The Importance of the Eight Extraordinary Vessels in Treatment of Male Sexual and Reproductive Issues

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ICCM - Tel Aviv March 2017
The Power of Sexuality and Conception

• For women Blood is the most important aspect

• For men Jing is the most important aspect

• For men the starting point is the Kidney, the lower Dan Tian

• For women the starting point is the Heart, the Upper Dan Tian
Du, Ren and Chong - three branches with the same origin from the space between the Kidneys

Chong – centre of the vortex

Ren and Du – define front and back

Qiao Mai – define left and right (of Yin and Yang)

Wei Mai – define interior and exterior

Dai Mai – defines above and below
The 8 Extras have many intersections with the main channels, they integrate and regulate the channel system and absorb overflows from the main channels...

They have 3 aspects as ‘Reservoirs of Qi’

… they can absorb and transfer energy to [and from] the main channels when needed...

…they are especially useful when more than one channel is involved...

…their use is indicated whenever a pulse quality spans more than one pulse position (i.e. the reservoir rather than the individual channel is affected)
The Extraordinary Vessels all derive directly or indirectly from the Kidneys and they all contain the Essence (Jing), which is stored in the Kidneys.

They circulate the Essence, thus contributing to the integration of the circulation of Nutritive and Defensive Qi with the Jing.

The Extraordinary Vessels integrate the Six Extraordinary Fu (Brain, Uterus, Blood vessels, Gall Bladder, Marrow and Bones) with the Internal Organs and Main channels.

Maciocia, Channels, pg 380
The Kidneys are the connection between the Extraordinary vessels and the Internal Organs, and also the connection between the Extraordinary Fu and the Internal Organs.

- Brain = Du
- Uterus = Chong & Ren
- Blood = Chong
- GB = Dai
- Marrow = Chong & Du
- Bones = Chong, Du & Ren

Channels, pg 380
As often happens in acupuncture the channel system is compared to an irrigation system. The channels are compared to rivers which flow into the Four Seas

**Sea of Blood** = *Chong* = disharmonies of Blood, esp Blood stasis
Bl 11, St 37, St 39

**Sea of Marrow** = Brain = *Du* = Kidney essence is the origin of Marrow = symptoms of Ki def
Du 20, Du 16

**Sea of Food** = Stomach = *Chong* = influencing stomach and intestines and digestion
St 36, St 30

**Sea of Qi** = Lung = *Ren* = the gathering of the *Zong Qi*
St 9, Ren 17

Channels, pg 381/382
Functions of the Extraordinary Vessels

• Reservoirs of Qi
• Related to Kidneys and the Essence
• Related to Defensive Qi
• Control life cycles
• Integrate the 6 Extraordinary Fu
• Integrate the Four Seas
• Control the orifices
• Regulate, balance and integrate

Channels, pg 385
8 Extra’s Regulating, Balancing and Integrating Function

- Regulate flow from the Main channels
- Regulate excess of Yang or Yin
- Link the Yin channels and the Yang channels
- Balance Yin and Yang in trunk and head
- Balance Left - Right, Above – Below, Interior – Exterior, Back – Front
- Integrate various structures into the channel system and with the internal organs (Six Extra Fu, Four Seas, fat tissue, membranes)

Channels, pg 385
great physicians treat root problems before attending to local symptoms... essentially, problems of the energetic centre are root problems. Problems that arise in the branches, the meridians or organs, are symptomatic problems

Extraordinary Vessels, Matsumoto & Birch, Paradigm 1986, pg 11

the image emerging from the classical texts is that of a vortex. The cosmic energies come to a point at the centre of our being: these energies are the power of life, the generative force of the universe. From this centre the cosmic energies change, transmute, merge and radiate in concentric systems

Matsumoto & Birch pg 10
The Eight Extraordinary Vessels

Chong Mai (Penetrating)  Sp 4 / Pc 6
Coalescent: Ren 1, Ren 7, St 30 Ki 11-21

Ren Mai (Conception)  Lu 7 / K1 6
Coalescent: St 1, Du 28

Du Mai (Governing)  SI 3 / BI 62
Coalescent: BI 12, Ren 1

Dai Mai (Girdle)  Gb 41 / TH 5
Coalescent: Liv 13, Gb 26, Gb 27, Gb 28
Yin Wei Mai (Yin Linking)  
Pc 6 / Sp 4  
Coalescent: KI 9, Sp 12, Sp 13, Sp 15, Sp 16, Liv 14, Ren 22, Ren 23

Yang Wei Mai (Yang Linking)  
TH 5 / Gb 41  
Coalescent: Bl 63, Gb 35, SI10, Th 15, Gb 21, St 8, GB 13-20, Du 16, Du 15

Yin Qiao Mai (Yin Heel)  
Ki 6 / Lu 7  
Coalescent: Ki 6, Ki 8, Bl 1

Yang Qiao Mai (Yang Heel)  
Bl 62 / SI 3  
Coalescent: Bl 61, Bl 55, Bl 59, Gb 29, SI 10, LI 15, LI 16, TH 15, St 4, St 3, St 1, Bl 1, Gb 20
Du Mai

...the meaning of the complete character is Governor... something like a viceroy

...Du Mai is like a director, and the place from where all different forms of expression can be ruled

For all the yang functions inside the body, it is the administrative centre, the principle, the main rope for all the yang mai; not only the meridians, but all the circulation which is an expression of yang power

It is where all the yang qi is mastered.

Another name for Du Mai is sea of the yang mai... a general supervisor of all the yang functions of the body
Clinical Applications of Du Mai

- Tonify Ki Yang
- Strengthen the back
- Nourish the brain and marrow
- Strengthen the mind (Shen)
- Expel exterior wind
- Extinguish interior wind
- Tonify Heart-Yang
- Lift qi

The Fire of the Gate of Life (Ming Men)
- The root of original Qi
- Source of Fire for all internal organs
- Warms the lower burner and Bladder
- Warms St and Sp to aid digestion
- Harmonises sexual function, warms the Essence and the Uterus
- Assists Kidney function of reception of Qi
- Assists the Heart function of housing the Mind
Du Mai in Gynaecology

- Du represents the Ki-Yang in the flux of the menstrual cycle
- Du is used to tonify the Uterus whenever there is a deficiency of Ki-Yang
- Du can be used in all cases when one would use the Ren Mai, but when there is a pronounced Ki-Yang deficiency
- Du flows through the vulva and vagina and it can therefore be used for problems of these 2 organs occurring against a background of Ki-Yang deficiency
The Prostate

• “It can be postulated that, in men, the prostate is the organ equivalent to the Uterus in women

• Therefore, the Du, Ren & Chong all flow through the prostate on their way down to Ren 1

• ...the seminal vessels should be assimilated with the prostate
Good Wood

• The Du Mai represents the influence of Ki-Yang on the penis and testes

• It is the channel through which Ki-Yang provides heat to the Essence

• Ki-Yang and the Du Mai are important to determine a normal erection

• A deficiency of Ki-Yang may cause abnormalities of the sperm such as reduced count or impaired sperm motility
• Sperm is a form of essence and, as such, it is part of the Yin essences (and therefore it needs the Ren Mai)

• However, just as ovulation needs the heat from Ki-Yang, so does the production of sperm (and therefore it needs the Du Mai)

• Ren 4 and Du 4 represent the Yin and Yang aspect of the essence respectively

• In men, they both are needed for the production of seminal fluid by the prostate

...
[the meaning in the Chinese character for Ren is]
...to bear the burden of being human...to be able to take charge and cope at each level of human life

... the idea of being able to withstand softened by the notion of following the natural way

It is coping, not by confrontation, but allowing

This is the meridian acting especially to nourish life, to bring all the essences, blood and liquids to nourish the new life inside the body of the woman... but acts in the same way at all times for all people
Clinical Applications of Ren Mai

- Nourish Yin
- Regulate the uterus and genitalia in women
- Regulate life cycles
- Move Qi in the lower burner and uterus
- Promote descending of Lu Qi and the Ki receiving of Qi
- Promote transformation, transportation and excretion of fluids
- Activate the Triple Burner
- Control fat tissue and membranes
- Regulate the male genital system
Ren Mai in Gynaecology

- Problems of puberty
- Infertility
- Menstrual irregularities
- PMT
- Problems of pregnancy
- Problems after childbirth
- Menopausal problems
- PCOS
- Endometriosis
- Myoma
- Painful periods from Qi stagnation or dampness
- Problems of both the male and female external and internal genitalia
Ren Mai and the Male Genital System

• The Ren Mai flows at the front of the body over the external genitalia and therefore the testicles and penis in men.

• The Ren mai represents the influence of Ki-Yin on the penis and testes.

• Ren Mai can be used to treat problems of the male genitalia occurring against a background of Ki-Yin deficiency.

• A deficiency of Ki-Yin may cause abnormalities such as reduced sperm count.

Channels pg 462
Ren Mai controls Fat Tissue and Membranes

- The membranes anchor the organs, connect the organs and wrap the organs.
- They fill in the spaces between the organs and the muscles.
- They correspond to the connective tissue of the abdomen: fascia, mesentery, omentum, stroma.
- Ren and Chong influence the membranes.
- The membranes are subject to stagnation.
The Enteric Nervous System

• There are more than a hundred million nerve cells in the small intestine – equal to the number in the spinal cord

• Add on the nerve cells of the oesophagus, stomach and large intestine and you find that there are more nerve cells in the bowel than in our spine

• We have more nerve cells in our gut than in the entire remainder of the peripheral nervous system

• The enteric system is the third leg of the autonomic system

• It differs from the parasympathetic and sympathetic systems in it’s anatomical and it’s functional independence from the brain and spinal cord
Ren 6 - Source point of the membranes

• Ren 15 is the source point of the fat tissue

• Ren 15 and Ren 6 can be used at a deep energetic level to regulate and equalise tensions and weaknesses in the membranes of the abdomen and thorax

• They are considered the source points for the chest and abdomen respectively which means that they can be used as command points for all problems of the chest and abdomen respectively
Ren 6 - Qi Hai - Sea of Qi

point of the Sea of Qi of the lower dantien

- Level with the Kidney and Ming Men
- Fosters Original Qi
- *Where Ren 4 tonifies Yin and Blood, Ren 6 tonifies Qi and Yang*
- Rescues collapse of Yang
- Ren 6 is at the level of Bl 24 Sea of Qi Shu
- Regulates Qi and harmonises Blood
- Has a direct effect on the uterus, helps to govern menstruation
- Helps to spread the benefits of Du 4 and Du 5
Ren 15 – Juiwei – Turtledove Tail

Luo-connecting point of the conception Vessel
Source point of the Fat Tissue

• Ren 15 can be considered a Source point for the chest

• ‘Gao’ literally means ‘fat’, so some say it refers to adipose tissue – this only gives a partial understanding of the nature and functions of Gao

• Gao seems to be more than fat, it also seems to be a component of Marrow

• Gao is a type of tissue that has no equivalent in Western medicine

• Gao in the abdomen is the fat tissues that surrounds the organs and the other connecting tissues in this region

• Acting on Fat Tissue may act on Marrow at a deep constitutional level

• In weeks 4-8 the embryo is Gao – 1st month ‘Dew’, 2nd month ‘Gao’, third month ‘Bao’ (foetus)
Membranes are related to the Triple Burner

“There is a Minister Fire in the body which moves within the cavities and up and down in between the membranes: it is called the Triple Burner” (Zhong Yi Li Dai Yi Lun Xuan)

- Triple burner is responsible for the movement of Qi in and out of the membranes

- In Japanese tradition SJ 4, source point of the Triple Burner, is used to strengthen original Qi in the treatment of diseases of deficiency, and it is also used to regulate the conception and penetrating vessels in disordered menstruation

- In the Chinese classics however, it is not indicated for gynaecology, or for deficiency

- SJ 6 is indicated for ‘blockage of the conception vessel in women’
TH6 – Zhigou – Branch Ditch

*also called ‘Flying Tiger’*

- SJ 6 is the most important point on the channel for moving Qi and clearing heat in the three burning spaces.
- Important point for moving stagnation – hence the indication for clearing blockages of the conception vessel.
- It is able “to drain Ministerial Fire from the three jiao”.
- Ministerial fire, the primal fire of the body which has its roots in the Ming men and the Kidneys, is ‘entrusted to the Liver, GB and SJ.
- Moves Qi of the intestines, good for constipation, regardless of aetiology.
- Used when there is bloating in the upper and in the lower abdomen.
Ki 16 – Huagshu – Vitals Shu

*Transporting point of the membranes*

- Coalescent point of the Chong Mai
- Being near the umbilicus it controls the origin of the membranes
- Used when the membranes are affected by Qi stagnation causing distention and pain
- Used to harmonise the Kidney Heart axis through establishing communication between these two organs
- Tonifies the Kidneys
- Benefits the membranes
- Benefits the Heart, calms the mind
- Moves Qi and Blood in the abdomen
- Regulates the intestines
- Ki 16 should be seen in connection with Bl 17

- Bl 17 is the Back Shu of the diaphragm and influences the Gaohuang, the space between the diaphragm and the heart

- It is situated on either side of the Governing Vessel which governs all Yang

- Ki 16 sits on either side of the Directing Vessel which governs all Yin

- Because of this connection between Ki 16 and the diaphragm it can affect both Heart and Lungs

- Ki 16 calms the Heart and relieves anxiety deriving from rebellious Qi of the Chong Mai

- Treats ‘internal urgency’ – a vague anxiety and (often mental) restlessness, uncomfortable tight sensation rising from the lower abdomen up towards the heart
BL 43 – Gaohuangshu – Rich for the Vitals

*Transporting point of Gaohuang*

- Level with BL 14 – Back Shu of Pericardium
- Mentioned in one of the earliest references to acupuncture
- The characters Gaohuang indicate the space between the heart and the diaphragm
- This point tonifies the Qi of the whole body, and is particularly used when there is debilitation from a chronic illness
- Nourishes essence – used for nocturnal emissions, low sexual energy or poor memory
- Nourishes Lung Qi and the Lung Yin
- Tonifies Stomach and Spleen
- Invigorates the Mind by promoting essence to nourish the brain and nourish the Heart
Bl 51 – Haungmen – Door of membranes

*Back Shu for the Triple Burner*

- Regulates the Triple Burner
- Found at the level of the Back Shu of Triple Burner Bl 22
- Ensures the smooth spread of the Triple Burner Qi to the heart region
- Triple Burner is the ‘ambassador’ the ‘envoy’ the avenue’ through which the Yuan Qi comes out of the Kidneys and spreads to the internal organs and the 12 channels
- This point is the ‘door’ to bring the Qi to the Gaohuang region
- Benefits the breasts
- Breasts are rich in membranes (the connective tissues of the breasts)
BI 53 – Baohuang – Bladder membranes

*also called ‘Womb and Heart diaphragm’*

- The Triple Burner penetrates upward to the Gaohuang region (BI 51) and penetrates downward to the Baohuang, the region of the uterus and bladder (BI 53).
- The use of Bao in this point name may also refer to the uterus, meaning this point can be used for menstrual problems that affect the membranes.
- Opens the Water passages in the lower burner.
- Benefits the transformation and excretion of fluids and benefits the Bladder.
Huangmu (Ex-CA)

Collecting (Mu) point of the membranes

- Tonifies Qi and Blood
- Moves Qi and Blood
- Dissolves masses
- Specific for chronic diseases and debility after a long illness
- Suitable for chemotherapy patients
- Generally used with moxa
Chong Mai

...we saw that *Du Mai* has a special mastery of the *Yang* meridians and function throughout the body, and *Ren Mai* has the same for the *Yin*

Now in the third position we have the Chong Mai, with its gathering and interpenetration of these two powers

... Chong is a great route of communication, a route with a lot of crossings or tributaries... Chong is not just the meeting of routes but also the power to continue to walk straight, gathering more and more things on the way from other routes that join
*Chong Mai* is able to regulate both blood and qi. Because of that Chong is called ‘Sea of Blood but it is also called the ‘Sea of Meridians’

And of course the meridians are nothing but the regulation of the circulation of *qi*, allowing the blood and *qi* to circulate in the correct way without deviation

This is the first function of the *Chong Mai*. *Chong* is concerned with *qi*, and with creating good rhythm of circulation. It makes the connection between the sea of *qi* at the origin and the sea of *qi* in the chest
*Chong Mai* is like the mother of the *yang* circulation, and not only that, but it is also able to provide the *yang* with essences, liquids and blood, to enable the *yang* to be efficient.

So here we have a kind of mastery of the *yang* circulation, at the same time enriching the *qi* with essences.

But also the mastering of the *yin* circulation, bringing warmth, heat and movement into the territory covered by the *yin* circulation.

That is the reason why the *Chong Mai* is said to be ‘the sea of the 12 meridians’.
Clinical Applications of Chong Mai

- Blood stasis
- The membranes
- The female breast
- The Heart
- The Stomach
- The Heart – Kidney axis
- Qi circulation to the feet

‘Sea of Blood’
- Controls the blood of the uterus and transformation of Ki-Essence into Tian gui
- Controls all the blood connecting channels
- Influences Heart blood and Heart rhythm

Channels, pg 491
• Controls all the channels of the abdomen
• Controls circulation of qi and blood in all channels (except the arms)
• Controls all connecting channels
• Root of Pre-Heaven qi (through Ki connection) and Post-Heaven qi (through St and Sp connection)
• Influences the three yin channels of the leg
• Affects the heart
• Is the centre of the energetic vortex of the extraordinary vessels
Rebellious Qi of the Chong Mai

- Cold feet
- Fullness/distention/pain of the lower abdomen
- Hypogastric fullness/distention/pain
- Painful/irregular periods
- Fullness/distention/pain of the umbilical area
- Fullness/distention/pain of the epigastrum
- Feeling of tightness below the xiphoid process
- Feeling of tightness in the chest

- Palpitations
- Feeling of distention in the breasts in wimen
- Slight breathlessness
- Sighing
- Feeling lump in the throat
- Feeling heat in the face
- Headache
- Anxiety, mental restlessness, ‘internal urgency’

Channels, pg 501
At each level and for each new life, the intrinsic nature is not only the mixture of sperm and blood, man and woman, but also a quality given by heaven.

Elisabeth Rochat de la Vallee, 
The Essential Woman

Just as one cannot scatter seeds on rock and hope for a successful harvest, one must also prepare the body by making the person healthier both physically and mentally.

Song Xuan Ke
Qi  Blood
(essences)
Yin  Yang
Zang Fu
8 Extraordinary Vessels
Bao Mai
What we have with blood and qi is a lot more than just a red liquid and movement... blood and qi were definitely linked with the ability to know or perceive with full consciousness.

ERV

Very often with these texts [Su Wen] the blood and qi are not really concerned with the physical aspects of life, but rather with temperament and all the characteristics of mind and will.

ERV
We have to behave according to the Art of the Heart

In a human being everything which is physiology and psychology, tendency and reaction, may be called blood and qi

ERV
A human being is ruled by their blood and qi and all the variations in the balance between them. But on the other hand a human being is also capable of guiding and ruling the blood and qi, and this is called the Art of the Heart.

Any kind of alteration in the external surroundings of the internal state will influence the balance of qi and blood.
Bao Zhong / Bao Gong – intimate envelopes

Bao Luo – protecting envelope over the uterus

Bao Mai – vital circulation (often concerned with blood)

Jing Luo – connecting circulations

Du & Ren and Chong – the reservoir for the regulation of all the pathways which allow the circulation of blood and qi
Bao Zhong

...the centre of the vital protection, may be used when the bao is not related to the heart, and is not translatable as the uterus, and can exist in the body of a man or a woman. It is the place inside each person where life is both protected and connected. The original blueprint and impulse of life are kept safe there to maintain vitality, and the connections and circulations express the power of life. *Bao zhong* is where *chong* and *ren mai* start.
The uterus or ‘precious envelope’
The place where the Heart and Kidneys connect
The place where essence is treasured and concealed
The uterus is an extraordinary bowel - a hollow organ (Fu) that behaves like viscus (Zang)
In men it is called Jing Shi (ejaculate) “the chamber of essence”
In women it is called Xue Shi (menstrual blood) “the chamber of blood”
Bao Luo

The pathway by which the yin essence is transported to the uterus, but also from thence upward via the chong mai/bao mai to the heart and upper body.

The Bao luo are network vessels which distribute over Bao Gong which supply and fill Bao Gong with Kidney essence.

Menstruation and the ability to conceive are dependant upon both an abundance of blood sent down via the Bao Mai to the uterus and sufficient Ki essence supplied by the Bao Luo.

Flaws
Bao Mai

The pathway by which heart blood is transported down to the uterus

It is said that the Bao Mai (as a channel) homes to the heart but connects (literally, networks) with the Bao Gong as a bowel. This parallels the relationship between other channels and vessels that connect a yin viscus with a yang bowel

The uterus’s function are normal only when and if heart function is normal

Flaws
The meaning of ‘Bao’

“The Golden Mirror of Medicine” (Yi Zong Jin Jian Jian 1742) says:

“The Du mai arises within the lower abdomen, externally in the abdomen, internally in the Bao... also called Dan Tian in both men and women: in women it is the uterus, in men, the Room of Sperm”
• Bao is a structure common to both men and women

• The Extraordinary Vessels arise in this area

• The Pericardium (Xin Bao) and the Room of Sperm (Jing Shi – also called Bao) are the two centres of sexuality

• One in the upper burner one in the lower burner

• These centres control sexuality

• Specifically in men: libido, erection, orgasm and ejaculation
• These two centres, the Heart and Pericardium above, and the Minister Fire in the Kidneys blow, regulate the ascending and descending fire and water and mutually nourish each other.

• There is an important connection between men’s sexual function and the Heart via the Minister Fire of the Ming Men.

• The Minister Fire is a special type of Fire that can actually generate Water.

• Thus: Fire and Water within the Kidneys are inseparable and interdependent.
• The Minister Fire warms and nourishes the Room of Sperm

• When the Minister Fire is deficient, the Room of Sperm is cold

• This may cause lack of libido or impotence

• When it is excessive it will flare up and affect the Pericardium and Heart

• In men’s sexuality we should consider that the Heart is the ‘Upper Kidney’ – influencing many of the sexual (and reproductive) functions

• Mental-emotional stress in men will profoundly influence sexual function in men
• Are Chong Mai and Bao Mai one and the same?

• In Chinese medicine both connect the uterus and the heart

• Bao Mai is a term which is only used in theoretical discussions

Giovanni Maciocia
The Bao Gong (uterus/Room of Sperm) is the juncture between Bao Mai and Bao Luo and therefore also between the Ht & Ki, or, upper and lower burner

“The Heart opens the Bao”
(libido, sexual arousal, orgasm and ejaculation)
To protect the heart is the same as protecting the surging forth of life

ERV
Balance the organ & meridian systems

Examine the disturbances

What are the causes of pathology?

What corrections will balance the pathology?
Our job is to create fluency. To create fluency we must: calm - clear - connect

- Front and back
- Shu points
- Mu points
- Luo points
- Yuan points
- Xi cleft points
- Transporting points
- Ki chest points
Male Sexual Health

and

Treating Spermatogenesis
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>organ</th>
<th>function</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>testis with seminiferous</td>
<td>sperm production</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tubules</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>collecting ducts</td>
<td>transport and storage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>epididymis</td>
<td>transport, maturation and ejaculation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vas deferens (sperm duct)</td>
<td>transport and ejaculation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>seminal vesicles</td>
<td>secrete thick liquid to transport sperm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prostate gland</td>
<td>secretes thin alkaline solution to neutralise urine and female system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cowper’s gland</td>
<td>secretions may lubricate, flush out urine or form a gelatinous plug</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>urethra</td>
<td>passage for urine and sperm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>penis</td>
<td>copulation</td>
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</table>
Sperm Development

• The spermatozoa take over 70 days to develop and are produced solely in the testicles. Individual sperm develop within the testicles from a cell called a spermatogonium.

• The spermatid eventually develops into a mature spermatozoan - this process takes about 60 days.

• The sperm then takes a further 10 to 14 days to pass through the ducts of each testicle and its sperm-maturing tube, the epididymis, before it can leave the body in the semen during ejaculation.

• The fluid produced by the testicles is particularly rich in testosterone.

http://www.netdoctor.co.uk/menshealth/facts/semenandsperm.htm
Hormone imbalances in men

Factors that can contribute to hormone imbalance may be:

- Chronic stress
- Excessive or intense exercise
- Obesity
- Liver disease
- Diabetes
- Thyroid disease
- age

- Hypogonadotropin hypogonadism – lack of FSH and LH
Fig. 3: Changes with Age

Age-related alterations of hormonal profiles in males with age. Note that the progressive rise in FSH and LH begins prior to a drop in testosterone. This is believed to be due to the progressive loss of hypothalamic sensitivity to feedback inhibition by testosterone (Adapted from Dilman and Dean, 1992, based on data from Moroz and Verkhratsky, 1985).
Other factors affecting male fertility

- varicoceles – enlarged veins around the testes which can inhibit sperm production and perhaps motility
- damage to the testes
- genetic or birth defects
- STI’s / GUI’s
- mumps before or during puberty
- retrograde ejaculation (damaged nerves, diabetes, STI’s)
- impotence or inability to ejaculate (stress and anxiety, diabetes)
Hypothyroid is linked to infertility

• Thyroid function is important for controlling all the metabolic processes in the body

• A borderline underactive thyroid may show increased TSH levels with normal T4

• Attention to diet is vital for good thyroid function and may help to normalise the thyroid before it becomes problematic

• Supplements for thyroid function include: B1, B2, B3, B5 and B6, co-enzyme Q10, magnesium, chromium, selenium, zinc and calcium. Referral to a qualified nutritionist would be beneficial
Symptoms of hypothyroidism

- Fatigue
- Weakness
- Weight gain or increased difficulty losing weight
- Coarse, dry hair
- Dry, rough pale skin
- Hair loss
- Cold intolerance
- Muscle cramps and frequent muscle aches
- Constipation
- Depression
- Irritability
- Memory loss
- Abnormal menstrual cycles
- Decreased libido
**Thyroid function parameters (mU/L)**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Parameter</th>
<th>Normal Range</th>
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<tr>
<td>TSH</td>
<td>0.4–4.5 mU/L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FT4</td>
<td>9.0–25 pmol/L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FT3</td>
<td>3.5–7.8 pmol/L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T4</td>
<td>60–160 nmol/L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T3</td>
<td>1.2–2.6 nmol/L</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• Subclinical hypothyroidism may present itself with mild versions of these hypothyroid symptoms, or often with just fatigue or depression.

• Hypothyroidism often occurs along with insulin resistance, and these two conditions share some similar symptoms.
Symptoms of hyperthyroidism

- Rapid heart rate
- Restlessness, nervousness
- Heat intolerance
- Unexplained weight loss
- Loose stools
- Trembling hands
- Skin warmer and more moist than usual
TCM – the six main causes of men’s disease:

- The six excesses (esp cold, dampness and heat)
- Affect-mind damage
- Dietary irregularities
- Overtaxation
- External injuries
- Natural endowment insufficiency and Constitutional vacuity
Affect-mind damage

• Mind and body are one

• Emotional challenges can adversely affect men’s health

• Fear, anxiety, and preoccupation, resentment and indignation, depression, etc…
  – Binding depression of Liv qi with qi depression transforming fire
  – Anxiety and preoccupation damaging Heart and Spleen
  – Fright and fear damaging Kidney and Heart

pg 85
In the *Nei Jing* there is no assumption that the mind and body are separated. In chapter 8 of the *Ling Shu*, it states: “The kidney stores essence: essence is the abode of the spirit.”

The very term essence-spirit (*jing shen*) as it is used in *Nei Jing* is a compound word indicating the close link between essence (*jing*) – fundamental yin-substance for the mind, and spirit (*shen*) – the ethereal-yang aspect of the mind.

So, abundant essence is a necessity for normal male emotional life
Essence

...we must clarify the two meanings for the term “essence” (jing):
In the first broad meaning... it is the fundamental substrate from which all other essential elements - namely qi, blood, and fluids – derive. As such, essence is raw material which must be in abundance so that a man’s viscera-bowels, bodily orifices, etc, are sufficiently nourished

In the second and more specific meaning of essence as “reproductive essence,” it stands for reproductive essence in a genetic-like sense and also specifically refers to semen

From this statement and others like it, we are reminded of the importance of the Kidney in all male reproductive and sexual functions
Chapter 1 of *Su Wen* states:

“the Liver and Kidney are of the same source, “ and “essence and blood are of the same source”

These statements mean that Liver blood and Kidney essence are mutually convertible… when there is sufficient Liver blood it can be stored as Kidney essence, and when there is insufficient Liver blood, Kidney essence can be transformed into Liver blood to compensate

We must challenge the notion…of Kidney essence as a fixed and immutable phenomenon, as either immature or at best incomplete…
Overwork and dietary irregularities

• Endemic in Western society

• It is common for work to encompass full time plus evenings plus weekends

• Domestic responsibilities have increased with higher expectation of house maintenance and childcare

• Overwork often comes with:
  – Erratic eating schedule
  – Scanty or no breakfast – coffee and pastry
  – Skipping lunch or grabbing a sandwich in front of the computer
  – Eating too much, too rich, too late in the evening

• Grab & go diet leads to decreased libido, decreased fertility and yang wilt

• Overtaxation damages and consumes qi and blood, and debilitates Liver blood, Spleen qi, Kidney qi and Kidney essence
Frequency of sex

• Frequency should be based on the consideration of:
  – strength of constitution
  – age
  – season of the year

• Usually in a range of 1 – 5 times per week

• Pay attention to one’s body, regarding signs such as:
  – fatigue
  – weakness of the back and knees
  – decreased frequency of morning erections
  – decreased firmness of erections
  – decreased orgasmic intensity

• These are barometers for detecting weakened Kidney qi and for the need to reduce sexual frequency
When treating men’s sexuality

- Treat the Heart
- Think about the Bao Mai, the Bao Luo
- Think about the role of the Chong, Ren and Du
- The gonadal processes of men and women are not significantly different
- In treating men it is just as important to treat the landscape of that individual
When treating men’s diseases

- Nourish qi and blood
- Nourish Kidney essence
- Warm the Ming Men
- Support Liver qi
- Build Liver blood
- Clear damp heat and damp toxins in the essence chamber
- Clear blood stasis
Male Fertility

Macro = pattern differentiation (TD)
Micro = semen analysis

Seminal fluid = yin
The testicle itself is yin (in Chinese language testes and yin are the same character)
Sperm move within the seminal fluid = yang within the yin

Body = yin
Movement = yang

This is why sperm sub parameters are a yin deficiency
Main Patterns

- Yin xu
- Yang xu
- Qi stagnation
- Blood stasis
- Phlegm damp
- Mixed patterns

Peter Deadman also ascribes

“no obvious pattern”
Yang deficient

- Thin clear ejaculate
- Cold hands and feet
- Erectile dysfunction
- Low libido
- Large number of immotile sperm

Yin Deficient

- Strong libido
- Many sexual dreams
- Needing a lot of intercourse
- Nightly emissions
- Reduced number of sperm
- Many misshapen sperm
- Many sperm not alive
Qi & blood stagnation

- Erectile dysfunction
- Testicular pain
- Testicular lumps
- Varicele

- In younger men this is often due to alcohol and drug abuse, ecstasy especially
Deadman advice for treating fertility

General principles:

• Suggest 10 weeks treatment, twice a week if possible

• Form 2 treatment prescriptions and alternate, front and back

• Stick to treating the primary disorder and avoid being distracted by other issues (aches and pains, headaches etc)

• Select from main and secondary points every treatment
Check for any symptoms of hypothyroidism that may warrant asking for a thyroid function test. Be sure to ask that the T3 is checked as well as the T4 and TSH.

Symptom check list:

- Fatigue
- Depression
- Modest weight gain
- Cold intolerance
- Excessive sleepiness
- Dry, coarse hair
- Constipation

- Dry skin
- Muscle cramps
- Increased cholesterol levels
- Decreased concentration
- Vague aches and pains
- Swelling of the legs
Investigations

- History
- Physical exam, possibly ultrasound
- Semen analysis
- Further semen analysis
- Endocrine analysis
History Check list

- History of paternity
- Frequency, timing and technique of sexual intercourse
- Use of contraceptives and spermicidal lubricants
- Chemotherapy
- Radiation exposure
- Medications, including otc’s
- Occupational toxins
- Environmental toxins
- Recent infections
- Febrile illnesses
- Surgeries
- Use of anabolic steroids
- Recreational drugs
- Alcohol consumption and Smoking
- Stress factors
Check list

Erectile function: psychogenic or organic cause? or both?

- is there spontaneous erection during sleep or in the early morning, known as NPT (nocturnal penile tumescence)
- how is the turgidity
- the ability to hold the erection
- is the premature ejaculation
- is there no ejaculation (anejaculation)
- is there retrograde ejaculation (semen is dispersed up into the bladder rather than through the urethra)
The ejaculate:

– amount
– consistency
– colour – white, yellowish, greyish

Physical exam - look for:

– poorly developed secondary sexual characteristics
– lack of normal male hair distribution (axillary, pubic, facial, body hair)
– small penis and/or testes
– under developed scrotum
– diminished muscular development and mass
– check BMI
– gynaecomastia (‘moobs’ = man boobs)
– palpation of varicoceles (like a bag of worms)
– abnormal prostate (on DRE)
Urine function:

• flow
  – amount
  – colour
  – frequency

• how is the bladder control
  – dribbling
  – urgency

Have there been any
  – accidents – car accident, slips, falls
  – surgeries
  – sports injury
  – trauma – physical or emotional
  – exposure to toxins
Lifestyle issues

- Work
  - level of responsibility
  - workload
  - after-hours attendance
  - culture of alcohol
- Commute
- Diet and eating patterns
- Rest and leisure
- Exercise
- Are the testes being exposed to heat, or being over heated in tight clothing
Environmental factors

• endocrine disrupters
• toxic pollutants
• STI’s (sexually transmitted infections) and GUI’s (genitourinary infections)
• sub nutritional diet, esp zinc deficiency
• alcoholism / recreational drug use and abuse
• smoking
• anabolic steroid use
• EMR (Electromagnetic radiation) also known as ionising radiation
Symptoms of GUI

- itching, soreness, tenderness or pain in the vagina
- any abnormal vaginal discharge, ie: unusual smell or staining
- pain on urination
- low abdominal pain
- discomfort during intercourse
- abnormal bleeding
- lumps or ulcers in the genital region
- any genital problems in your partners past and present

Symptoms of STI

- discharge from the penis
- soreness or ulcers in the genital region
- frequent urge to urinate and pain with passing urine (urethritis)
- swollen glands in the groin
- tender or painful testes or prostate gland
Toxins known to damage sperm

- Thalates - plastics industry
- Alkylphenols - industrial and domestic detergents
- Bisphenol A - lacquers to coat foods, dental treatments
- Organochlorine pesticides - (Lindane, DDT, etc)
  Lindane is used on cereals, soft fruits, cabbage
- Dioxins - paper production
- Vinclozolin - fungicide used on foods
- Phytoestrogens – found in soya products
Semen Analysis: advice for patients

• It is recommended that if there is an abnormal semen parameter that the test be repeated within 7 days. This is to confirm whether it is accurate to the sperm, or if there has been an environmental influence to the results.

• Sperm evaluations should be repeated every 3 months when undergoing treatment, as the spermatogenesis is 72 - 86 days (10 - 12 weeks).

• Exposure to severe heat or prolonged/high fever will affect parameters; tests done within 12 weeks of such exposure may not be accurate.

• 2 or 3 days abstinence is recommended before an analysis. Longer abstinence will affect the motility and morphology outcomes, and shorter abstinence will affect the count. 2-3 days abstinence will more accurately reflect the actual sperm parameters.
Semen Parameters according to Jane Lyttleton:

A count between 48 and 13.5 ml/ml should be considered sub-fertile

**Fertile**
- Volume – at least 1 ml
- Count – more than >48 ml/ml
- Motility – more than >63% forward progression
- Morphology – less than <88% normal forms

**Infertile**
- Volume - less than 1 ml
- Count – less than <13.5 ml/ml
- Motility – less than <32% forward progression
- Morphology – more than >91% normal forms
Fertility needs:

• Kidney essence
• Life-gate-fire must be sufficiently warm – to power engenderment and transformation of Ki essence into semen and sperm
• Free flowing Liver Qi to regulate Ki function and maintain normal ejaculatory function
• Free from phlegm and blood stasis
• Free from damp-heat and heat toxins
• To have adequate Qi and Blood

“In clinical practice men usually become infertile because they have a failure in 2 or more of these physiological aspects of their fertility.”

“In the classics, male infertility was most often seen as a problem of kidney essence vacuity and debility of life-gate-fire

We now know that damp-heat, phlegm, and blood stasis are extremely important factors in the development of male infertility” Damone
Principles of Chinese Medical Andrology
Bob Damone

Peter Deadman’s JCM Subfertility article: £4.00 to order
http://www.jcm.co.uk/product.php?catID=0&open er=0-499&productID=8724&sType=search&search=m ale+infertility&section=217

Treatment of Infertility with Chinese Medicine Jane Lyttleton