of ginseng, 15g of peony bark, and 12g of gardenia. 14 doses, same as above for usage.

On January 9, 2024, after taking medication, the menstrual flow decreased, and lower back pain, dysmenorrhea, fatigue, weakness, and sleep improved compared to before. Emotions are irritable and irritable, easy to wake up from shallow sleep, and easy to adjust. Last menstrual period: December 25th, 2023. On the basis of the two diagnostic prescriptions, black medicine, bran fried fructus aurantii, amber, agrimony, and jujube kernel were added with 3g dragon's blood (oral), 10g ground beetle worm, 10g frankincense, and 10g myrrh. The dosage of Polygala tenuifolia was adjusted to 15g. 14 doses, same as above for usage.

On January 30, 2024, after taking medication, the menstrual flow decreased, and the symptoms of lower back pain, dysmenorrhea, fatigue, sleep, and mood were completely improved. The patient is now able to receive medication, sleep well, and adjust bowel movements. Last menstrual period: January 23, 2024. Continue to use three diagnostic medications to consolidate the therapeutic effect. 14 doses, same as above for usage.

According to: The patient begins dysmenorrhea at the age of 14 at menarche, which is consistent with primary dysmenorrhea in Western medicine. The patient has a history of adenomyosis, which belongs to the pain caused by traditional Chinese medicine syndrome and also belongs to the category of secondary dysmenorrhea in Western medicine. Adenomyosis (AM) is a pathological change caused by the invasion of the endometrium into the muscular layer and growth. The most typical clinical manifestation of AM is progressive and aggravated dysmenorrhea, which seriously affects the physical and mental health of women. Its pathogenesis is complex and belongs to the difficult gynecological disease [13]. Modern medical experts believe that the fundamental cause of adenomyosis is blood stasis, and the pathogenesis is blood stasis blocking the uterus and Chongren. Adenomyosis belongs to the category of dysmenorrhea and syndrome in traditional Chinese medicine. The patient is usually irritable and irritable, and is given a self-formulated formula called "Liver Five Flavors", which includes Huanhuan Pi, Yujin, Chaihu, Xiangfu, and Baishao to soothe the liver and promote qi circulation. The patient is diagnosed with qi stagnation and blood stasis, so the method of using the diaphragm to remove blood stasis and Cangfu to guide phlegm is adopted. Adding the last flavor of amber can not only promote blood circulation and dispel blood stasis, but also calm the mind. It has a good therapeutic effect in treating cluster diseases caused by accumulation of symptoms and masses. Fangzhong Yuanzhi and Lizaoren are used to calm the mind and improve the patient's sleep condition. Treat dry mouth with Xuanshen and Beishashen to nourish yin and promote fluid production. The patient complained of being prone to excessive heat and was given Danpi and Zhizi to clear heat and reduce fire. The patient took traditional Chinese medicine for 2 months and experienced significant relief in symptoms such as dysmenorrhea. Subsequent follow-up visits revealed that the patient did not experience dysmenorrhea.

## 7. Summary

Periodic lower abdominal pain during menstruation in women can have an impact on their daily life and work. Professor He Fengjie believes that the core pathogenesis of dysmenorrhea is the obstruction of Qi stagnation, cold coagulation, blood stasis, and the deficiency of Qi and blood leading to the loss of nourishment in the uterus. Therefore, in terms of treatment, emphasis is placed on promoting and supplementing, with adjustments made according to the symptoms. Before diagnosis and treatment, one should first distinguish between deficiency and excess, and treat them in stages. The focus in the early stage of menstruation is on pain relief, and the main goal is to consolidate the root cause and treat both symptoms and symptoms. In daily care, it is important to prevent illness before it occurs, regulate emotions smoothly, and adapt to changes in the four seasons.

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