

Exploration on the Application of Five Elements Music Therapy in Postpartum Depression based on the Theory of Form, Qi and Spirit

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Abstract: To explore the diagnosis and treatment of postpartum depression (PPD) based on the theory of form, qi and spirit, and summarize the treatment principles of five elements music therapy. The theory of form, qi and spirit is the core embodiment of the holistic concept of traditional Chinese medicine, which reveals the synergistic relationship between form, qi and spirit in human life activities. The occurrence of PPD is in accordance with the dynamic evolution law of “shape injury first, qi disorder as the center, and spirit damage as the end”, which is manifested as opening of 100 joints, qi and blood deficiency, and spirit loss. Five elements music therapy is based on the theoretical system of traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) corresponding to the “Gong, Shang, Jiao, Zheng and Yu” of the five zang organs to regulate qi and blood, unblocking the five zang organs and unblocking the five elements, which is highly consistent with the theory of form, qi and spirit. This study analyzed the clinical efficacy of five elements music on the form, qi and spirit of PPD patients, and put forward the treatment principle of “nourishing the form to invigorate the essence of blood - regulating qi to solidify the vitality - calming the mind to clear the disease root”, aiming to provide theoretical support for the treatment of PPD with five elements music method.

Keywords: Form qi spirit theory, Five elements music therapy, Postpartum depression, Holistic view.

1. Introduction

Postpartum Depression (PPD) is a mental disorder that lies between postpartum depressive disorders and postpartum depression. Its clinical manifestations include low mood, unstable emotions, fatigue, world-weariness and pessimism, sleep disorders, loss of interest, and a sense of guilt, etc [1,2]. The occurrence of PPD can be caused by a variety of factors, such as hormonal changes, physical changes, emotional stress, lack of sleep, and inadequate support systems, which may act alone or together to trigger PPD. According to the data published by the World Health Organization (WHO), 13% of pregnant women in the world will experience postpartum mental disorders, and the rate in developing countries is as high as 19.8%. Who considers perinatal mental health problems to be a public health issue worthy of attention [2]. Studies have shown that the global prevalence of postpartum depression is 17.7%[3]. The prevalence of postpartum depression in developing and developed countries during the perinatal period is 5%-30% and 5%-20% respectively [4]. In China, there is a large base of primiparas and with the opening of the “three-child policy”, the number of multiple parturients has also increased, and the mental health problems of parturients have gradually attracted wide attention of the whole society. Solving PPD, paying attention to maternal mental health, and eliminating postpartum emotional disorders are social and medical problems that need to be solved.

Although the proper term “postpartum depression” has not been clearly proposed in traditional Chinese medicine, the emotional changes and mental symptoms after childbirth have long been described in Huangdi Neijing (Yellow Emperor’s Internal Classic), which are similar to those of modern medicine. In terms of postpartum care, Sheng Ji Zonglu emphasizes that postpartum care should avoid happiness,

anger or sadness. In the Prescriptions for Women, it is emphasized that postpartum multilateralism, laughter, panic, anxiety, crying, thinking, and anger should not be discouraged, pointing out that these emotional fluctuations are unfavorable to puerpera. It can be seen that emotional disorder and poor qi often cause PPD, and then cause physical changes in postpartum women [3]. Music is the product of human psychological activities. The realization of its social function depends on specific psychological processes such as sound experience and emotional feelings, and this mechanism of action can have a positive impact on individual health. Five elements music therapy, as a part of traditional Chinese medicine therapy, further improves the treatment effect of postpartum depression through the corresponding relationship between the five sounds (Gong, Shang, Jiao, Zheng and Yu) and the five elements (earth, metal, wood, fire and water) of music, so as to reconcile the Yin and Yang of the human body. Five elements music therapy is characterized by its simplicity, acceptability, economy, operability and wide application potential. It has become a promising therapeutic method. With the deepening of research and the expansion of clinical application, five elements music therapy is expected to provide effective treatment options for more patients.

2. Outline of the Theory of Form, Qi and Spirit

The theory of shape-qi spirit comes from Huainan zi · Yuan Daoxun “Husband shape, the birth of the house also; Qi, the full also; God, the system of life also “. The spirit of form and qi is a common part of life. Among them, “shape” refers to the tangible substances such as viscera, body, and official orifices, which are the house of qi and qi, and the material basis for the function of qi and spirit. “Qi” refers to the invisible matter that is filled with the form matter. It is the basic way of life activity and the hub of communication between form and God. “God” is the master of life activities, representing people’s mental

activities such as thinking and emotion, and regulating the changes of form and qi. “Huainan Zi · Yuan Tao Xun” cloud: “Therefore, the form of the husband, is not the place of its own, but also waste, qi is not its full and used, the god is not its appropriate behavior is ignorance.” Form, qi and God are interdependent and together constitute the unity of life. God is the commander of form and qi, qi is the hub of form and spirit, and form is the foundation of form and qi. The abnormality of any one of them can affect the other two, leading to the disorder of the overall rhythm of life and disease. The theory of form, qi and spirit is integrated with the concept of “preventive treatment for disease”, which plays a macro guiding role in the diagnosis and treatment of diseases.

3. An Overview of Postpartum Depression

postpartum depression (PPD) is a common mental disease in puerperium, characterized by low mood, anxiety and depression, insomnia, crying, and loss of interest. In severe cases, self-injury and suicide may occur [4]. At present, PPD is mainly treated with antidepressant drugs in clinical practice, but the adverse reactions of long-term western drug treatment have increased, and the maternal medication compliance has decreased [5]. PPD not only brings huge economic and medical burdens to the society and individuals, but also is the source of family conflicts [6]. The pathophysiological mechanism of this disease is complex, the pathogenesis has not been fully determined, and the effect of targeted treatment is poor.

4. TCM Understanding of PPD

Although the name of PPD has not been recorded in ancient Chinese medical books, it can be classified into the categories of “depression syndrome”, “lily disease”, “plum nucleus qi” and “zang mania” according to its symptoms. Although there is no special article on “postpartum depression” in ancient Chinese medical books, there are articles on “postpartum silence”, “postpartum palpitations”, and “postpartum delirium” [7]. According to the discussion on the symptoms and treatment of postpartum depression in *Jingui Yaluo* (Synopsis of the Golden Chamber), *Puji Fang* (Prescriptions for Universal Relief) and *Yizong Jinjian* (Golden Guide to Medicine), it is classified as “depression disease” and “zang disorder” in traditional Chinese medicine, and the main causes of postpartum depression are qi deficiency, blood deficiency and blood stasis. Whether it is natural labor or cesarean section, maternal bleeding will occur in the process of childbirth. In addition, maternal postpartum need to assume the responsibility of lactation, which is more likely to damage qi and blood, aggravate the deficiency of Yin and blood, affect the mental state, and the situation of mind loss. Postpartum women pay more attention to the health status of their newborns. At this time, if they are too worried, it will affect the postpartum recovery and sleep, and then cause heart and spleen damage, phlegm dampness accumulation. In addition, maternal roles change after delivery, hormone levels change significantly, and physical and psychological changes occur, but the family members do not understand the burden of the mother, and the requirements of the mother to take care of the newborn are too high. At this time, the mother is prone to negative emotions, resulting in liver qi stagnation, qi stagnation and blood stasis and mental disorders due to

emotional damage.

5. The Relationship between Shape-qi spirit and PPD

In clinical practice, PPD is often treated with oral herbal medicine, Chinese patent medicine, acupuncture and music therapy to improve symptoms and treat diseases [8]. PPD is affected by various factors such as postpartum physical changes, environmental changes, and identity transformation, which should be considered from a holistic and systematic perspective. At present, modern medicine has also begun to change from the biomedical model to the bio-psycho-social composite medical model, which confirms the comprehensiveness and advancement of the human body in the integration of form, Qi and spirit [9]. The theory of form, Qi and spirit is based on the holistic syndrome differentiation concept of traditional Chinese medicine, which believes that the occurrence of PPD is often related to qi spirit, qi and form. For PPD such diseases, clinical treatment should start from the theory of form, qi and spirit to analyze its pathogenesis based on syndrome differentiation.

5.1 Physical Change is the Premise

Zhang Zhongjing believed that “new parturient women have three diseases, one is spasmodic, two are depression, and three are difficult to defecate” [10]. In essence, the treatment of postpartum disease is based on deficiency. It is believed that postpartum qi and blood deficiency, the inability to control pathogenic factors and the invasion of wind pathogenic factors cause spasticity, the loss of qi and blood and the difficulty of cold pathogenic factors cause depression, and the deficiency of body fluid and dryness of intestine cause difficult defecation. Some modern experts and scholars believe that “depression” is related to PPD, which is a symptom, indicating head vertigo, depression, fatigue, confusion, etc. [11]. Ma Tianyi [12] believed that the deficiency of qi and blood was the cause, and thought that depression was equivalent to postpartum blood halo. Xia Guicheng [13] believes that depression refers to a transient mild mood disorder that occurs after childbirth and lasts for several days, which is a neuropsychiatric disorder, namely postpartum depression. Modern research has inherited part of the views of ancient doctors at the theoretical level, and believes that depression refers to the disease of postpartum blood loss leading to qi and blood deficiency, resulting in dizziness, depression and other symptoms, which is more consistent with postpartum blood halo [11].

According to traditional Chinese medicine (TCM), the changes of postpartum body are mainly caused by the massive consumption of qi and blood, temporary disorder of zangfu function and imbalance of Yin and Yang during delivery. Chen Ziming mentioned in the *Compendium of Good Prescriptions for Women in the Southern Song Dynasty* that “after childbirth, the hundred knots are opened, the blood vessels are scattered, and when qi is weak, the blood flow between the meridians and flesh points is stagnant, which does not spread over the days. Therefore, the bone joints are not conducive, the muscles and veins are strongly oriented, so the waist and back cannot be turned to the side, the hands and feet cannot be moved, and the body is hot and headache” [14].

Sun Simiao expounded on postpartum body changes in the book *Women's Prescriptions for Essential Prescriptions for urgent Needs of a Thousand Gold*: "After delivery, the five zang organs are weak, but they must be replenished instead of reducing" [16], indicating that the function of postpartum zangfu organs is in a state of deficiency, which will lead to many diseases of deficiency of zangfu organs. When a woman gives birth, great changes occur in qi, blood, Yin and Yang, body functions, and zangfu meridians, resulting in postpartum deficiency and postpartum diseases. Modern medicine believes that pregnancy and the postpartum period is a period of violent fluctuations in the level of reproductive hormones in women. In contrast to pregnancy, when estrogen levels are significantly elevated, after childbirth, estrogen levels fall rapidly, a phenomenon known as "withdrawal." Some researchers have proposed that this rapid withdrawal of estrogen may be a major factor in postpartum women's depressive symptoms, and have called this theory the "ovario-steroid-withdrawal hypothesis" [17]. Studies have found that postpartum depression is negatively correlated with E2, 5-HT and prolactin levels, and it is considered that the occurrence of postpartum depression may be related to the sharp reduction of estrogen and progesterone [18]. Animal experiments have proved that the female rats were ovariectomized and then given related drugs to finally withdraw hormones, so as to construct a female rat model of postpartum depression [19, 20].

5.2 The Change of Gas Engine is the Key

In the Law of Medicine and the Theory of Atmosphere, it is concluded that "When qi gathers, form exists, and when qi disperses, form collapses. Qi about the form also, is not great" [21], indicating the importance of qi in the human body. In *Zheng Zhi Hui Bu · Yu Zheng*, it is said that "Although there are many depression diseases, they are all due to abnormal flow of qi, and the method should be smooth qi first" [22], indicating that depression is often caused by the obstructed qi machine of the human body, and ventilation should be smooth qi. "Qi and blood flow harmony, all diseases do not arise" [23] in *Danxi Xinfu*, is fully reflected in PPD qi machine pathology. *Su Wen Jiu Tong Lun* said, "All diseases arise from qi." Thus, qi is a key factor in human life activities. Qi is the basis of human life activities and plays an important role in life activities. "Qi is the root of human beings," it is recorded in the "Ba Nan Jing". Zhu Danxi inherited the theory of rising and falling in the *Neijing*. He pointed out in the *Play of Bureau Fang* that "the husband and the Zhou were one of the people who thought that the body was a living person, and the qi was also. When Yang goes, Yin comes, when Yin goes, Yang comes, a rise and a fall, there is no poor self" [24]. If the qi is not smooth, the disease will be born. During labor, the exertion caused postpartum exhaustion, the blood chamber was wide open, the pulse was empty, and the qi was removed with the blood. Women are born with liver, based on blood and used with qi. The liver is the master of catharsis, regulating emotions. Due to the psychological and physical impact of the newborn on the maternal, especially the "primipara" for the transformation of maternal identity and the shift of the focus of family attention, the maternal liver qi stagnation, liver fire disturbance, affecting the long flow of qi, easy to cause maternal depression, irritability and other symptoms. It can be seen that the smoothness of Qi has a close

relationship with emotion. Modern medical research shows that reactive oxygen species (ROS) play a major role in brain injury. Antioxidant treatment suppressed depression-like behavior in mice by eliminating reactive oxygen species, which can cause DNA damage in specific brain regions. The abnormal rise and fall of qi machine can be manifested as the weakening of the role of reactive oxygen species, and then cause depression. In some experiments, DCFH-DA reactive oxygen species detection fluorescent probe was used to detect the reactive oxygen species level in fresh hippocampal and prefrontal cortex cells, suggesting that the fluorescence intensity of hippocampal cells in the postpartum depression model group was higher than that in the normal rat group [25].

5.3 The Mind Changes to the Final

Women in modern society live under great pressure, and both social and psychological factors can affect postpartum physical and mental health. Studies have shown that the factors affecting Chinese women's postpartum emotions include depression during pregnancy, housing conditions, economy, marital relationship, family support, sleep and so on [26]. "Yi Zhuan" recorded: "God also, wonderful things for the speaker also" [27]. Traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) believes that "god" is the master of human life activities. In the broad sense, God refers to the expression and domination of life activities and zangfu functions, while in the narrow sense, god refers to mental activities such as spirit, thinking, and emotion. "Heart, God's house also." "The blood, the spirit also", maternal labor gas consumption blood injury, heart qi heart blood deficiency. Another book, *100 Questions in Women's Department*, said, "Childbirth and lying injuries consumed meridians, and the pulse did not calm down" [28]. Postpartum qi and blood consumption injury, the body has not recovered the prenatal state, the slow operation of the qi machine, coupled with the influence of external factors, easy to make the qi machine run poorly, thus making the mental failure and inducing PPD. However, modern medicine believes that postpartum depression is a common problem after childbirth due to changes in postpartum hormone levels, physical comfort changes and parenting pressure [29]. In an animal study of postpartum depression, pregnant rats were made to observe the process of other rats being shocked, and the pregnant rats were placed in a similar environment to feel fear information through vision, hearing and smell, thus inducing a rat model of postpartum depression [30].

6. To Explore the Application of Five Elements Music Therapy in PPD based on the Theory of Form, Qi and Spirit

Five elements music therapy is a kind of therapy that combines the five elements theory of traditional Chinese medicine with music therapy. In the theory of traditional Chinese medicine, the five elements (wood, fire, earth, metal and water) correspond not only to the five basic elements of nature, but also to the five zang organs (liver, heart, card, lung and kidney), the five emotions (anger, joy, thought, worry and fear) and the five tones as the core (Jiao, Hui, Gong, Shang and Yu) of the human body. The purpose of regulating the balance of the five elements of the human body through specific music is to promote the function of the zangfu organs and the harmonious balance of qi, blood, body and fluid. As

early as in the Inner classic of Huangdi, it was recorded in detail in the chapter of Miraculous Shu · Evil Key: “The heaven has five sounds, and human has five zang organs. Heaven has six laws and man has six bowels.” Based on the basic theory of Yin and Yang and five elements in traditional Chinese medicine, Gong, Shang, Jiao, Hui and Yu tones of music correspond to the liver, heart, spleen, lung and kidney of the human body respectively, and are also related to the five emotions of anger, joy, thought and sorrow and fear. Grasping the patient’s emotions can understand the damage of different emotional changes to the patient, and also find the corresponding music for intervention and treatment [31]. Modern research has confirmed that each of the five viscera of the human body has a specific vibration frequency. There is a close and subtle correlation between these frequencies and the corresponding frequencies of the pentatonic scale. With the help of nanotechnology, the mechanism of the influence of sound on cells was analyzed, and animal experimental studies were carried out to reveal the activation of five viscera by sound waves with different pronunciation frequencies [32]. In recent years, some scholars have adopted five elements music therapy in the treatment of postpartum depression, and the results show that this treatment method can effectively regulate the patients’ emotions and reduce their depression and sadness, which is worthy of wide clinical application [33]. From a physiological point of view, when the vibration frequency contained in music is consistent with the physiological vibration frequency of the human body, such as heart rate, heart rhythm, breathing rhythm, blood pressure fluctuation and pulse beat, it may cause physiological resonance phenomenon, so as to achieve the purpose of treating diseases [34].

6.1 Tuning of Shape

Huangdi Neijing (Yellow Emperor’s Internal Classic) summarized the aspects of meridian, belt, fetus and delivery, and also recognized the predisposing factors of postpartum diseases, such as the six exogenous pathogens and emotional depression. The shape changes of PPD patients are mainly manifested in the exhaustion of qi and blood, the imbalance of yingwei, the stagnation of blood, and the injury of viscera. In the process of diagnosis and treatment of PPD, we should pay attention to “toning qi and regulating blood, and harmonizing yingwei” as the basis. Therefore, paying attention to the recovery of postpartum body is the primary measure for the treatment of PPD patients, and the recovery of postpartum body function can be promoted through diet regulation, daily life, oral administration of traditional Chinese medicine, acupuncture and moxibustion. For example, in the “Fetal birth heart Method: Shang shi Lun”: “Postpartum body tiredness, spleen and stomach are injured. After the new production, to the paste sorghum, far thick taste, eating porridge shavings and vegetables, thought to be relocated” [35]. “Zhang shi Yi tong · Postpartum” pointed out that “one is forbidden to lie, two is forbidden to drink, three is forbidden to bath, four is forbidden to cold. . . Cold causes stagnation of blood and qi, and all becomes redundant. When the diet is not changed, abdominal pain is reduced, and the disaster is unpredictable. “[36] refers to the ancient doctors who paid great attention to keeping warm after childbirth. The Ganmai Dazao decoction in the Jin-gui Yaolue (Compendium of Prescriptions of the Golden Chamber) is used to treat women’s dirty and irritable,

happy and sad to cry, which is consistent with the symptoms of PPD and plays a role in tonifying the heart and spleen, regulating qi and soothing the liver. The treatment of postpartum depression with acupuncture and moxibustion has been recorded in many books, among which the treatment of postpartum mental disorders with Lieque acupoints is the most abundant [37]. Modern medicine believes that postpartum hormone levels in women’s body change rapidly, and endocrine changes are the biological basis of PPD [38].

6.2 Flow of Air

The rise, fall, exit and gasification function of qi are closely related to human life activities. Qi is the handsome blood, blood is the mother of qi, qi deficiency is not handsome blood, blood deficiency is qi stagnation. Qi-depression constitution is the internal basis of postpartum depression [2]. In the book of Female Science and Economics, it is said that “all diseases arise from qi, especially in women” [39]. This indicates that qi plays a crucial role in the occurrence of diseases in women. The key of PPD to regulate qi is to avoid liver depression and qi stagnation. Traditional Chinese medicine believes that the liver dominates the emotion, which is realized through the function of the liver. When the liver is lost and the qi machine is not running smoothly, it will affect the function of viscera and meridians. In order to regulate qi, prescriptions for soothing the liver and regulating qi, such as Xiaoyao powder and Chaihu Shugan powder, can be used to dispel stagnation and regulate qi, and acupuncture therapy can be used to dredge meridians and regulate qi and blood, supplemented by yoga, music therapy, mindfulness and daoyin and other physical and mental recuperation methods to help the circulation of qi.

6.3 Calm Your Mind

Regulating the mind is the first link in the treatment of PPD. In Huangdi Neijing Su Wen (Plain Questions in the Yellow Emperor’s Inner Classic), it was said, “The spirit is advanced, the will is treated, so the disease can be cured. Now the essence of evil god, glory can not be restored, who? The appetite is endless, and the worry is not aware of the danger, the essence is weakened, the glory cries and the wei is removed, so the God is gone” [40], indicating that the patient’s mentality has a decisive role in the outcome of the disease. “Spirit” occupies an important position in the theory of traditional Chinese medicine, and it is also an important factor affecting the occurrence and development of diseases. In Huangdi Neijing (Yellow Emperor’s Inner Classic), it is stated that “disease cannot be cured without God’s intervention” [40], which emphasizes the importance of God in the development of diseases. The disorder of “God” runs through the whole disease of PPD. PPD patients are depressed, easy to cry and sad, etc., which are negative emotions, often affecting the harmony of God. Therefore, attention should be paid to the mental changes of women, and the symptoms of PPD can be relieved by regulating the mind through traditional Chinese medicine decoction, acupuncture, auricular point, acupoint massage, emotional therapy and five elements music therapy [41]. PPD patients should be treated both physically and mentally. In postpartum life, we should also pay attention to the high level of social support from family and close friends and the construction of their own strong psychology. The doctor fully communicated with the

patient to find the root of the disease, enlightened and relieved the emotions, so as to achieve calm mind and determination.

7. Summary

Five elements music therapy, as a non-drug treatment method without obvious side effects, is guided by holism and syndrome differentiation, which makes it have unique advantages in the treatment of PPD. It can improve the function of postpartum mental health by regulating the mood of patients and improving their psychological state. Multiple aspects of conditioning, in order to achieve the effect of both symptoms and root causes. Five elements music can promote the spirit of PPD patients through the integration of shape, qi and spirit, so that the PPD patients' qi is orderly and the kidney essence is full, so as to achieve the purpose of feeling comfortable, which reflects the advantages of traditional Chinese medicine. In the process of clinical treatment of PPD, clinicians mostly rely on drug treatment, and ignore the five elements music therapy, which is a health treatment method for both body and mind. The integration of five elements music therapy into the treatment process of PPD means that the patient consciously carries out self-regulation, which can maintain and relieve the patient's mood and optimize the postpartum mood through the five elements. To provide sufficient theoretical and clinical evidence for improving the diagnosis and treatment system of PPD.

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