

# Exploring the Pathogenesis and Prevention / Treatment of Vascular Dementia from the Perspective of “Deficiency-Stagnation and Turbidity-Clouding”

Wei Li, Geng Sun, Zhihong Yang\*

Shaanxi University of Chinese Medicine, Xianyang 712046, Shaanxi, China

\*Correspondence Author

**Abstract:** *Vascular Dementia (VaD) is a syndrome of cognitive impairment caused by cerebrovascular diseases, clinically characterized by progressive decline in multiple cognitive domains such as memory, executive function, attention, and language abilities [1]. This article interprets the pathological mechanism of VaD based on the theory of “Deficiency-Stagnation and Turbidity-Clouding”. It posits that the core issue lies in the deficiency of primordial qi and disharmony between qi and blood, leading to abnormal transportation and transformation of qi, blood, and body fluids. This results in the formation of pathogenic turbid factors such as qi stagnation, blood stasis, phlegm coagulation, and damp obstruction. These turbid pathogens steam upward, cloud the clear orifices (senses and mind), obstruct mental clarity, and ultimately lead to dementia (“Deficiency leading to Stagnation, Turbid Pathogens harming the Clear”). Addressing the pathological state of diminished marrow and brain essence with impaired mental function, treatment should follow the principle of “Tonifying Deficiency and Fortifying the Root, Resolving Turbidity and Unblocking Stagnation”, addressing both the root cause and the symptoms. This study aims to provide new theoretical perspectives and practical ideas for the prevention, treatment, and prognosis of VaD in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM).*

**Keywords:** Deficiency-Qi Stagnation, Turbid Pathogens Harming the Clear, Vascular Dementia.

## 1. Introduction

Vascular Dementia (VaD) is an acquired intellectual impairment syndrome caused by various cerebrovascular diseases, belonging to a chronic progressive category. Its clinical manifestations, besides symptoms and signs of neurological localization damage, often include a series of neuropsychological and mental behavioral abnormalities. With the aging population, the incidence of VaD is rising, severely affecting patients' quality of life and increasing family and societal burdens [1]. As the only type of dementia considered potentially preventable and controllable, VaD shows significant clinical heterogeneity. However, no drugs are currently explicitly approved by the FDA specifically for VaD, and highly effective specific treatment strategies are still lacking [2]. Therefore, in-depth exploration of the evolutionary patterns of VaD's pathogenesis according to TCM theory and its prevention and treatment strategies is crucial for achieving early diagnosis, prevention, and intervention.

In ancient TCM texts, Vascular Dementia falls under categories such as “dementia (Chi Dai)”, “stupidity disease (Dai Bing)”, and “literary dementia (Wen Chi)”. Modern TCM practitioners often approach its treatment based on the theory of “diminished marrow and brain essence, impaired mental function”. Integrating clinical practice, this article suggests its pathogenesis aligns closely with the theory of “Deficiency-Stagnation and Turbidity-Clouding”, emphasizing deficiency of primordial qi as the root, disharmony between qi and blood as the pivot. Deficiency leads to stagnation, stagnation worsens deficiency, prolonged stagnation produces turbidity, and the upward disturbance of turbid pathogens clouding the clear orifices is the key

pathological mechanism. Therefore, based on the treatment principle of “Tonifying Deficiency and Fortifying the Root, Resolving Turbidity and Unblocking Stagnation”, this article systematically explains the application of the “Deficiency-Stagnation and Turbidity-Clouding” theoretical framework in the pattern identification and treatment of VaD, hoping to provide new insights for its prevention, treatment, and management.

## 2. Theoretical Origin of “Deficiency - Stagnation and Turbidity - Clouding”

### 2.1 “Deficiency-Qi Stagnation” (Xu Qi Liu Zhi)

The term “Deficiency-Qi Stagnation” (Xu Qi Liu Zhi) originated in Cheng Wuji's “Exposition of Cold Damage” (Shang Han Ming Li Lun) from the Jin Dynasty. He quoted from the “Essential Prescriptions of the Golden Coffer” (Jin Gui Yao Lue) [3]: “Abdominal fullness that sometimes decreases and then returns as before, this is deficient cold rising from below, it should be harmonized with warm herbs. This is because deficient qi stagnates, also causing distension, but compared to excess [type], it does not reach [the level of] hardness and pain.” He also pointed out that “generally, abdominal fullness belongs to the Taiyin pattern.” The original text explains that deficient qi stagnation can lead to deficiency-cold of the spleen and stomach, causing stuffiness and discomfort. Chen Shiyi of the Southern Song Dynasty, in “Ren Zhai Zhi Zhi Fang” (Beneficial Formulae from Ren Zhai) [4], further discussed: “In excess [patterns], the abdomen is constantly distended, hard externally and painful internally, not sunken upon pressure, the method should be to dredge and promote flow; in deficiency [patterns], it distends and decreases intermittently, deficient qi stagnates, feels soft upon

pressure, the method should be to harmonize with warm herbs.” This emphasizes the sign of softness upon palpation in deficient-type stagnant distension. The above discussions clarify that the spleen and stomach are the pivot of qi movement; deficiency of primordial qi leads to impaired transportation and transformation by the spleen and stomach, obstruction of qi movement, resulting in stuffiness and fullness. Academician Wang Yongyan, integrating clinical practice [5], expanded the connotation of “deficient qi stagnation”, defining it as: deficiency of primordial qi, disharmony between qi and blood, leading to abnormal movement of qi, blood, and body fluids, thereby generating pathological processes such as qi depression, blood stasis, phlegm coagulation, and damp obstruction.

## 2.2 Successive Generations of Physicians Have Developed the Theory of “Clear and Turbid”

Eastern Han - Zhang Zhongjing: In “Treatise on Cold Damage and Miscellaneous Diseases”, “turbid pathogens” were specified as pathological products like phlegm-fluid retention and static blood. He proposed “for diseases of phlegm-fluid retention, harmonize with warm herbs”, pioneering the method of eliminating turbidity. Jin-Yuan Dynasties - Liu Wansu: From the perspective of “fire-heat theory”, he explained how turbid pathogens transform into heat, advocating “cooling and clearing heat” to wash away turbid pathogens, using formulas like Fang Feng Tong Sheng San for excessive damp-heat. Ming-Qing Dynasties - Ye Tianshi: In “Discussion on Warm-Febrile Diseases” (Wen Re Lun) [6], he elevated the theory, proposing “dampness combining with warm [pathogen], steaming, depressing, and clouding the clear orifices, it is turbid pathogens harming the clear”, clearly defining the mechanism of damp-heat turbid pathogens ascending to disturb the clear orifices, providing a diagnostic and treatment framework for diseases like stroke and dementia. Modern Physicians: Expanded the meaning of “turbid pathogens” to include pathological factors like foul, dirty, sticky, greasy turbidity, and extended “clear” (Qing) to physiological concepts or states such as the clear orifices, light and clear [qi], clear yang, and clear qi [7]. Contemporary Extension: Modern practitioners extend “turbid pathogens” to include metabolic toxins (e.g., hyperlipidemia), inflammatory factors, etc., forming interdisciplinary correlations with Western medical mechanisms like “atherosclerosis” and “thrombosis”.

The author believes that the intrinsic pathogenesis of VaD highly aligns with the theories of “Deficiency-Stagnation and Turbidity-Clouding”. Therefore, this article combines these theories, hoping to provide ideas for TCM intervention in VaD.

## 3. Interpreting the TCM Connotation of VaD through “Deficiency-Stagnation and Turbidity-Clouding”

### 3.1 Primordial Deficiency and Marrow Depletion, Unchecked Turbidity Overflow: The Foundation of VaD Onset

The disease location of VaD is in the brain. Its core pathogenesis is summarized as primordial deficiency and

marrow depletion, with unchecked turbidity overflow harming the clear. Primordial qi (Yuan Qi), inherited prenatally and nourished postnatally, is the primordial motive force for life activities. “Yixue Yuan Liu Lun” (On the Origin and Development of Medicine) [8] states: “Primordial qi, invisible, unfindable, attaches within qi and blood, governs prior to qi and blood.” Decline of primordial qi leads to weakened production of qi and blood, decline of organ function, resulting in the accumulation and clouding of clear orifices by turbid pathogens such as qi depression, blood stasis, phlegm coagulation, and damp obstruction, blocking brain collaterals, depriving the mind of nourishment, thus giving rise to VaD.

### 3.2 Disharmony of the Five Zang Organs, Nourishment Failure of Mental Faculty: The Progression of VaD

“Zhang Shi Yi Tong” (Zhang’s Treatise on General Medicine) [9]: “The head is the image of heaven, the domain of yang; the clear yang qi of the six fu-organs and the essential blood of the five zang-organs all converge at the high summit [the head].” The agile function of the brain’s mental faculty relies on the upward offering of the essences of the five zang-organs and the harmony of qi, blood, and body fluids. Heart Vessel Disorder: The heart governs the blood vessels; it is not merely a pump but the pivot for the production and movement of qi and blood. “Su Wen · Ba Zheng Shen Ming Lun” (Plain Questions · Discussion on the Eight Major Principles and the Divine Luminescence) [10] says: “Blood and qi are the spirit of man, they must be carefully nourished.” Heart qi propels blood flow like the sun and moon moving cyclically without cease. The heart, vessels, and blood are closely related; the dynamic balance, information exchange, and energy interaction of blood and its vital substances rely on their interaction. If heart qi and blood are not free-flowing and abundant, leading to qi stagnation and blood sluggishness forming turbidity, which ascends to disturb clear yang, the mental faculty becomes blocked and malnourished, resulting in dementia and forgetfulness. Liver Failing to Dredge and Disperse: The liver is a resilient organ, embodying the ascending and developing nature of spring wood, governing free coursing, and is the pivot of qi movement. If liver free coursing fails, qi movement becomes blocked, like a river frozen, causing essence, blood, and body fluids to congeal and move with difficulty. Stagnant blood becomes stasis, retained fluids accumulate dampness forming phlegm; various turbid pathogens gradually arise, occupying the vessels. Spleen Earth Stagnation: The spleen is the official of the granary, governing transportation and transformation, controlling blood, and raising the clear; it is the source of qi and blood production. Its function involves: 1) transporting food and water essence, transforming them into qi and blood to nourish the whole body; 2) metabolizing fluids, regulating the san jiao to control water-dampness. The spleen prefers dryness and dislikes dampness, its health lies in ascending. Spleen qi, like earth qi rising, carries essence upward to the heart and lungs, spreads essence to the skin and hair, and transports nourishment to the brain orifices. The essence of food and drink, clear like dew, through the spleen’s mediation, rises to the position of clear yang. If spleen transportation and transformation fail, the pivot of ascending and descending becomes obstructed, then clear yang fails to rise, and turbid yin fails to descend. Food and drink are not transformed into

essence but instead brew into damp-turbidity; body fluids are not properly transformed, accumulating into phlegm. Dampness is sticky and stagnant, phlegm is gluey and stubborn; the two steam together like mist and fog, clouding the clear orifices, causing the mental faculty to become slack and dim. Lung Failing to Diffuse and Descend: The lung diffuses like fog and descends like rain; it is the upper source of water. Its duty is to diffuse defensive qi to warm the muscles and fill the skin, and to descend body fluids to regulate the water passage and transport downward to the bladder. If the lung loses its governing regulation, qi movement becomes obstructed, fluids accumulate, phlegm-turbidity forms internally, blocking brain collaterals, clear yang cannot spread, and mental clarity becomes dim. Kidney Deficiency and Turbidity Overflow: The kidney is the foundation of pre-heaven, housing primordial yin and yang, the root of life. Yang is the fire of the life gate, warming the whole body, stimulating qi and blood; kidney yin is the source of true water, moistening the organs, floating yang. If kidney yang is weak, fire cannot warm earth, leading to impaired qi transformation, sluggish blood flow, stasis-turbidity obstructing the vessels; if kidney yin is consumed, water cannot nourish wood, leading to the rising of ministerial fire, scorching fluids into phlegm, disturbing the clear upper regions. Kidney essence is depleted, the sea of marrow is empty, the brain lacks nourishment, like a river running dry; qi and blood decline and vessels stagnate, turbid pathogens overflow unchecked.

Mutual Affliction of the Five Zang Organs: With aging and physical decline, kidney essence is consumed and the sea of marrow is not full; spleen fails in transportation and transformation and clear yang does not rise; liver fails to dredge causing qi depression; lung fails to govern causing disharmony in all vessels. The organs afflict each other, leading to loss of control over the movement of qi, blood, and body fluids: qi loses warmth and becomes stagnant and depressed; blood loses free flow and congeals into stasis; fluids fail to distribute and accumulate into dampness and phlegm. Various turbid pathogens gradually develop, foul turbidity knots together, ascending along the channels. Ultimately, the sea of marrow loses the nourishment of essence and gradually becomes empty (deficiency leading to stagnation), clear yang qi is obstructed by turbid yin and cannot ascend, the house of intelligence becomes stuck with turbid pathogens like dust clouding a mirror (turbid pathogens harming the clear). The original spirit loses its clear and pure nature, the mental faculty loses its agile function, resulting in the clouded consciousness and witless decline of dementia.

#### **4. Treating VaD Based on “Deficiency - Stagnation and Turbidity-Clouding”**

Dementia patients often belong to the category of elderly physical decline, primordial qi weakness, and malnourishment of the mental faculty. Clinical prescription of formulas and herbs should take “Tonifying Deficiency and Fortifying the Root, Resolving Turbidity and Unblocking Stagnation” as the general principle, treating both root and branch simultaneously. When primordial qi is sufficient, the organs are nourished and qi-blood is regulated; when turbid pathogens are resolved, the collaterals become unblocked and clear yang can rise. In clinical practice, one must carefully

examine the deficiency and excess of the organs, clearly identify the predominant turbid pathogen, and either boost qi to assist blood movement, wash away phlegm to open the orifices, or transform stasis to unblock brain collaterals, ensuring the free flow of primordial truth and the recovery of mental faculty.

##### **4.1 Tonify Deficiency and Fortify the Root to Secure the Foundation**

The primary focus is on replenishing essence, boosting qi, and harmonizing yin and yang. The kidney is the foundation of pre-heaven. The “Jing Yue Quan Shu” (Complete Works of Zhang Jingyue) [11] states: “Injury of the five zang-organs, when extreme, must reach the kidney.” The spleen is the foundation of post-heaven. If spleen transportation fails, food and drink are not transformed into essence but instead become greasy turbidity and phlegm, like earth qi steaming upward to cloud clear yang. Fortifying the root should first emphasize the spleen and kidney. Tonify Kidney and Replenish Essence to Fill the Marrow Sea: Addressing the foundation of “primordial deficiency and marrow depletion”, the method follows “for essence insufficiency, supplement with flavorful [tonics]”. Often select flesh-and-blood (you qing zhi pin - substances with affinity, often animal products) like deer antler glue, tortoise plastron glue, and human placenta to strongly tonify essence and blood; prepared rehmannia root, cornus fruit, and lycium fruit to nourish the kidney and replenish essence; combine with small amounts of epimedium and morinda root to warm kidney yang, following the idea of “mild fire generating qi”, promoting mutual growth of yin and yang, so the marrow sea becomes filled. Zhang Jingyue said: “Those skilled at supplementing yang must seek yang within yin, then yang obtains help from yin and its generation and transformation is endless; those skilled at supplementing yin must seek yin within yang, then yin obtains ascent from yang and its source never depletes.” This method of mutual support between yin and yang is particularly suitable for VaD with kidney primordial deficiency.

Strengthen Spleen and Boost Qi to Support the Source of Transformation: “Deficiency-Qi Stagnation” is often attributed to the weakness of the middle jiao’s mediating power. One should follow Li Dongyuan’s teaching: “Once the qi of the spleen and stomach is injured, the primordial qi cannot be filled, and this is the origin of all diseases.” Use large doses of astragalus root and codonopsis root (or ginseng) to greatly tonify spleen and lung qi; atractylodes rhizome, poria, and Chinese yam to strengthen the middle region; assisted by tangerine peel and amomum fruit to awaken the spleen and regulate qi, preventing tonics from causing stagnation. Once spleen qi functions properly, clear yang can rise, and the transportation and distribution of qi, blood, and body fluids are regulated, then deficient stagnation naturally alleviates.

##### **4.2 Resolve Turbidity and Unblock Stagnation to Eliminate the Nest**

Addressing the branch aspect of “turbid pathogens harming the clear”, one should determine treatment based on cause, and separately reduce their influence. Wash Phlegm and Open the Orifices: Phlegm-turbidity clouding the clear orifices is a

common pattern of harming the clear. The method follows Zhang Zhongjing's "for diseases of phlegm-fluid retention, harmonize with warm herbs", but phlegm in VaD often combines with depressed heat or stasis obstruction. Often use the herb pair of acorus tuber and curcuma root: acorus transforms turbidity and opens orifices with its fragrance, curcuma moves qi, resolves depression, and clears the heart; polygala root dispels phlegm and calms the spirit; pinellia tuber and arisaema/bile-treated arisaema dry dampness and transform phlegm; bamboo sap and bamboosilica/bamboo shavings clear heat and wash phlegm. If phlegm and heat are knotted together, consider incorporating the principles of Huang Lian Wen Dan Tang (Coptis Gallbladder-Warming Decoction). Activate Blood and Transform Stasis: Stasis obstructing brain collaterals is a core pathology of VaD. Wang Qingren said: "If primordial qi is deficient, it certainly cannot reach the blood vessels; blood vessels without qi will inevitably have stagnation and stasis." One should simultaneously boost qi and activate blood, making qi vigorous and blood moving. Commonly use astragalus root combined with angelica root (reflecting Dang Gui Bu Xue Tang, Angelica Blood-Tonifying Decoction), red peony root, chuanxiong rhizome (core of Xue Fu Zhu Yu Tang, Blood Mansion Stasis-Expelling Decoction), salvia root, peach kernel, and safflower. Insect drugs like leech, earthworm, and ground beetle, natured to move and penetrate, search out and remove stasis-turbidity from the collaterals, having particularly strong unblocking power. Ye Tianshi said "prolonged illness enters the collaterals" and "rely on creeping creatures to loosen and penetrate the disease root." Promote Dampness and Drain Turbidity: Dampness is sticky and stagnant, easily combining with phlegm and stasis. Often select alisma rhizome, poria, and coix seed to gently percolate dampness; eupatorium and agastache/patchouli to fragrantly transform turbidity and awaken the spleen. If dampness and heat steam together, add capillaris, gardenia, and scutellaria root to clear heat and promote dampness. Soothe Liver and Resolve Depression: Liver qi depression is the initiating link for qi stagnation producing turbidity. Use bupleurum root, cyperus tuber, and finger citron to soothe liver and regulate qi; white peony root to soften the liver and nourish blood. Once liver qi is relaxed, the movement of qi, blood, and body fluids returns to normal.

The overall aim is "Simultaneous Unblocking and Tonifying": Tonifying deficiency does not mean using only clumsy tonics; often include (shu tong zhi pin - unblocking agents), such as combining qi tonics with tangerine peel and aucklandia root; combining essence replenishers with amomum fruit and alisma rhizome; combining yin nourishers with tortoise plastron and turtle shell for (qian zhen - subduing and anchoring). Resolving turbidity also does not forget to protect righteous qi, such as combining blood-activating and stasis-transforming herbs with astragalus root and codonopsis root; combining phlegm-washing and orifice-opening herbs with poria and atractylodes rhizome. Ensure that tonifying does not cause stagnation, and unblocking does not damage the right.

## 5. Case Example

Patient: Female, 68 years old. First visit: March 21, 2025.

Chief Complaint: Progressive memory decline for over 2 years, worsened with slowed response for 6 months.

Present History: The patient suffered a sudden right basal ganglia cerebral infarction 2 years ago. After rehabilitation, she could manage daily life independently. Over the past 2 years, family noticed gradual memory decline, especially recent memory loss, often forgetting where items were placed. Symptoms worsened in the last 6 months, with slowed response, decreased calculation ability, reduced verbal expression, occasional incoherence, apathy, and few words. Previously took Donepezil (5mg/day) for 3 months with little effect.

Current Presentation: Slowed response, slow speech rate, occasional wrong words in replies, phlegm sounds audible in the throat. Apathetic expression, sallow yellowish complexion without luster, dull eyes, occasional drooling. Usually feels fatigued, poor appetite, average sleep. Stool sticky, urine normal. Tongue dark, body swollen with tooth marks on edges, coating white, thick, greasy. Sublingual veins tortuous. Pulse deep, thin, rapid.

Neuroimaging: Head MRI (2025-02-28): (1) Multiple old infarcts in bilateral basal ganglia and frontal lobes; (2) White matter lesions (Fazekas grade 3); (3) Enlarged ventricular system, widened sulci (consistent with cerebral atrophy).

Western Diagnosis: Vascular Dementia.

TCM Diagnosis: Dementia Pattern (Phlegm and Stasis Intermingling).

Treatment Approach: Wash phlegm, transform stasis, open orifices; strengthen spleen, boost qi, support the right.

Formula: Modified Huang Lian Wen Dan Tang (Coptis Gallbladder-Warming Decoction):

Coptis (Huang Lian) 10g, Scutellaria (Huang Qin) 10g, Gardenia (Zhi Zi) 10g, Arisaema/Bile (Dan Nan Xing) 15g, Poria (Fu Ling) 15g, Spirit Poria (Fu Shen) 20g, Astragalus (Huang Qi) 30g, Tangerine Peel (Chen Pi) 10g, Atractylodes (Bai Zhu) 12g, Acorus (Shi Chang Pu) 20g, Polygala (Yuan Zhi) 10g, Chinese Yam (Shan Yao) 10g, Cornus (Shan Zhu Yu) 10g, Angelica (Dang Gui) 15g, Red Peony (Chi Shao) 15g, Chuanxiong (Chuan Xiong) 12g, Earthworm (Di Long) 10g, Curcuma (Yu Jin) 15g, Cyperus (Xiang Fu) 20g.

10 doses. 1 dose daily, decocted in water, taken warm morning and evening.

Second Visit (April 1, 2025): Reported significant reduction in drooling, reduced heavy-headedness. Family reported improved response speed, spirit somewhat brighter. Still poor appetite. Tongue dark, coating white thick. Pulse deep thin. Removed Chuanxiong from above formula, added Radish Seed (Lai Fu Zi) 15g, Fried Barley Sprout (Chao Mai Ya) 15g. 14 doses, method same.

Third Visit (April 20, 2025): Reported ability to recall details of children's visit 3 days prior, can walk to community entrance with family accompaniment and return home alone,

actively participates in family conversations. Mood stable. Appetite somewhat improved. Tongue pale-dark, coating white. Pulse deep. Treatment effective. Considering patient's age and chronic illness, still some drooling, fatigue, reluctance to speak. Removed Scutellaria and Barley Sprout from above formula, added Codonopsis (Dang Shen) 15g. 14 doses, method same.

Note: The patient is elderly with physical decline, organ function impairment, deficient qi stagnation, turbid pathogens accumulating and clouding the clear orifices, obstructing brain collaterals, compounded by stroke, gradually leading to impaired mental faculty, dullness, and clumsiness. Prolonged illness and body deficiency resulted in fatigue and lack of strength. Spleen deficiency failing to transport causes poor appetite. Tongue and pulse signs all indicate spleen-kidney deficiency with phlegm-stasis intermingling. Treatment focused on washing phlegm, transforming stasis, opening orifices, strengthening spleen, boosting qi, and supporting the right. The formula chosen was modified Huang Lian Wen Dan Tang. Ingredients: Coptis, Scutellaria, Gardenia clear heat and drain dampness, preventing long-standing phlegm-stasis from transforming heat; Arisaema/Bile dries phlegm and removes dampness; Poria, Spirit Poria, Astragalus, Tangerine Peel strengthen spleen and boost qi; Acorus, Polygala transform turbidity, open orifices, awaken spirit, benefit intelligence; Cyperus, Curcuma move qi, resolve depression, clear the heart; Chinese Yam, Cornus tonify spleen, nourish kidney, secure essence; Angelica, Red Peony, Chuanxiong, Earthworm activate blood, transform stasis, unblock collaterals. At the second visit, symptoms reduced, but drooling and poor appetite remained, so Chuanxiong was removed and Radish Seed (to direct qi downward and eliminate phlegm) and Fried Barley Sprout (to strengthen stomach and promote digestion) were added. At the third visit, treatment was effective. Considering the patient's age and chronic illness, Scutellaria and Barley Sprout were removed and Codonopsis was added to support the right. This formula uses Huang Lian Wen Dan Tang to wash phlegm and transform stasis, incorporates ideas from Bu Yang Huan Wu Tang (Tonify Yang to Restore Five-Tenths Decoction), and adds orifice-opening and intelligence-benefiting agents, integrating "Clearing, Resolving, Unblocking, and Tonifying", embodying the dementia treatment principle of "simultaneously treating root and branch, combining attack and supplementation".

## 6. Conclusion and Outlook

Vascular Dementia's disease location is in the brain, but its root lies in the five zang-organs. The pivot of its occurrence and development deeply corresponds to the essential principle of "Deficiency leading to Stagnation, Turbid Pathogens harming the Clear". Primordial qi deficiency is the root, the beginning of the failure in the movement of qi, blood, body fluids, and the gradual decline of organ function; turbid pathogen accumulation is the branch, the key to vessel obstruction and clouding of the clear orifices. The two are cause and effect, mutually contributing, ultimately leading to malnourishment of the marrow sea and impaired mental faculty. Therefore, its prevention and treatment should take "Tonifying Deficiency and Fortifying the Root to Secure the Foundation, Resolving Turbidity and Unblocking Stagnation

to Eliminate the Nest" as the guiding principle, ensuring that primordial qi becomes abundant, then the organs are harmonious and qi-blood flows freely; turbid pathogens are resolved, then the vessels become unobstructed and clear yang can rise. In clinical practice, one must clearly identify organ deficiency/excess, carefully observe the predominant turbid pathogen, and either strongly tonify the true origin, separately reduce stagnant turbidity, or simultaneously unblock and tonify, applying flexible strategies, in order to rescue the mental faculty from decline and save the clear yang from its obstructed state.

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