

Professor Li Renting's Experience in Treating Advanced Lung Cancer with "Homeostasis Reconstruction"

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Abstract: ***Objective:** To explore the clinical experience of Professor Li Renting, a renowned traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) practitioner in Shaanxi Province, in diagnosing and treating advanced lung cancer. **Methods:** Based on syndrome differentiation and holistic regulation, Professor Li's therapeutic principles and prescription rules were summarized through clinical observation and case analysis. **Results:** Professor Li holds that the initiation and progression of lung cancer are closely related to the disruption of the body's homeostatic equilibrium. The fundamental pathogenesis is systemic homeostasis imbalance with intermingled phlegm and blood stasis. Therefore, he adopts "homeostasis reconstruction" as the core therapeutic principle, constructing a balanced state from four dimensions—physiological, pathological, psychological, and spatiotemporal—and combining vital qi reinforcement with anti-cancer measures to restore the steady state of yin-yang, viscera, qi, and blood in the internal environment. **Conclusion:** The "homeostasis reconstruction" strategy effectively restores the disordered internal environment, improves quality of life, and prolongs survival in advanced lung cancer patients, ultimately achieving the goal of "survival with tumor." This integrative approach is worthy of clinical promotion.*

Keywords: Advanced lung cancer, Phlegm and blood stasis intermingling, Homeostasis reconstruction, Strengthening vital qi and anti-cancer, Li Renting.

1. Introduction

Lung cancer poses a serious threat to global health, ranking first in both incidence and mortality among all malignancies. According to the Global Cancer Statistics 2022, there were approximately 2.5 million new cases of lung cancer worldwide in 2024, accounting for 12.4% of all new cancer cases, and about 1.8 million deaths, representing 18.7% of all cancer-related deaths [1]. Current modern medical treatments for lung cancer include surgery, chemotherapy, radiotherapy, targeted therapy, and immunotherapy, which have yielded certain clinical benefits. However, these modalities are often limited by adverse reactions, drug resistance, and diminished quality of life, resulting in suboptimal outcomes. Approximately 82% of lung cancers are non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC), and over 70% of patients are already at an advanced stage (IIIB–IV) at the time of diagnosis, with a 5-year relative survival rate of only 5% [2,3].

In recent years, TCM has gained widespread attention for its unique anti-cancer concepts based on syndrome differentiation and holistic regulation, and has demonstrated definite clinical efficacy. Although there is no precise disease name for lung cancer in ancient Chinese medical texts, it is often classified under categories such as "cough," "wheezing," "lung accumulation," and "chest pain," with manifestations including cough, hemoptysis, chest pain, and dyspnea. Professor Li Renting points out that although lung cancer is a localized lesion, its development inevitably leads to internal environment disturbance, functional imbalance of the viscera, and disordered circulation of qi, blood, and body fluids. Hence, he proposes the concept of "homeostasis reconstruction" for cancer treatment, combining vital qi reinforcement with anti-cancer measures to restore the steady state of yin-yang, viscera, qi, and blood, so that patients can

achieve "survival with tumor." The traditional theory of strengthening vital qi and eliminating pathogenic factors emphasizes the dynamic balance of yin and yang based on the axiom "when vital qi exists within, pathogenic qi cannot invade." However, its regulation is vague and lacks molecular-level targets. In contrast, the "homeostasis reconstruction" theory, grounded in the holistic view and modern systems biology, focuses on the dynamic balance of the complex "tumor-microenvironment-host" system and can re-establish physiological homeostasis through multidimensional interventions [4,5].

2. Etiology and Pathogenesis of Lung Cancer according to Professor Li Renting

Professor Li Renting believes that the occurrence and development of lung cancer are closely related to the loss of systemic homeostasis. The fundamental pathogenesis is systemic homeostasis imbalance and intermingled phlegm and blood stasis, which further aggravate the homeostatic disruption. Some scholars consider malignant tumors to be "encysted masses" formed by protracted accumulation of stubborn phlegm and dead blood, with phlegm and stasis congealing and transforming into toxins [24]. As stated in the Treatise on Blood Syndromes by Tang Rongchuan, "phlegm and blood stasis share the same origin," and "accumulation of phlegm and fluid is caused by blood stasis; removing blood stasis will naturally dissipate phlegm and fluid." Both phlegm-retained fluid and blood stasis are pathological products of disordered qi, blood, and body-fluid metabolism. According to TCM, "body fluid and blood share the same source"; both are yin in nature and rely on yang qi for their generation and circulation. When cancerous toxins invade the lung by taking advantage of deficiency, they lurk in the chest and wait for an opportunity to flare up. The lung, being

affected, loses its qi regulation, which impairs the propulsion of qi, blood, and fluids. Qi stagnation leads to failure in propelling blood and fluids, causing fluid to congeal into phlegm and blood to stagnate into stasis. Since both are yin pathogens, they tend to interact and combine, further complicating the disease.

2.1 Formation of Phlegm-Dampness: Imbalance in the Spleen and Lung in Fluid Transportation

As recorded in *Treatise on the Spleen and Stomach*: “When the lung metal is affected by pathogenic factors, it is due to the spleen and stomach being weak and unable to generate the lung, hence the affected organ is damaged by its offspring.” The lung and spleen are physiologically interrelated and pathologically interactive. The lung is the “child” of the spleen (in the five-phase generating cycle, earth generates metal). When lung qi is deficient and repeatedly invaded by external pathogens and cancer toxins, the root cause often lies in the spleen. If the spleen fails to transport and transform phlegm-dampness, the source of phlegm persists, and lung function cannot be restored. Over time, both the lung and spleen become deficient, fluid distribution is impaired, and retained fluid forms phlegm and dampness, which move upward with qi, causing cough and copious sputum. As the disease progresses, cough and wheezing worsen. Prolonged retention of dampness affects the spleen, leading to spleen deficiency. The spleen governs fluid transportation; when it fails to transport, dampness accumulates and forms phlegm, which further impairs qi movement and lung function. Thus, treatment should focus on reinforcing the spleen earth to nourish the lung metal [6,7].

2.2 Formation of Blood Stasis: Dysfunction of the Heart and Lung in Qi and Blood Movement

2.2.1 Impaired heart-lung function affects the generation and circulation of qi and blood, leading to stasis

The lung governs qi and respiration, controls dispersion and descending, and assists in the transformation of qi and blood. The heart governs blood and vessels; heart qi propels blood within the vessels to nourish the whole body. Lung qi and heart qi mutually promote each other physiologically and influence each other pathologically. In health, abundant lung qi assists and promotes blood circulation, while heart qi promotes blood flow and also facilitates lung qi movement. In disease, disorders of the heart and lung affect each other and produce blood stasis. For instance, lung dysfunction, qi deficiency, or impaired dispersion and descending can weaken the propelling force of heart qi, affecting the heart’s blood-moving function and resulting in stasis. Conversely, if heart qi is insufficient, blood circulation is retarded, which in turn affects lung qi movement and also leads to stasis.

2.2.2 Impaired heart-lung function affects the generation and circulation of pectoral qi (Zong qi), leading to stasis

Pectoral qi is formed by the combination of the essence of food (from the spleen and stomach) and the clean qi inhaled by the lung. It promotes qi and blood circulation, connects with blood vessels, and assists respiration. Accumulated in the chest, it serves as the hub of heart and lung functions. Pectoral

qi travels with the respiratory tract to govern breathing and penetrates the vessels to promote blood circulation. The heart and lung are the main sites of pectoral qi action. If lung qi is congested, pectoral qi formation is hindered, blood moves sluggishly, and vascular stasis may occur. If heart yang is weakened, pectoral qi cannot adequately propel blood, leading to blood stasis and fluid retention [8].

2.2.3 Impaired heart-lung function affects the patency and fullness of blood vessels, leading to stasis

The heart governs blood vessels, and the lung faces all vessels and regulates them; together they maintain vascular patency. The heart is the primary organ of the vascular system; heart qi drives blood flow, and heart yang warms and dilates the vessels. If heart qi is deficient, blood circulation stagnates, and stasis may lodge in the vessels. The lung assists the heart in blood circulation; “the lung faces all vessels” means that lung qi dispersion and descending regulate systemic qi and help blood return to the heart. The lung also governs respiration and regulates vascular pressure through pectoral qi. When lung descending is impaired, blood may stagnate in the upper body [9].

Overall, the development of lung cancer involves multiple organ dysfunctions and disordered distribution of qi, blood, and body fluids. If homeostasis is not restored in time, the disease may progress to an advanced stage with pathogenic exuberance and vital qi decline, leading to metastasis and recurrence. Professor Li emphasizes that treatment should not be confined to the lung alone but should be based on disease differentiation and individual variations in the internal environment, using “homeostasis reconstruction” as the fundamental principle to stabilize the internal environment, reinforce vital qi, and eliminate pathogens [10].

3. Professor Li Renting’s Therapeutic Experience in Treating Advanced Lung Cancer

Professor Li Renting approaches advanced lung cancer from the perspective of the patient’s internal environment, taking “homeostasis reconstruction” as the basic therapeutic principle. He identifies the deficient viscera as the root and combines vital qi reinforcement with anti-cancer measures. He proposes four dimensions of homeostasis—physiological, pathological, psychological, and spatiotemporal—to reconstruct the perturbed internal environment, prolong survival, and achieve “survival with tumor” [11]. The concept of “homeostasis reconstruction” can be traced back to the Yellow Emperor’s Inner Canon, which states: “Carefully observe the location of yin and yang imbalance and regulate it, with the aim of achieving equilibrium.” The traditional concept of homeostasis centers on “yin-yang balance,” closely related to the modern concept of internal environment stability; both emphasize dynamic equilibrium. Traditional theory elaborates this through a macroscopic framework, while modern homeostasis reconstruction re-establishes the internal environment through microscopic mechanisms.

3.1 Physiological Homeostasis

3.1.1 Reinforcing the Spleen and Benefiting the Lung

Once the “encysted mass” is formed, a series of clinical manifestations appear. Zhu Danxi stated: “All stagnation originates in the middle energizer.” Thus, intermingled phlegm and stasis affect the ascending and descending of spleen and stomach qi, causing “failure of downward transmission and further stasis in the middle energizer,” with manifestations such as abdominal distension, pain, poor digestion, and irregular bowel movements. As recorded in *Secrets from the Stone Chamber*: “Treating the lung directly is difficult; the proper approach is to treat the spleen. When spleen qi is nourished, earth naturally generates metal.” The qi of the spleen and stomach is the “mother qi” of the lung. According to the five-phase generating cycle, earth generates metal; hence, when the child (lung) is deficient, the mother (spleen) should be supplemented. The method of “cultivating earth to generate metal” strengthens the spleen and stomach to support lung qi. Only when spleen qi ascends and stomach qi descends in harmony can lung qi be enhanced and systemic qi coordinated. As stated in the *Plain Questions*: “With stomach qi, there is life; without stomach qi, there is death,” highlighting the importance of protecting stomach qi in diagnosis and treatment. Only by preserving stomach qi can the essential nutrients derived from food be transported upward to the lung, regulate the water passages, and downward to the bladder and large intestine for excretion. Strengthening the mother qi of the spleen and stomach thus nourishes the child qi of the lung, thereby promoting the flow of systemic qi and gradually restoring vital qi, which improves survival and quality of life. Professor Li commonly uses Dangshen (*Codonopsis pilosula*), Fuling (*Poria*), Baizhu (*Atractylodes macrocephala*), Chenpi (*Citrus reticulata*), and Shanyao (*Dioscorea opposita*) to invigorate the spleen and tonify the lung. He also emphasizes that most advanced lung cancer patients have severely weak spleen and stomach function and should be supplemented gently with neutral medicinals; overuse of overly rich and greasy tonics may further impair the spleen and stomach [12].

3.1.2 Regulating Qi Movement

Regulating lung qi: The lung is described as “the canopy of the body, covering and ordering the circulation of qi and blood.” During the development of lung cancer, whether due to pathogenic invasion or internal lung disorders, or a combination, lung qi dispersion and descending may be impaired, leading to cough. The main physiological function of the lung is dispersion and descending; the fundamental treatment of lung cancer is to restore these basic functions. If lung qi is obstructed, stagnation generates heat, heat damages the collaterals, and over time the lung yin and fluids become depleted, causing persistent cough. In the advanced stage, the body is weak, qi and blood are poorly circulated, and pathological products such as qi stagnation, phlegm congelation, and blood stasis accumulate, further aggravating the condition and even threatening life. Therefore, Professor Li’s general principle for treating lung-cancer cough is to restore lung dispersion and descending. To disperse lung qi, he uses Mahuang (*Ephedra*), Sangye (*Mulberry leaf*), Kuxingren (Bitter apricot kernel), Juhua (*Chrysanthemum*), and Jiegeng (*Platycodon*); to descend lung qi, he uses Zisu (*Perilla frutescens*), Kuxingren, Ziyuan (*Aster*), Kuandonghua (*Tussilago*), and Baibu (*Stemona*). Zisu not only descends lung qi but also regulates systemic qi.

Restoration of lung function should not be solely ascending or descending; there should be ascending within descending and descending within ascending [13].

Furthermore, Professor Li has inherited and developed the cough-treatment concepts of the late Qing physician Wang Mengying, who emphasized the need to examine the patient’s urination and defecation. Professor Li believes that when the fu organs are unobstructed, the zang organs are at peace. The lung and large intestine are interior-exteriorly related, and the lung is the upper source of water; thus, lung function is closely linked to urination and defecation. Only when urination and defecation are free can lung qi disperse and descend properly. If various treatments or targeted drugs cause intense internal heat that moves downward to the large intestine, resulting in scanty dark urine and constipation for 5–6 days, then fu qi is blocked, ascending and descending are disturbed, and lung pathogenic toxins worsen. In such cases, Professor Li uses Danzhu (Lophatherum), Dongguapi (*Benincasa exocarp*), and Cheqianzi (*Plantago*) to clear heat, promote diuresis, and relieve strangury; and Huomaren (*Cannabis seed*), Houpo (*Magnolia*), Dahuang (*Rheum*), and Mangxiao (Glauber’s salt) to purge heat and relax the bowels. When the large intestine qi is unobstructed, lung qi can flow freely. If lung heat is present with loose stools, it indicates that the cold-nature drugs may be overly cooling; careful differentiation from spleen deficiency is needed to avoid misdiagnosis. Wang Mengying stated: “Loose stools are the outlet for lung heat; if constipation occurs, then panting and counterflow will ensue,” meaning that loose stools allow lung heat to be expelled and indicate improvement; blindly stopping diarrhea would worsen cough and dyspnea [14].

Regulating the overall qi (pectoral qi): Professor Li emphasizes that “the lung governs the qi of the entire body,” and is closely related to the generation of pectoral qi. Pectoral qi is formed by the combination of the essence of food and the clean air inhaled by the lung; it promotes qi and blood, penetrates vessels, and assists respiration. In advanced lung cancer, pectoral qi is often insufficient, failing to propel qi and blood, resulting in impeded vessel circulation and discontinuity of internal and external respiration. This leads to poor circulation and blood coagulation. Studies show that advanced lung cancer can disrupt the balance between coagulation and anticoagulation through multiple mechanisms, resulting in a hypercoagulable state [15]. Professor Li advocates invigorating pectoral qi to facilitate the recovery of systemic qi.

First, supplement qi and invigorate blood to support pectoral qi generation. The lung governs qi, and the heart governs blood; the generation of pectoral qi is closely related to the abundance of qi and blood. Thus, “supplementing qi and enriching blood” can elevate pectoral qi, promote blood circulation, penetrate vessels, and connect internal and external qi, thereby enhancing systemic qi and alleviating the hypercoagulable state in advanced cancer patients.

Second, “cultivate earth to generate metal” to strengthen pectoral qi. The spleen belongs to earth, the lung to metal; earth generates metal. By reinforcing the spleen and benefiting the lung, pectoral qi can be fortified. The lung’s function of governing qi and respiration depends on the

support of spleen qi. The method of “cultivating earth” assists in pectoral qi generation and restores its regulatory role in lung respiration, while also nourishing the innate qi. Therefore, reinforcing pectoral qi first requires supplementing lung and spleen qi. In advanced lung cancer, prolonged lung dysfunction leads to lung qi deficiency, and long-term treatment further impairs the spleen and stomach, causing cold deficiency, failure to transport food essence, and weakening of earth to generate metal, eventually leading to lung-spleen deficiency. Professor Li emphasizes the simultaneous reinforcement of the spleen and lung to support pectoral qi; when pectoral qi flows smoothly, all qi in the body becomes harmonious, and vital qi is restored [16].

Third, “lung qi in peace and large intestine open” facilitates pectoral qi circulation. The lung and large intestine are interior-exteriorly related; when fu qi is free, zang qi is at ease. Advanced lung cancer, due to homeostatic imbalance and disordered qi-blood-fluid metabolism, often presents with zang-deficiency and fu-excess patterns. The lung and large intestine are mutually related; lung qi governs dispersion and descending, while the large intestine transforms food and conducts waste. Physiologically they interact, and pathologically they influence each other. Lung qi should descend, and the large intestine should be unobstructed; their ascending and descending are interdependent. If lung qi cannot descend, the large intestine fails to conduct waste, causing constipation. Conversely, regular conduction of the large intestine facilitates lung qi descending, enabling the lung to better inhale clean qi, combine with the food essence from the spleen and stomach, and thus invigorate pectoral qi [17].

3.2 Pathological Homeostasis

3.2.1 Eliminating Cancer Pathogens

Professor Li holds that in treating advanced lung cancer, one must “distinguish between vital qi and pathogenic factors, and flexibly use reinforcing and attacking methods,” ensuring that “reinforcing does not retain pathogens and attacking does not injure vital qi.” Improper handling may exacerbate the condition. Effective elimination of cancer pathogens can rapidly restore homeostasis. In clinical practice, Professor Li often weighs the use of reinforcing and attacking herbs based on tumor stage, body status, and response to Western treatments, and proposes two principles: breaking blood stasis and unblocking collaterals, and eliminating phlegm and transforming turbidity [18].

First, breaking stasis and unblocking collaterals. Cancer patients frequently develop a hypercoagulable state in the microenvironment due to various treatments, which in TCM corresponds to “blood outside the vessels” stagnating. Commonly used are blood-breaking and stasis-resolving drugs, as well as blood-activating and pain-relieving drugs. If tongue and pulse signs indicate stasis with abnormal coagulation, the cause of stasis must be identified: qi-deficiency stasis should be treated with qi-supplementing and blood-activating drugs; qi-stagnation stasis with qi-regulating and blood-activating drugs; cold-stasis with warming and blood-activating drugs. Professor Li frequently uses Taoren (peach kernel), Honghua (safflower),

Hongjingtian (Rhodiola), Yanhusuo (Corydalis), Yujin (Curcuma), Wuyao (Lindera), Danpi (Moutan), Jiaoshanzha (hawthorn), and Daxueteng (Sargentodoxa). Modern pharmacological research indicates that blood-activating and stasis-resolving herbs not only improve the hypercoagulable state but also inhibit tumor cell growth, invasion, and metastasis through multiple targets and pathways [23]. However, blood-activating and stasis-resolving therapy is not purely attacking; Taoren and Honghua can be combined with Dangshen and Danguai (Angelica). For advanced patients, insect drugs such as Dilong (earthworm) and Jiangcan (silkworm) may be used, but should be combined with Shanyao and Baizhu to protect stomach qi, achieving “eliminating pathogens without harming vital qi.”

Second, eliminating phlegm and transforming turbidity. Cancer patients often present with thick, greasy tongue coating, indicating phlegm-dampness accumulation. For phlegm-dampness constitution, the pattern should be differentiated: spleen-deficiency phlegm-dampness requires spleen-fortifying and phlegm-resolving treatment; qi-stagnation phlegm-turbidity requires qi-regulating and phlegm-resolving treatment; phlegm-stasis intermingling requires combined phlegm-resolving and stasis-eliminating treatment. Professor Li commonly uses Fabanxia (Pinellia), Fuling, Zisu, Baiqian (Cynanchum), Maozhaocao (Ranunculus ternatus), Xuanfuhua (Inula), Daizheshi (hematite), Zhebeimu (Fritillaria thunbergii), and Chuanbeimu (Fritillaria cirrhosa). Phlegm resolution should differentiate cold and heat: Baijiezi (Sinapis) and Tiannanxing (Arisaema) are suitable for cold phlegm, while Gualou (Trichosanthes) and Zhuli (bamboo juice) are appropriate for heat phlegm. Eliminating phlegm and dampness regulates body fluids, removes retained water, and restores fluid metabolism, helping the patient recover.

Clinically, advanced lung cancer patients often present with complex patterns rather than a single pattern; thus, treatment should flexibly combine the two methods of breaking stasis and eliminating phlegm according to the patient’s condition, without rigid adherence to textbooks [19].

3.2.2 Relieving Cancer Pain

Cancer pain refers to pain caused by tumor-related factors, anti-tumor treatments, complications, and psychosocial factors. As the fifth vital sign in cancer patients, pain significantly exacerbates physical and psychological suffering, especially in advanced stages. Therefore, the Cancer Pain Management Standard states that pain control is both a patient’s basic right and a medical professional’s duty [20]. Although the WHO three-step analgesic ladder, primarily using opioids, has made progress in pain management, 40%–70% of patients still do not achieve adequate pain relief [21]. Opioids are limited by side effects such as addiction, tolerance, gastrointestinal reactions, constipation, respiratory depression, cognitive impairment, and urinary retention [22]. TCM has a unique and effective system for managing cancer pain, with advantages including good analgesic efficacy, fewer adverse reactions, and good patient acceptance. According to TCM theory, cancer pain can be classified into two pathogeneses: “pain due to malnutrition” and “pain due to obstruction.”

“Pain due to malnutrition” is “deficient pain,” caused by failure of qi, blood, and body fluids to nourish the viscera and tissues, leading to impaired function and pain, including empty pain, dull pain, and aching pain. Professor Li holds that analgesic treatment should not be given alone; rather, treatment should be based on syndrome differentiation while relieving pain. For example, in patients with qi and blood deficiency, he advocates simultaneously supplementing qi and blood and relieving cancer pain. Huangqi (Astragalus), Huangjing (Polygonatum), Dangshen, Danggui, Guizhi (Cinnamomum), Yanhusuo, and Fuzi (Aconite) are commonly used for deficient pain.

“Pain due to obstruction” is “excess pain,” caused by cancerous toxins blocking the collaterals and hindering qi and blood flow, resulting in distending pain, stabbing pain, burning pain, heavy pain, colic, arthralgic pain, wandering pain, fixed pain, and tugging pain. Professor Li advocates unblocking collaterals to relieve pain, using blood-activating and stasis-resolving analgesics and qi-regulating analgesics.

The three most frequently used analgesics by Professor Li are as follows:

- Vinegar-processed Yanhusuo (*Corydalis yanhusuo*) has a pungent, warm nature and can both activate blood and regulate qi. It is traditionally known as “specializing in treating all kinds of pain throughout the body.” Shennong’s Classic of Materia Medica records: “Yanhusuo can move qi stagnation in blood and blood stagnation in qi, hence it specializes in treating all pains.” Modern pharmacology has confirmed that its main active constituents are isoquinoline alkaloids, among which tetrahydropalmatine exhibits the most significant analgesic effect, and lipophilic non-phenolic alkaloids also possess anti-tumor activity [15].
- Chishao (*Radix Paeoniae Rubra*) is bitter and slightly cold; it promotes blood circulation, relieves pain, clears heat, cools blood, and reduces swelling. The Shennong’s Classic states: “It treats abdominal pain due to pathogenic qi, removes blood impediment, breaks hard masses, treats cold-heat hernia and masses, relieves pain, promotes urination, and supplements qi.” Modern research shows that Chishao contains total paeony glycosides, gallic acid, total flavonoids, and neolignan glycosides, with pharmacological effects including neuroprotection, endocrine regulation, anti-tumor, anti-inflammatory, antibacterial, antidepressant, antioxidant, and immunomodulatory activities [16].
- Quanxie (whole scorpion) is pungent, neutral, and slightly toxic. It extinguishes wind, stops convulsions, attacks toxins, disperses nodules, and unblocks collaterals to relieve pain. Modern studies have revealed anti-cancer, anti-tumor, anti-epileptic, anticonvulsant, and analgesic effects [17].

3.3 Psychological Homeostasis

Regulating Emotions: The Spiritual Pivot states: “Internal injury by worry and anger causes qi to counterflow upward; when qi counterflows upward, the six fu organs become

obstructed, warm qi cannot circulate, coagulated blood accumulates within and does not disperse, body fluids seep and stagnate, accumulate and do not move, and thus accumulations are formed.” Zhang Jiebin in Classified Canon said: “When wood-fire is rampant, metal is afflicted, hence coughing, wheezing, and hemoptysis occur.” Ye Tianshi in Case Records of Linzheng noted: “Liver yang hyperactive, scorching the lung metal, causing cough,” indicating that long-term liver depression can transform into fire and damage the lung. Many patients have had emotional disturbances long before diagnosis, and emotional disorders are closely linked to tumorigenesis. After diagnosis, excessive fear and avoidance further aggravate emotional problems, reducing treatment compliance and worsening prognosis. Studies show that among malignant tumor patients, depression occurs in about 40% and anxiety in 13%–33%; 20%–30% of early-stage patients develop personality adjustment disorders, including insomnia, fatigue, and low mood [18,19]. Thus, emotional disturbances are common in cancer patients and require attention.

Professor Li attaches great importance to monitoring and managing patients’ emotional states. For anxiety and nervousness, he uses Yujin, Qingpi (green tangerine peel), Chenpi, and Hehuanpi (*Albizia*) to soothe the liver and relieve depression. For irritability and anger, he uses Gouteng (*Uncaria*), Juemingzi (*Cassia*), Xiakucao (*Prunella*), Jiaozhizi (*Gardenia*), and Baishao (white peony root) to clear liver fire. For palpitations and timidity, he uses Cishi (magnetite), Zhusha (cinnabar), Longgu (dragon bone), and Baiziren (*Platycladus*) to calm the mind and stabilize the spirit. For apathy, muttering, and inappropriate responses, he uses Dangshen, Danggui, Longyanrou (longan aril), Changpu (*Acorus*), and Yuanzhi (*Polygala*) to nourish blood and calm the mind. Advanced lung cancer patients are predominantly deficient in pattern.

3.4 Spatiotemporal Homeostasis

Ensuring Good Sleep: Insomnia is common in cancer patients due to pain, poor appetite, fear of illness, financial concerns, or adverse reactions to radiotherapy and chemotherapy. According to the five-phase theory, the lung stores the corporeal soul and its emotion is grief. The Essential Prescriptions Worth a Thousand Gold states: “When lung qi is insufficient, the patient startles easily, may cry, sing, or become angry.” Lung qi deficiency in lung cancer patients often leads to emotional disturbances, mainly sadness and depression, followed by anxiety and palpitations. These emotions disturb the spirit, preventing yang from entering yin and causing sleeplessness, which over time leads to insomnia. Chronic insomnia not only impairs physical function but also reduces the effectiveness of standard treatments. Cancer-related insomnia can occur at any stage, with an incidence of up to 93.5% in cancer patients [20,21]. As stated in the Plain Questions: “When yangming is in reverse and cannot follow its proper course, one cannot lie down.” Most cancer patients use long-term chemotherapy, targeted therapy, or analgesics; many chemotherapeutic and analgesic drugs are of a cold nature, while some targeted drugs are pungent and hot, greatly affecting the spleen and stomach. As recorded in Case Records of Linzheng: “The spleen, being damp earth, requires yang to begin its movement; the stomach, being dry

earth, requires yin to be at ease.” The spleen and stomach serve as the pivot for ascending and descending qi; only when spleen qi ascends and stomach qi descends can systemic qi flow smoothly, enabling peaceful sleep at night. Professor Li proposes three recommendations: first, invigorate the spleen and harmonize the stomach, and calm the spirit and soothe the mind. He frequently uses Baizhu, Fuling, Huangqi, and Sharen (Amomum) to strengthen the spleen, benefit qi, and harmonize the stomach; and Yuanzhi, Hehuanpi, Baiziren, Lingzhi (Ganoderma), Cishi, Biejia (turtle shell), Duanlonggu (calcined dragon bone), and Suanzaoren (Ziziphus) to calm the spirit, tranquilize the mind, and improve intelligence. Second, after 7–9 pm, food intake should be light and moderate, avoiding overeating, greasy, spicy, and hard-to-digest foods, while also avoiding fasting; a small amount of coarse grains may be consumed. Excessive or insufficient dietary intake is a major cause of stomach disharmony and should be carefully managed. Third, appropriate listening to the five-element music may help sleep. The Yellow Emperor’s Inner Canon states: “All diseases arise from qi disturbance, and are calmed by sound.” Studies have shown that five-element music therapy, alone or combined with other interventions, has significant clinical efficacy in sleep disorders [22]. According to the Inner Canon, the lung belongs to metal, and the corresponding musical tones (Shang tone) played with instruments such as chimes, gongs, and brass wind instruments are sonorous, tragic, and clear, which can expand the lung, promote the intake of clean qi, and regulate respiration and conduction. Thus, patients may appropriately listen to Shang-tone music to assist lung qi dispersion and descending.

4. Conclusion

The normal physiological functions of the human body depend on the proper distribution of qi, blood, and body fluids and the relative dynamic balance of the five viscera and six fu organs. Once cancer develops, this balance is disrupted, and under the new cancer state, the body urgently needs to reconstruct its homeostatic equilibrium. In the treatment of advanced lung cancer, improving quality of life and prolonging survival are the primary goals. Professor Li Renting believes that the occurrence and development of lung cancer are closely related to systemic homeostatic imbalance, with the fundamental pathogenesis being intermingled phlegm and blood stasis leading to loss of homeostasis. Therefore, he adopts “homeostasis reconstruction” as the basic therapeutic principle in clinical practice, proposing four dimensions—physiological, pathological, psychological, and spatiotemporal—combining vital qi reinforcement with anti-cancer strategies. He skillfully applies methods such as reinforcing the spleen and benefiting the lung, regulating qi movement, harmonizing emotions, relieving cancer pain, ensuring good sleep, and eliminating cancer pathogens, while emphasizing the protection of the spleen and stomach, flexible use of reinforcement and attack, and emotional regulation. These approaches promote recovery, enhance vital qi, and reconstruct the patient’s internal environment, enabling patients to achieve a new steady state under “survival with tumor.” This integrative strategy is worthy of dissemination and clinical application.

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