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Hyperactive Children and Chinese Medicine



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Children and qi

Human beings are qi: emotions and intelligence, blood and body fluids, muscles and bones, *shen* and *jing* (different densities)

Qi is always moving: it circulates without stopping and changes through time

When we come into the world, we are extremely fragile: the qi that constitutes our individuality has just begun its existence, but has not yet been consolidated

Children are delicate

Paediatrics exists as a speciality in Chinese medicine

Children physiology

Children's '*zangfu* are soft and tender'
(*zang fu jiao ruo* 脏腑娇弱)

the functions of the various internal organs have yet to fully develop and consolidate

The flow of *qi*, its channels net, has yet to stabilise
'*qi* easily loses its way'
(*qi yi chu dao* 气易出道)

During the first phases of life growth is rapid,
a lot of *qi* is needed for transformation and transportation
'the Spleen of children is insufficient'
(*xiao er pi bu zu* 小儿脾不足)."

Chinese Medicine in Children

Chinese Medicine is extremely helpful to balance qi and reinforce constitution.

Effective for both acute and chronic diseases.

Treating children is easy and extremely rewarding: diagnosis is generally more straightforward than in adults (qi had not enough time to messed into complicated patterns);

changes are fast (children's qi has the wind, quick, strong quality of spring, of dawn, of growing of yang inside yin;

results are good because at the beginning of life qi is still "pure" and responds very promptly)

'the *zangfu* spirit is pure, health is easily and rapidly recovered' (*zang fu qing ling, yi qu kang fu* 脏腑清灵,易趋康复)."

Hyperactivity and attention problems

Children naturally have a yang and lively nature.
Move by running, speak by shouting, rarely sit quietly,
force their will upon others, explode in furious rages.

It becomes problem if all this interferes with their growth,
their internal integration and development,
disturbs their relations to others,
impairs learning.

Reckless, impulsive and prone to accidents.
move from one activity to another
without completing the initial task
may become isolated,
with low self-esteem,
difficulties at school
future antisocial behaviour

The main diagnostic criteria

DSM-IV as 'Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder' (ADHD)
ICD-10 as 'Disturbance of Activity and Attention' (DAA)
should involve significant impairment in social and academic
functioning in at least two settings
present for at least six months
start before the age of six (ICD-10) or seven years old (DSM-IV)

The cause of the disorder is unknown

One hypothesis concerns central nervous system (CNS) malfunction,
mainly in the pre-frontal cortex involving the dopaminergic and
noradrenergic circuits that link the prefrontal regions to limbic system
Low dopamine and noradrenalin levels are the basis for
pharmacological therapy with stimulants

morbidity, evolution and prognosis depend mainly on the child's
school and family environment
behavioural therapeutic strategies have been developed for both at
school and at home.

The Xiaoxiao Children Centre

Started in 2005 in Milan, Italy, now operating for the **6th year**

Cases: atopic dermatitis, infant abdominal pain, poor appetite, gastro-oesophagus reflux, slow growing, constipation, nocturnal enuresis, headache, cryptorchidism, juvenile idiopathic arthritis, Tourette's syndrome

With the support of FISTQ, free treatments for pilot-studies:

- "cure and prevention of winter respiratory diseases"
- "quiet-project"

Untill dec 2010: **162 children**, for a total of **845 sessions** aged from 2 months to 12 years,.

Treatments are individual - according to Chinese diagnosis
Tuina, acupuncture, moxibustion
+ cupping, ear-seeds, *guasha*, and plum-blossom needle.

Training Centre:

47 colleagues - basic or advanced clinical course

Parental cooperation

extremely important to support paediatric treatment, for treatment of chronic conditions and for prevention
In Europe we do not usually have the chance to treat 3 times a week as in China

Caregivers are then taught to apply an individually designed tuina sequence at home:

treatment is reinforced, their self-confidence is supported, and the child-parent relationship is improved

They also learn some “emergency” sequences (in case of common cold, fever, constipation, etc.).

Caregivers can also attend a two-days course.

Data are recorded through a specific clinical chart, available to other centres, so to build a network

A **semi-structured interview** is given to all the parents during the follow-up treatment, for suggestions, how they felt in the centre, how they evaluate the therapeutic results after some time, and if they continued to use tuina at home.

The "Quiet" Project

Children, according to their age may be:

- Agitated, restless, always moving.
- Impulsive, intractable, tense, angry and stubborn.
- Easily distracted and vague.
- Having difficulties in maintaining attention and listening.
- Anxious, afraid.
- In need of reassurance and emotionally fragile.
- Waking up frequently and sleeping late.

Pathogenesis according to Chinese medicine

"children yin is not sufficient"

(*xiao er yin bu zu* 小儿阴不足)

"liver has often excess"

(*gan chang you yu* 肝常有余)

Imbalance between yin and yang qi:

quietness, concentration, inwards movement, softness
are disturbed by an excess of yang –
by excess of movement, expansion and heat.

Excessive movement: messy and chaotic emotions

(emotions = movements of qi)

Heat disturbs the Heart, agitating and confusing the *shen*

Yin deficiency = weakness of the root

= instability of *shen*,

(*shen* is nourished by qi and rooted in *jing*)

Heat and deficiency facilitate clotting of phlegm:

obstructs the Heart portals (*xinqiao*), mists mind and emotions.

Heat agitating the *shen*

Children are yang by nature, easily generate excess heat

foetal toxins (*taidu*)

lingering pathogenic factors

food accumulation.

Heat disturbs the quietness of yin

does not allow the child to rest, causing poor sleep.

It agitates qi - causes physical and mental restlessness, hyperactivity and impulsive behaviour.

It disturbs the *shen* and agitates the emotions, causing disorders of attention and concentration.

Heat may also transform into internal wind - tics.

Phlegm misting the *shen*

Spleen and Lung immaturity –
Poor transformation and diffusion,
tendency of food accumulation to obstruct qi circulation

If phlegm mists the Heart portals:
extreme emotional swings,
violent behaviour,
sudden energy loss,
language disorders,
confusion,
opaque and 'disconnected' eyes,
poor coordination,
poor sense of direction and sluggish or impulsive
reactions.

catarrh, swollen lymph nodes, rough skin, thick coating

Food accumulation transforming into heat and phlegm.

Food accumulation does not mean acute indigestion, but rather an excess that comes from eating food of the wrong quality, quantity and frequency.

Such dietary excess overcomes the ability of the middle *jiao* to transform and transport.

Food accumulation obstructs qi circulation and because of this the child does not sleep well and is not at peace during the day.

It particularly interferes with the Liver function of spreading-discharging, manifesting as a foul temper, fits of rage, resentment, stubbornness and extreme antagonism.

Qi, blood and *jing* deficiency not nourishing *shen*

If qi and blood are deficient, the *shen* will lack an abode.
If *jing* is weak, the *shen* will not have a root.

Children with frail qi also tend to be emotionally fragile, overly dependent, fearful, anxious, need lots of attention and tend to wake up at night in fear and terror.

Further manifestations at the somatic level are:
poor appetite, pale face, tiredness, frequent illness, soft stools and a pale tongue.

If the Kidney and *jing* are involved, these symptoms will be more serious,
there may also be a dark shade under the eyes, nocturnal enuresis, retarded development, congenital or genetic pathologies and a pale tongue (red if there is yin deficiency).

Main acupuncture points

To regulate Heart qi:

Shenmen HE-7, Tongli HE-5, Xinshu BL-15, Shentang BL-44 and Shendao DU-11.

To descend excess yang from above and resolve phlegm obstructing the Heart portals:

Yintang (M-HN-3), Shenting DU-24, Houding DU-19, Qianding DU-21 and Sishencong (M-HN-1).

To reinforce the marrow and brain and raise the clear qi:
Baihui DU-20.

To regulate qi movement through the small circulation (Conception-Ren and Governing-Du vessels):

Shanzhong REN-17 (or Jiuwei REN-15, Juque REN-14, Zhongwan REN-12) + Qihai REN-6 (or Guanyuan REN-4).
seed at Yintang (M-HN-3)

Main tuina techniques

Tianmen (Heaven Gate):

Tui from Yintang (M-HN-3) upwards towards hairline.

Xinmen (Gate of Heart):

Tui from anterior hairline towards the fontanelle.

Kangong (Water Palace):

Fentui from the medial extremity of the eyebrows towards their lateral edges.

Xiaotianxin (Small Heaven Heart):

Kou at the base of the palm between the thenar and hypothenar eminences.

Shou yinyang (Hand Yinyang):

Fentui from the centre of the medial wrist crease towards the lateral edges

Taichong LR-3



Zhongwan CV-12



Hegu LI-4



Yintang EX-HN-3, *Yingxiang* LI-20



Pijing
jan. 2006



Tianmen

dec 2007



xiaoxiao



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