
Sebaceous glands are associated with the hair follicles, lying between the follicle and the epidermis. They are most numerous on the scalp, face, chest, and back. Sebaceous glands produce sebum, which is discharged into the hair follicle and functions to lubricate the skin and hair and act as a mild bactericide. These glands are dormant in children, but become active at puberty when they are stimulated by androgenic hormones.

Sweat glands are tightly coiled glands lying deep in the dermis. Sweat secreted by the glands reaches the surface of the skin through the sweat ducts. In total, the body has two to three million eccrine sweat glands, which are most numerous on the palms, soles, axillae, and forehead.

These sweat glands are important for regulating body temperature and up to 10 liters a day of sweat may be excreted.

Apocrine sweat glands are larger than eccrine glands and open into the hair follicles. They are mostly found around the axillae, nipples and perineum. Sweat produced by these glands is odorless, with an odor only developing after being acted upon by bacteria on the skin.

In TCM, etiological analysis generally starts with the nature of the disease – diseases of the sebaceous glands are usually related to the Lungs and Spleen, diseases of the sweat glands to disharmony between the Ying and Wei levels or retention of Heat in the Spleen channel.

Acne

痤疮

Acne is a disorder of the hair follicle sebaceous glands, consisting of non-inflammatory lesions (open and closed comedones) and inflammatory lesions (papules, pustules and nodules). Many factors are responsible for the development of acne – sebum excretion, androgenic hormones, occlusion of sebaceous gland pores, and infection with *Propionibacterium acnes*. The development of acne is also influenced by genetic factors, gastrointestinal function, environmental factors, cosmetics, and emotional factors.

Acne is essentially due to excessive activity of the sebaceous glands, which are most numerous in the skin of the face, chest and back. During puberty, these glands grow rapidly and keratin may block the opening. Where partially dried keratinous matter blocks the opening of the sebaceous glands, comedones (whiteheads or blackheads) appear. In more serious cases, sebum trapped in the glands leaks around the pilosebaceous unit and may become infected by bacteria, resulting in papules, pustules, nodules, or cysts.

In TCM, acne is known as *fei feng fen ci* (Lung-Wind powder prickles). This name is derived from the starch-colored fluid that can be squeezed out of the thorn-like papular or pustular eruptions characteristic of acne and the attribution of the disease to the Lungs.

Clinical manifestations

- Acne is common among adolescents and young adults, usually starting between the ages of 12 and 14 and peaking between the ages of 16 and 19; females are normally affected earlier than males. Although acne generally disappears once puberty and growth are over, it may persist into adulthood. It may reappear in adult life after hormone treatment for other disorders; in some women, acne may be exacerbated in the premenstrual phase.
- Lesions generally appear on the face (especially the forehead, cheeks and chin), the chest, the back, and the interscapular area. Involvement is symmetrical.

- At the initial stage, lesions manifest as open comedones (blackheads), caused by keratin and sebum plugging the pilosebaceous orifice, or closed comedones (whiteheads), small white or grayish papules caused by occlusion of the follicle opening. As the disease develops, lesions may evolve into inflammatory papules or pustules.
- In a few cases, mostly in males, papules may develop into red or dark red nodules or cysts, which are located deeper in the skin than papules, but may still raise the skin slightly. The surface of large cysts is fluctuant when palpated. Atrophic and pitted scarring may occur where lesions are deep.
- Acne is often complicated by increased sebaceous activity on the face and scalp, manifesting as an oily complexion with enlarged follicles and a greasy scalp.
- Subjective symptoms are rare in most cases except for the emotional stress caused by the appearance of the lesions.

Differential diagnosis

Rosacea

This condition affects middle-aged people most commonly. Lesions manifest initially as erythema and capillary dilatation (telangiectasia) on the forehead, cheeks, nose, chin, and around the eyes, with papules, pustules and nodules appearing later. There are no comedones and no other areas of the body are involved.

Perioral dermatitis

This disorder occurs most frequently in women in the 20-40 age group. Eruptions usually start around the mouth, but may also involve the areas around the nose and eyes. Lesions mainly manifest as erythema, pinpoint papules, papulovesicles or pustules, with some scaling. There are no comedones and no other areas of the body are involved.

Hidradenitis suppurativa

This disorder is more common in young or middle-aged women, and is worse in the obese. Lesions usually occur in the axillae, the groin, the area under the female breast, and the anogenital region. There are no comedones.

Etiology and pathology

- Underlying Heat in the Blood is the main internal factor responsible for the onset of the disease, whereas improper diet and invasion by external pathogenic factors are the main external causes; Blood stasis and binding of Phlegm result in complications and aggravation of the condition.
- A tendency toward exuberance of constitutional Yang-Heat during adolescence (when the body is growing rapidly) gradually warms up the Ying and Xue levels. Blood-Heat moves out to the exterior and congests the vessels, resulting in stagnation of Qi and Blood.
- Spicy food has a hot, Yang nature and transforms into Heat if too much is eaten over a long period. Over-indulgence in fishy and fatty foods impairs the transformation and transportation function of the Middle Burner and generates Fire and Heat from prolonged accumulation. Fire and Heat tend to steam upward to affect the face, giving rise to small red eruptions.
- General poor health resulting in repeated contraction of pathogenic Wind-Heat or washing in cold water resulting in binding of Blood-Heat gradually leads to clusters of inflamed lesions or blackheads.
- Stagnation of Qi and Blood in the channels and network vessels due to persistent illness or emotional disturbance, or Blood stasis and binding of Phlegm due to prolonged accumulation of Heat in the Lungs and Stomach, which transforms into Damp and generates Phlegm, will result in widespread eruptions or the formation of nodules and cysts.

Pattern identification and treatment

INTERNAL TREATMENT

ACCUMULATION OF HEAT IN THE LUNGS

This pattern arises when Heat in the Lung channel is complicated by external contraction of pathogenic Wind, which causes the retention of Lung-Heat in the skin and flesh. Lesions are distributed over the cheeks and forehead and around the nose, manifesting as discrete pinpoint to 2mm red or pale red papules; in severe cases, lesions may involve the chest and back. Blackheads may be seen on some lesions. Pressure may produce excretion of a plug of greasy matter or thick, yellow purulent discharge. The skin looks oily and shiny. Accompanying symptoms include a dry mouth and nose, a red tongue body with a thin yellow coating, and a floating pulse.

Treatment principle

Clear Heat from the Lungs.

Prescription

PI PA QING FEI YIN JIA JIAN

Loquat Beverage for Clearing Heat from the Lungs, with modifications

Pi Pa Ye (Folium Eriobotryae Japonicae) 10g

Jiao Zhi Zi (Fructus Gardeniae Jasminoidis, scorch-fried) 10g

Lian Qiao (Fructus Forsythiae Suspensae) 10g
Chi Shao (Radix Paeoniae Rubra) 10g
Sang Bai Pi (Cortex Mori Albae Radicis) 10g
Huang Qin (Radix Scutellariae Baicalensis) 6g
Chao Mu Dan Pi (Cortex Moutan Radicis, stir-fried) 6g
Hong Hua (Flos Carthami Tinctorii) 6g
Ling Xiao Hua (Flos Campsis) 6g
Sheng Di Huang (Radix Rehmanniae Glutinosae) 12g
Jin Yin Hua (Flos Lonicerae) 12g
Dong Gua Pi (Epicarpium Benincasae Hispidae) 12g
Dong Gua Ren (Semen Benincasae Hispidae) 12g

Explanation

- *Pi Pa Ye* (Folium Eriobotryae Japonicae), *Jiao Zhi Zi* (Fructus Gardeniae Jasminoidis, scorch-fried), *Sang Bai Pi* (Cortex Mori Albae Radicis), *Huang Qin* (Radix Scutellariae Baicalensis), and *Lian Qiao* (Fructus Forsythiae Suspensae) clear and diffuse Heat retained in the Lungs.
- *Chao Mu Dan Pi* (Cortex Moutan Radicis, stir-fried), *Chi Shao* (Radix Paeoniae Rubra), *Hong Hua* (Flos Carthami Tinctorii), *Ling Xiao Hua* (Flos Campsis), *Sheng Di Huang* (Radix Rehmanniae Glutinosae), and *Jin Yin Hua* (Flos Lonicerae) cool and invigorate the Blood and reduce erythema.
- *Dong Gua Pi* (Epicarpium Benincasae Hispidae) and *Dong Gua Ren* (Semen Benincasae Hispidae) transform Dampness and moisten the skin.

ACCUMULATION OF HEAT IN THE STOMACH

Stomach-Heat arises from accumulated Heat in the Spleen and Stomach caused by overindulgence in spicy, fatty and fried foods, with Heat then being retained in the skin and flesh. Lesions are similar to those in the Lung-Heat pattern, except that they are mainly distributed around the mouth. Accompanying symptoms and signs include bad breath, aversion to heat, thirst with a desire for cold drinks, constipation, and dark yellow urine. The tongue body is red with a thin yellow or thick and greasy coating; the pulse is slippery and rapid.

Treatment principle

Clear Heat from the Yangming channel.

Prescription

TIAO WEI CHENG QI TANG

Decoction for Regulating the Stomach and Sustaining Qi

Jin Zhi Da Huang (Radix et Rhizoma Rhei, processed with wine) 12g
Zhi Gan Cao (Radix Glycyrrhizae, mix-fried with honey) 6g
Mang Xiao† (Mirabilitum) 12g, infused in the decoction

Explanation

- *Jin Zhi Da Huang* (Radix et Rhizoma Rhei, processed with wine) clears the Fu organs and drains Heat.

- *Mang Xiao*† (Mirabilitum) flushes out accumulation and guides out stagnation.
- *Zhi Gan Cao* (Radix Glycyrrhizae, mix-fried with honey) moderates and harmonizes the properties of the other ingredients to reduce the rate of draining.

BLOOD-HEAT

Internal damage due to emotional disturbances leads to Qi Depression, eventually transforming into Heat. Latent Heat in the Ying and Xue levels finally results in acne. Lesions manifest as 1-2 mm red papules on the face, concentrated around the nose and mouth and between the eyebrows, accompanied by telangiectasia, tidal reddening of the face and a sensation of scorching heat. For women, papules normally increase before and after menstruation. Accompanying symptoms include dry stools and yellow or reddish urine. The tongue tip is red with a thin yellow coating; the pulse is thready, slippery and rapid.

Treatment principle

Cool the Blood and clear Heat, transform stasis and reduce erythema.

Prescription

TAO HONG SI WU TANG HE LIANG XUE WU HUA TANG JIA JIAN

Peach Kernel and Safflower Four Agents Decoction Combined With Five Flowers Decoction for Cooling the Blood, with modifications

Tao Ren (Semen Persicae) 6g
Hong Hua (Flos Carthami Tinctorii) 6g
Ling Xiao Hua (Flos Campsis) 6g
Chuan Xiong (Rhizoma Ligustici Chuanxiong) 6g
Chao Mu Dan Pi (Cortex Moutan Radicis, stir-fried) 10g
Sheng Di Huang (Radix Rehmanniae Glutinosae) 10g
Chi Shao (Radix Paeoniae Rubra) 10g
Jin Yin Hua (Flos Lonicerae) 10g
Chao Huai Hua (Flos Sophorae Japonicae, stir-fried) 10g
Ji Guan Hua (Flos Celosiae Cristatae) 10g
Shi Gao‡ (Gypsum Fibrosum) 12g
Huang Qin (Radix Scutellariae Baicalensis) 6g

Explanation

- *Sheng Di Huang* (Radix Rehmanniae Glutinosae), *Chao Mu Dan Pi* (Cortex Moutan Radicis, stir-fried), *Chi Shao* (Radix Paeoniae Rubra), *Ling Xiao Hua* (Flos Campsis), and *Chao Huai Hua* (Flos Sophorae Japonicae, stir-fried) cool the Blood and clear Heat.
- *Tao Ren* (Semen Persicae), *Chuan Xiong* (Rhizoma Ligustici Chuanxiong), *Hong Hua* (Flos Carthami Tinctorii), and *Ji Guan Hua* (Flos Celosiae Cristatae) transform Blood stasis and reduce erythema.
- *Jin Yin Hua* (Flos Lonicerae), *Shi Gao*‡ (Gypsum Fibrosum) and *Huang Qin* (Radix Scutellariae Baicalensis)

clear Heat in the Stomach to help reduce redness on the face.

STAGNATION OF QI AND BLOOD

This pattern presents as red or dark red eruptions on the face that persist for several years. In women, eruptions are usually aggravated during menstruation and are alleviated after periods. Accompanying symptoms and signs due to disharmony of the Chong and Ren vessels may include menstrual irregularities, menstrual clots and abdominal pain. In men, the complexion may be dark red or purplish-red. The tongue body is dark red or has stasis marks; the pulse is deep, thready and rough.

Treatment principle

Move Qi and regulate the Blood, relieve Toxicity and dissipate lumps.

Prescription

LIANG XUE QING FEI YIN JIA JIAN

Beverage for Cooling the Blood and Clearing Heat from the Lungs, with modifications

Sheng Di Huang (Radix Rehmanniae Glutinosae) 30g
Jin Yin Hua (Flos Lonicerae) 30g
Yin Chen Hao (Herba Artemisiae Scopariae) 30g
Bai Hua She She Cao (Herba Hedyotidis Diffusae) 30g
Chao Mu Dan Pi (Cortex Moutan Radicis, stir-fried) 10g
Huang Qin (Radix Scutellariae Baicalensis) 10g
Chi Shao (Radix Paeoniae Rubra) 10g
Tao Ren (Semen Persicae) 10g
Yi Mu Cao (Herba Leonuri Heterophylli) 12g
Zhe Bei Mu (Bulbus Fritillariae Thunbergii) 12g
Lian Qiao (Fructus Forsythiae Suspensae) 12g
Zi Hua Di Ding (Herba Violae Yedoensis) 12g
Chao Zhi Mu (Rhizoma Anemarrhenae Asphodeloidis, stir-fried) 6g
Pi Pa Ye (Folium Eriobotryae Japonicae) 6g

Explanation

- *Sheng Di Huang* (Radix Rehmanniae Glutinosae), *Chao Mu Dan Pi* (Cortex Moutan Radicis, stir-fried), *Chao Zhi Mu* (Rhizoma Anemarrhenae Asphodeloidis, stir-fried), *Chi Shao* (Radix Paeoniae Rubra), *Tao Ren* (Semen Persicae), and *Yi Mu Cao* (Herba Leonuri Heterophylli) cool and invigorate the Blood, regulate menstruation and improve the complexion.
- *Jin Yin Hua* (Flos Lonicerae), *Huang Qin* (Radix Scutellariae Baicalensis), *Yin Chen Hao* (Herba Artemisiae Scopariae), *Bai Hua She She Cao* (Herba Hedyotidis Diffusae), *Zi Hua Di Ding* (Herba Violae Yedoensis), and *Pi Pa Ye* (Folium Eriobotryae Japonicae) clear Heat and relieve Toxicity, clear and diffuse Heat from the Lungs.
- *Zhe Bei Mu* (Bulbus Fritillariae Thunbergii) and *Lian Qiao* (Fructus Forsythiae Suspensae) soften hardness

and dissipate lumps, draw out Toxicity from the interior and expel pus.

BLOOD STASIS AND BINDING OF PHLEGM

This pattern manifests as repeated and persistent eruptions on the cheeks and lower jaw, gradually enlarging into 3-5 mm or larger, unevenly protruding, purplish-red lumps that feel soft on palpation, with excretion of pus and blood or sticky yellow matter on pressure. Scars form after rupture. The tongue body is pale red with a slippery and greasy coating; the pulse is soggy and slippery.

Treatment principle

Invigorate the Blood and transform Blood stasis, disperse Phlegm and soften hardness.

Prescription

HAI ZAO YU HU TANG JIA JIAN

Sargassum Jade Flask Decoction, with modifications

Hai Zao (Herba Sargassi) 10g
Zhe Bei Mu (Bulbus Fritillariae Thunbergii) 10g
Chen Pi (Pericarpium Citri Reticulatae) 10g
Kun Bu (Thallus Laminariae seu Eckloniae) 10g
Fa Ban Xia (Rhizoma Pinelliae Ternatae Praeparata) 10g
Lian Qiao (Fructus Forsythiae Suspensae) 12g
Xia Ku Cao (Spica Prunellae Vulgaris) 12g
Long Gu† (Os Draconis) 12g
Mu Li‡ (Concha Ostreae) 12g
Dang Gui (Radix Angelicae Sinensis) 6g
Chuan Xiong (Rhizoma Ligustici Chuanxiong) 6g
Qing Pi (Pericarpium Citri Reticulatae Viride) 6g
Ju He (Semen Citri Reticulatae) 10g

Explanation

- *Hai Zao* (Herba Sargassi), *Kun Bu* (Thallus Laminariae seu Eckloniae), *Lian Qiao* (Fructus Forsythiae Suspensae), *Fa Ban Xia* (Rhizoma Pinelliae Ternatae Praeparata), *Zhe Bei Mu* (Bulbus Fritillariae Thunbergii), *Xia Ku Cao* (Spica Prunellae Vulgaris), *Long Gu*† (Os Draconis), *Mu Li*‡ (Concha Ostreae), and *Ju He* (Semen Citri Reticulatae) disperse Phlegm and soften hardness, eliminate pus and dissipate lumps.
- *Chen Pi* (Pericarpium Citri Reticulatae), *Qing Pi* (Pericarpium Citri Reticulatae Viride), *Dang Gui* (Radix Angelicae Sinensis), and *Chuan Xiong* (Rhizoma Ligustici Chuanxiong) invigorate the Blood and transform Blood stasis, regulate Qi and free the network vessels.

General modifications

1. For a persistent red complexion, add *Ji Guan Hua* (Flos Celosiae Cristatae), *Mei Gui Hua* (Flos Rosae Rugosae), *Shi Gao*‡ (Gypsum Fibrosum), and *Han Shui Shi*‡ (Calcium).

2. For severe abscesses with distending pain, add *Pu Gong Ying* (Herba Taraxaci cum Radice), *Zi Hua Di Ding* (Herba Violae Yedoensis), *Chong Lou* (Rhizoma Paridis), and *Hu Zhang* (Radix et Rhizoma Polygoni Cuspidati).
3. For constipation, add *Chao Zhi Ke* (Fructus Citri Aurantii, stir-fried), *Shu Da Huang* (Radix et Rhizoma Rhei Conquitum) and *Fan Xie Ye* (Folium Sennae).
4. For severe nodules and cysts, add *Huang Yao Zi* (Rhizoma Dioscoreae Bulbiferae), *Tu Bei Mu* (Tuber Bolbostemmatis), *Zao Jiao Ci* (Spina Gleditsiae Sinensis), *Kun Bu* (Thallus Laminariae seu Eckloniae), and *Jiang Can*[‡] (Bombyx Batryticatus).
5. For menstrual irregularities or increased severity of eruption prior to periods, add *Yi Mu Cao* (Herba Leonuri Heterophylli), *Wu Yao* (Radix Linderiae Strychnifoliae), *Xiang Fu* (Rhizoma Cyperi Rotundi), *Yin Yang Huo* (Herba Epimedii), *Chao Bai Shao* (Radix Paeoniae Lactiflorae, stir-fried), and *Dang Gui* (Radix Angelicae Sinensis).
6. For very oily or greasy skin, add *Wu Wei Zi* (Fructus Schisandrae), *Yin Chen Hao* (Herba Artemisiae Scopariae) and *Hu Zhang* (Radix et Rhizoma Polygoni Cuspidati).

EXTERNAL TREATMENT

- For lesions manifesting mainly as papules with a few pustules, apply *San Huang Xi Ji* (Three Yellows Wash Preparation) or *Cuo Chuang Xi Ji* (Acne Wash Preparation) to the affected area.
- For lesions manifesting mainly as nodules, cysts and scars, apply *Hei Bu Yao Gao* (Black Cloth Medicated Paste), *Du Jiao Lian Gao* (Giant Typhonium Paste) or *Si Huang Gao* (Four Yellows Paste) to the affected area.

ACUPUNCTURE

Selection of points based on pattern identification

- For Heat in the Lung channel, select GV-14 Dazhui and BL-20 Pishu.
- For Heat in the Spleen and Stomach, select ST-36 Zusanli and LI-4 Hegu.
- For disharmony of the Chong and Ren vessels, select SP-6 Sanyinjiao and BL-23 Shenshu.

Selection of points on the affected channels

LI-11 Quchi, LI-4 Hegu, SP-6 Sanyinjiao, BL-2 Cuanzhu,ⁱ and LI-20 Yingxiang.

Selection of adjacent points

EX-HN-5 Taiyang,ⁱⁱ BL-2 Cuanzhu,ⁱ LI-20 Yingxiang, SI-18 Quanliao, EX-HN-3 Yintang,ⁱⁱⁱ and ST-6 Jiache.

Technique

Apply the even method for all points and retain the needles for 30 minutes. Treat once a day. A course consists of seven treatment sessions.

Explanation

- GV-14 Dazhui, LI-4 Hegu and BL-2 Cuanzhuⁱ clear and diffuse Heat from the Lungs.
- LI-11 Quchi, ST-36 Zusanli, BL-20 Pishu, ST-6 Jiache, and LI-20 Yingxiang clear Heat and transform Dampness.
- BL-23 Shenshu and SP-6 Sanyinjiao regulate the Chong and Ren vessels.
- The adjacent points cool the Blood and reduce redness, dissipate Wind and alleviate itching.

EAR ACUPUNCTURE

Selection of points based on disease differentiation

Main points: Lung and Kidney (both bilateral).

Auxiliary points

- For pustules, add Heart.
- For constipation, add Large Intestine.
- For greasy skin, add Spleen.
- For painful periods, add Liver and Endocrine.

Empirical points

Points: Lung (bilateral), Ear-Shenmen, Sympathetic Nerve, Endocrine, and Subcortex.

Technique: Retain the needles for 30 minutes. Treat once every two days. A course consists of ten treatment sessions.

EAR ACUPUNCTURE WITH SEEDS

Points: Endocrine, Subcortex, Lung, Heart, and Stomach.

Technique: Attach *Wang Bu Liu Xing* (Semen Vaccariae Segetalis) seeds to the points with adhesive tape and ask the patient to press the seeds gently for one minute each day. Change the seeds once every five days. A course consists of seven treatment sessions (35 days).

PRICKING TO BLEED METHOD

Points: BL-13 Feishu (bilateral) and GV-14 Dazhui.

Technique: After routine sterilization, prick the points with a small gauge three-edged needle to cause slight

ⁱ Also known as Zanzhu.

ⁱⁱ M-HN-9 according to the system employed by the Shanghai College of Traditional Chinese Medicine.

ⁱⁱⁱ M-HN-3 according to the system employed by the Shanghai College of Traditional Chinese Medicine.

bleeding. Treat once every three days. A course consists of five treatment sessions.

PRICKING METHOD

Points: BL-12 Fengmen, BL-13 Feishu (bilateral, since the disease is closely related to the Lungs), BL-14 Jueyinshu, BL-15 Xinshu, BL-17 Geshu, BL-18 Ganshu, BL-19 Danshu, BL-20 Pishu, BL-21 Weishu, BL-22 Sanjiaoshu, BL-23 Shenshu, and BL-24 Qihaihu.

Technique: After routine sterilization, prick five to seven of the points with a three-edged needle in each treatment session; alternate with the other points in the following treatment sessions. Treat once every three days. A course consists of seven treatment sessions.

PRICKING AND CUPPING

Main points: BL-14 Dazhui, GV-4 Mingmen, GV-8 Jinsuo, GV-9 Zhiyang, GV-11 Shendao, and GV-12 Shenzhu.

Auxiliary points: Blood Pressure-Lowering Groove on the back of the ear and Hot Point on the ear.

Technique: After routine sterilization, prick the main points with a three-edged needle to cause slight bleeding. Apply cupping over these points immediately, keeping the cups in place for five minutes. Prick the auxiliary points to cause slight bleeding; no cupping is applied afterwards. Treat once every three days. A course consists of seven treatment sessions.

Clinical notes

- Acne is a common skin disease among younger people and tends to recur during treatment. The treatment principle should therefore include regulating menstruation for women and regulating the gastrointestinal function for men.
- External treatment and acupuncture can be used to assist in the dispersal and elimination of lesions and to shorten the course of treatment.

Advice for the patient

- Cut down on intake of fatty and sweet food and eat more vegetables and fruit in order to regulate the digestive function.
- Wash the face frequently with warm water or apply a wet compress; do not rub the skin or press the spots with the hands.
- Squeezing the lesions may leave permanent pitted scarring.
- Steroid, bromide or iodine medication is contraindicated.

Case histories

Case 1

Patient

Male, aged 20.

Clinical manifestations

The patient had been healthy throughout his childhood and adolescence. At the age of 18, red papules and open comedones (blackheads) started to appear on the face. In the following year, successive crops of increasingly severe red papules and pustules appeared. Lesions of different sizes were distributed over the forehead and chin and around the nose. Comedones were noted in the center of some of the papules, which were most densely concentrated around the nose. The patient's face was very greasy. He was keen on sports, had a good appetite and tended to eat large amounts. Accompanying symptoms and signs included dry mouth and dry and smelly stools, with bowel movements only once every few days. The tongue body was red with a thin yellow coating; the pulse was wiry and slippery.

Pattern identification

Heat accumulating in the Lungs and Stomach with external contraction of pathogenic Toxins.

Treatment principle

Clear Heat from the Lungs and Stomach and relieve Toxicity.

Prescription

YIN QIAO SAN JIA JIAN

Honeysuckle and Forsythia Powder

Jin Yin Hua (Flos Lonicerae) 15g
Lian Qiao (Fructus Forsythiae Suspensae) 15g
Pu Gong Ying (Herba Taraxaci cum Radice) 30g
Zi Hua Di Ding (Herba Viola Yedoensis) 15g
Sang Bai Pi (Cortex Mori Albae Radicis) 15g
Huang Qin (Radix Scutellariae Baicalensis) 10g
Zhi Zi (Fructus Gardeniae Jasminoidis) 10g
Chi Shao (Radix Paeoniae Rubra) 10g
Mu Dan Pi (Cortex Moutan Radicis) 10g
Sheng Di Huang (Radix Rehmanniae Glutinosae) 30g
Gua Lou (Fructus Trichosanthis) 15g
Shu Da Huang (Radix et Rhizoma Rhei Conquutum) 10g
Ye Ju Hua (Flos Chrysanthemi Indici) 15g
Di Gu Pi (Cortex Lycii Radicis) 15g

One bag a day was used to prepare a decoction, taken twice a day.

Second visit

After 14 bags of the prescription, stool was passed once a day and the dry mouth was relieved. No new red papules had appeared. The pustules had disappeared but the oily secretion was still pronounced. Numerous open and closed comedones also remained. The patient was told to continue with the prescription for another 28 days.

In addition, *Liu Lei Xi Ji* (Sulfur and Resorcinol Wash

Preparation) and *Liu Liu Ding* (Chloramphenicol Salicylate Tincture) were applied externally once a day.^{iv}

Third visit

The red papules had disappeared completely, leaving pale pigmented spots. The skin was still greasy and slightly red on both sides of the nose. The prescription was modified by removing *Gua Lou* (Fructus Trichosanthis) and *Shu Da Huang* (Radix et Rhizoma Rhei Conquutum) and adding *Mei Gui Hua* (Flos Rosae Rugosae) 10g, *Ji Guan Hua* (Flos Celosiae Cristatae) 10g and *Ling Xiao Hua* (Flos Campsitis) 10g. The patient followed the revised prescription for one month to consolidate the improvement. The external wash prescription was changed to washing the face with alkaline soap three times a day. The patient was also advised not to eat deep-fried food and sweet food.

Outcome

At the end of the course, the condition had resolved.

Discussion

Zhang Zhili considers that acne is closely related to Damp-Heat in the Lungs and Stomach. This is a typical case of Heat accumulating in the Lungs and Stomach. The patient was young, strong and full of energy, with the result that Yang-Heat tended to be exuberant.

In the prescription, *Sang Bai Pi* (Cortex Mori Albae Radicis), *Di Gu Pi* (Cortex Lycii Radicis), *Huang Qin* (Radix Scutellariae Baicalensis), and *Zhi Zi* (Fructus Gardeniae Jasminoidis) clear Heat in the Lungs and Stomach; *Jin Yin Hua* (Flos Lonicerae), *Lian Qiao* (Fructus Forsythiae Suspensae), *Pu Gong Ying* (Herba Taraxaci cum Radice), *Zi Hua Di Ding* (Herba Violae Yedoensis), and *Ye Ju Hua* (Flos Chrysanthemi Indici) clear Heat and relieve Toxicity; *Shu Da Huang* (Radix et Rhizoma Rhei Conquutum) and *Gua Lou* (Fructus Trichosanthis) clear Excess-Heat in the Stomach; and *Chi Shao* (Radix Paeoniae Rubra), *Mu Dan Pi* (Cortex Moutan Radicis) and *Sheng Di Huang* (Radix Rehmanniae Glutinosae) cool the Blood and relieve Toxicity. The whole prescription achieved the effect of clearing Heat accumulated in the Lungs and Stomach. *Mei Gui Hua* (Flos Rosae Rugosae), *Ji Guan Hua* (Flos Celosiae Cristatae) and *Ling Xiao Hua* (Flos Campsitis) were used later to treat oily skin due to exuberant Stomach-Fire.¹

Case 2

Patient

Male, aged 21.

Clinical manifestations

Papules started to appear on the patient's face at the age of 16 with intermittent exacerbation and alleviation. The papules gradually increased in number and turned redder, some of them becoming confluent. When the papules burst, a white

secretion came out. The patient was diagnosed with cystic acne with secondary inflammation.

Examination revealed closed comedones, papules and pustules of different sizes concentrated on the forehead and both cheeks. A number of hard nodules 10mm in diameter were noted on various parts of the face. Some of the nodules were mobile and discharged a white plug when squeezed. The patient's face was very greasy. Accompanying symptoms and signs included dry mouth and a liking for cold drinks. Stool and urine were normal. The tongue body was red with a white and greasy coating; the pulse was wiry and slippery.

Pattern identification

Damp-Heat in the Lungs and Stomach, external contraction of pathogenic Toxins, Blood-Heat accumulating and binding.

Treatment principle

Clear Damp-Heat in the Lungs and Stomach, cool the Blood and relieve Toxicity, soften hardness and dissipate lumps.

Prescription ingredients

Sang Bai Pi (Cortex Mori Albae Radicis) 15g
Di Gu Pi (Cortex Lycii Radicis) 15g
Huang Qin (Radix Scutellariae Baicalensis) 15g
Zhi Zi (Fructus Gardeniae Jasminoidis) 10g
Huang Lian (Rhizoma Coptidis) 10g
Ye Ju Hua (Flos Chrysanthemi Indici) 15g
Ji Guan Hua (Flos Celosiae Cristatae) 10g
Jin Yin Hua (Flos Lonicerae) 15g
Lian Qiao (Fructus Forsythiae Suspensae) 15g
Pu Gong Ying (Herba Taraxaci cum Radice) 15g
Zi Hua Di Ding (Herba Violae Yedoensis) 10g
Chi Shao (Radix Paeoniae Rubra) 10g
Mu Dan Pi (Cortex Moutan Radicis) 10g
Xia Ku Cao (Spica Prunellae Vulgaris) 15g
Che Qian Zi (Semen Plantaginis) 15g
Yi Yi Ren (Semen Coicis Lachryma-jobi) 30g

One bag a day was used to prepare a decoction, taken twice a day.

External treatment

The patient was also told to apply *Liu Lei Xi Ji* (Sulfur and Resorcinol Wash Preparation)^v externally to the papules and pustules once a day. For the hard nodules, a mixture of equal proportions of *Hei Bu Yao Gao* (Black Cloth Medicated Paste) and *Hua Du San Gao* (Powder Paste for Transforming Toxicity) was prepared for application twice a day.^{vi}

Second visit

After three days, the skin lesions had improved, and some of the papules and pustules had begun to subside. The patient was told to continue the prescription and the external applications for another seven days. The hard nodules and cystic area began to shrink and flatten. He was told to continue for another four days.

^{iv} These preparations are usually only available through a registered pharmacist or registered doctor.

^v This preparation is usually only available through a registered pharmacist or registered doctor.

^{vi} In those countries where the use of certain ingredients contained in this powder paste are not permitted, it can be replaced by *Fu Rong Gao* (Cotton Rose Flower Paste) combined with *Da Bai Du Gao* (Major Toxicity-Vanquishing Syrup).

Third visit

After 14 bags overall, most of the lesions were flat and no new papules had appeared; the oily secretion was disappearing and the cysts were smaller. The tongue body was dark red with a white coating; the pulse was wiry and slippery. The prescription was modified by removing *Ji Guan Hua* (Flos *Celosiae Cristatae*) and *Huang Qin* (Rhizoma *Coptidis*) and adding *Dan Shen* (Radix *Salviae Miltiorrhizae*) 15g and *Hong Hua* (Flos *Carthami Tinctorii*) 15g. The external application continued as before.

Outcome

After 14 bags of the amended prescription, the skin lesions had disappeared completely, leaving pale pigmented spots and shallow scarring.

Discussion

The patient in this case had a liking for cold drinks, which caused Damp-Heat in the Lungs and Stomach. This was complicated by external contraction of pathogenic Toxins resulting in Blood-Heat accumulating and binding. Since the disease was in the acute stage manifesting as red papules, pustules and cysts, *Sang Bai Pi* (Cortex *Mori Albae Radicis*), *Di Gu Pi* (Cortex *Lycii Radicis*) and *Huang Qin* (Radix *Scutellariae Baicalensis*) were used initially to clear Lung-Heat, and *Huang Lian* (Rhizoma *Coptidis*) and *Zhi Zi* (Fructus *Gardeniae Jasminoidis*) to clear Stomach-Heat; *Zhi Zi* (Fructus *Gardeniae Jasminoidis*) was also included to clear exuberant Fire in the Triple Burner; *Jin Yin Hua* (Flos *Lonicerae*), *Lian Qiao* (Fructus *Forsythiae Suspensae*), *Pu Gong Ying* (Herba *Taraxaci cum Radice*), *Ye Ju Hua* (Flos *Chrysanthemi Indici*), and *Zi Hua Di Ding* (Herba *Violae Yedoensis*) clear Heat and relieve Toxicity; *Chi Shao* (Radix *Paeoniae Rubra*), *Mu Dan Pi* (Cortex *Moutan Radicis*) and *Xia Ku Cao* (Spica *Prunellae Vulgaris*) cool the Blood, relieve Toxicity and soften hardness; *Che Qian Zi* (Semen *Plantaginis*) and *Yi Yi Ren* (Semen *Coicis Lachryma-jobi*) clear and drain Damp-Heat; and *Ji Guan Hua* (Flos *Celosiae Cristatae*) cools the Blood and clears Heat. The subsequent addition of *Dan Shen* (Radix *Salviae Miltiorrhizae*) and *Hong Hua* (Flos *Carthami Tinctorii*) was made to regulate Qi and invigorate the Blood, soften hardness and dissipate lumps to treat the hard nodules and cysts left when the inflammation subsided.²

Case 3

Patient

Female, aged 18.

Clinical manifestations

Red papules appeared on the patient's face when she was 15 and gradually became worse. The patient was diagnosed with acne by a number of hospitals but treatment with Western medicines was never successful. Three months previously after the patient had gone to a beauty salon, the red papules worsened significantly, with some of them turning into pustules. The papules were distributed symmetrically over the face, being particularly obvious on the cheeks; most of them manifested as closed comedones surrounded by a red border. They were painful to the touch. Accompanying symptoms

and signs included a painful, red and hot face, dry stools, irritability and restlessness, and early and profuse periods. The tongue was red with a white and greasy coating; the pulse was wiry, slippery and rapid.

Pattern identification

Heat Toxins binding and accumulating in the skin.

Prescription ingredients

Jin Yin Hua (Flos *Lonicerae*) 15g
Lian Qiao (Fructus *Forsythiae Suspensae*) 15g
Pu Gong Ying (Herba *Taraxaci cum Radice*) 30g
Zi Hua Di Ding (Herba *Violae Yedoensis*) 10g
Sang Bai Pi (Cortex *Mori Albae Radicis*) 15g
Di Gu Pi (Cortex *Lycii Radicis*) 15g
Huang Qin (Radix *Scutellariae Baicalensis*) 10g
Zhi Zi (Fructus *Gardeniae Jasminoidis*) 10g
Sheng Di Huang (Radix *Rehmanniae Glutinosae*) 30g
Chi Shao (Radix *Paeoniae Rubra*) 15g
Mu Dan Pi (Cortex *Moutan Radicis*) 15g
Gua Lou (Fructus *Trichosanthis*) 15g
Shu Da Huang (Radix et Rhizoma *Rhei Conquium*) 10g
Yi Mu Cao (Herba *Leonuri Heterophylli*) 10g
Ye Ju Hua (Flos *Chrysanthemi Indici*) 15g
Xia Ku Cao (Spica *Prunellae Vulgaris*) 15g
Ling Yang Jiao Fen† (Cornu *Antelopis*, powdered) 0.6g, infused in the prepared decoction

One bag a day was used to prepare a decoction, taken twice a day.

Second visit

After 14 bags, the pustules had disappeared completely. The red papules had become paler and the irritability had disappeared, but the patient still suffered from dry stools. A few new red papules had appeared. The prescription was modified by removing *Lian Qiao* (Fructus *Forsythiae Suspensae*) and *Jin Yin Hua* (Flos *Lonicerae*) and adding *Mei Gui Hua* (Flos *Rosae Rugosae*) 10g and *Huai Hua* (Flos *Sophorae Japonicae*) 30g.

Outcome

After 14 bags of the amended prescription, all the papules had disappeared, leaving pale pigmented spots. The menstrual flow was lighter and the stool was normal. The tongue body was red with a white coating; the pulse was wiry and slippery. The patient was prescribed *Lian Qiao Bai Du Wan* (Forsythia Pill for Vanquishing Toxicity) 6g, twice a day, and *Dang Gui Ku Shen Wan* (Chinese Angelica Root and Flavescent Sophora Root Pill) 9g, twice a day, for one month to consolidate the improvement.

Discussion

As stated in the discussion of Case 1 above, Dr. Zhang considers that Damp-Heat in the Lungs and Stomach is part of the etiology of all cases of acne and therefore materia medica for clearing Damp-Heat in the Lungs and Stomach should be included in the treatment. In this prescription, *Sang Bai Pi* (Cortex *Mori Albae Radicis*), *Di Gu Pi* (Cortex *Lycii Radicis*), *Huang Qin* (Radix *Scutellariae Baicalensis*), and *Zhi Zi* (Fructus *Gardeniae Jasminoidis*) serve this purpose. In addition, *Jin Yin Hua* (Flos *Lonicerae*), *Lian Qiao* (Fructus *Forsythiae Suspensae*), *Pu Gong Ying* (Herba *Taraxaci cum Radice*), *Zi Hua Di*

Ding (Herba *Violae Yedoensis*), and *Ye Ju Hua* (Flos *Chrysanthemi Indici*) clear Heat and relieve Toxicity; and *Gua Lou* (Fructus *Trichosanthis*) and *Shu Da Huang* (Radix et Rhizoma *Rhei Conquutum*) clear Excess-Heat in the Stomach. In addition, because the patient presented with a red and hot face, red papules with pustules, and pain due to Heat Toxins accumulating and binding, *Sheng Di Huang* (Radix *Rehmanniae Glutinosae*), *Chi Shao* (Radix *Paeoniae Rubra*), *Mu Dan Pi* (Cortex *Moutan Radicis*), and *Ling Yang Jiao Fen*† (Cornu *Antelopis*, powdered) were included to cool the Blood and relieve Toxicity. *Xia Ku Cao* (Spica *Prunellae Vulgaris*) was used to dissipate lumps and *Yi Mu Cao* (Herba *Leonuri Heterophylli*) to regulate and harmonize the Chong and Ren vessels. *Mei Gui Hua* (Flos *Rosae Rugosae*) and *Huai Hua* (Flos *Sophorae Japonicae*) were added to guide the other ingredients upward and assist in elimination of the lesions.³

Modern clinical experience

TREATMENT BASED ON PATTERN IDENTIFICATION

1. Li identified four patterns.⁴

- **Accumulation of Heat in the Lungs and Stomach**

Prescription

PI PA QING FEI YIN JIA JIAN

Loquat Beverage for Clearing Heat from the Lungs, with modifications

Pi Pa Ye (Folium *Eriobotryae Japonicae*) 10g
Sang Bai Pi (Cortex *Mori Albae Radicis*) 10g
Huang Qin (Radix *Scutellariae Baicalensis*) 10g
Zhi Zi (Fructus *Gardeniae Jasminoidis*) 10g
Mu Dan Pi (Cortex *Moutan Radicis*) 10g
Che Qian Cao (Herba *Plantaginis*) 10g
Bai Mao Gen (Rhizoma *Imperatae Cylindrica*) 30g
Shi Gao† (Gypsum *Fibrosus*) 30g, decocted for 30 minutes before adding the other ingredients

- **Exuberant Heat Toxins**

Prescription

WU WEI XIAO DU YIN JIA JIAN

Five-Ingredient Beverage for Dispersing Toxicity, with modifications

Jin Yin Hua (Flos *Lonicerae*) 15g
Lian Qiao (Fructus *Forsythiae Suspensae*) 15g
Pu Gong Ying (Herba *Taraxaci cum Radice*) 15g
Zi Hua Di Ding (Herba *Violae Yedoensis*) 15g
Ye Ju Hua (Flos *Chrysanthemi Indici*) 10g
Pi Pa Ye (Folium *Eriobotryae Japonicae*) 10g
Zhi Zi (Fructus *Gardeniae Jasminoidis*) 10g
Xuan Shen (Radix *Scrophulariae Ningpoensis*) 10g
Huang Qin (Radix *Scutellariae Baicalensis*) 10g

- **Disharmony of the Chong and Ren vessels**

Prescription

SI WU TANG HE PI PA QING FEI YIN JIA JIAN

Four Agents Decoction Combined With Loquat Beverage for Clearing Heat from the Lungs, with modifications

Sheng Di Huang (Radix *Rehmanniae Glutinosae*) 10g
Chi Shao (Radix *Paeoniae Rubra*) 10g
Bai Shao (Radix *Paeoniae Lactiflorae*) 10g
Dang Gui (Radix *Angelicae Sinensis*) 10g
Chuan Xiong (Rhizoma *Ligustici Chuanxiong*) 10g
Nü Zhen Zi (Fructus *Ligustri Lucidi*) 10g
Han Lian Cao (Herba *Ecliptae Prostratae*) 10g
Di Gu Pi (Cortex *Lycii Radicis*) 10g
Pi Pa Ye (Folium *Eriobotryae Japonicae*) 10g

- **Blood stasis and Phlegm congealing**

Prescription

TAO HONG SI WU TANG HE ER CHEN TANG JIA JIAN

Peach Kernel and Safflower Four Agents Decoction Combined With Two Matured Ingredients Decoction, with modifications

Dang Gui (Radix *Angelicae Sinensis*) 10g
Chi Shao (Radix *Paeoniae Rubra*) 10g
Tao Ren (Semen *Persicae*) 10g
Hong Hua (Flos *Carthami Tinctorii*) 10g
Sheng Di Huang (Radix *Rehmanniae Glutinosae*) 10g
Chuan Xiong (Rhizoma *Ligustici Chuanxiong*) 10g
Xiang Fu (Rhizoma *Cyperi Rotundi*) 10g
Fa Ban Xia (Rhizoma *Pinelliae Ternatae Praeparata*) 10g
Chen Pi (Pericarpium *Citri Reticulatae*) 10g
Fu Ling (Sclerotium *Poriae Cocos*) 10g
Jiang Can‡ (Bombyx *Batryticatus*) 10g
Xia Ku Cao (Spica *Prunellae Vulgaris*) 10g
Lian Qiao (Fructus *Forsythiae Suspensae*) 10g

With all patterns, one bag a day of the ingredients was decocted twice for oral administration and then a third time for use as a cold, wet compress on the affected area. A course of treatment lasted for two weeks. Results were seen after two courses.

2. Yu also identified four patterns for the treatment of acne.⁵

- **Liver Depression and Blood stasis**

Prescription ingredients

Chai Hu (Radix *Bupleuri*) 10g
Zhi Zi (Fructus *Gardeniae Jasminoidis*) 10g
Dang Gui (Radix *Angelicae Sinensis*) 6g
Chi Shao (Radix *Paeoniae Rubra*) 6g
Hong Hua (Flos *Carthami Tinctorii*) 6g

Huang Qin (Radix Scutellariae Baicalensis) 10g
Bo He (Herba Menthae Haplocalycis) 3g, added 5 minutes before the end of the decoction process
Chen Pi (Pericarpium Citri Reticulatae) 10g
E Zhu (Rhizoma Curcumae) 6g
Chuan Xiong (Rhizoma Ligustici Chuanxiong) 6g
Gan Cao (Radix Glycyrrhizae) 6g

- **Lung-Heat complicated by invasion of Wind**

Prescription ingredients

Jing Jie (Herba Schizonepetae Tenuifoliae) 10g
Fang Feng (Radix Ledebourieliae Divaricatae) 10g
Bai Zhi (Radix Angelicae Dahuricae) 6g
Jie Geng (Radix Platycodi Grandiflori) 6g
Chuan Xiong (Rhizoma Ligustici Chuanxiong) 10g
Huang Qin (Radix Scutellariae Baicalensis) 10g
Zhi Zi (Fructus Gardeniae Jasminoidis) 10g
Lian Qiao (Fructus Forsythiae Suspensae) 10g
Bo He (Herba Menthae Haplocalycis) 3g, added 5 minutes before the end of the decoction process
Huang Lian (Rhizoma Coptidis) 6g
Gan Cao (Radix Glycyrrhizae) 6g

- **Accumulation of Heat Toxins**

Prescription ingredients

Jin Yin Hua (Flos Lonicerae) 15g
Tian Hua Fen (Radix Trichosanthis) 10g
Zhe Bei Mu (Bulbus Fritillariae Thunbergii) 6g
Dang Gui Wei (Extremitas Radicis Angelicae Sinensis) 10g
Chi Shao (Radix Paeoniae Rubra) 10g
Ze Xie (Rhizoma Alismatis Orientalis) 15g
*Chuan Shan Jia** (Squama Manitis Pentadactylae) 10g
Ru Xiang (Gummi Olibanum) 6g
Mo Yao (Myrrha) 6g
Fang Feng (Radix Ledebourieliae Divaricatae) 6g
Gan Cao (Radix Glycyrrhizae) 6g

- **Deficiency of Vital Qi (Zheng Qi) complicated by Blood stasis and accumulation of Toxins**

Prescription ingredients

Huang Qi (Radix Astragali seu Hedysari) 15g
Gui Zhi (Ramulus Cinnamomi Cassiae) 6g
Dang Gui (Radix Angelicae Sinensis) 10g
Chi Shao (Radix Paeoniae Rubra) 10g
*Chuan Shan Jia** (Squama Manitis Pentadactylae) 10g
Ru Xiang (Gummi Olibanum) 6g
Mo Yao (Myrrha) 6g
Bai Zhi (Radix Angelicae Dahuricae) 6g
Zhe Bei Mu (Bulbus Fritillariae Thunbergii) 6g
Gan Cao (Radix Glycyrrhizae) 6g

With all patterns, one bag a day was used to prepare a decoction, taken twice a day. A course of treatment

lasted five to seven days. Results were seen after four courses.

3. **Zha** divided the disease into three patterns.⁶

- **Wind-Heat in the Lung channel**

Treatment principle

Dredge Wind, diffuse the Lungs and clear Heat.

Prescription

PI PA QING FEI YIN JIA JIAN

Loquat Beverage for Clearing Heat from the Lungs, with modifications

Pi Pa Ye (Folium Eriobotryae Japonicae) 10g
Sang Bai Pi (Cortex Mori Albae Radicis) 10g
Huang Qin (Radix Scutellariae Baicalensis) 10g
Lian Qiao (Fructus Forsythiae Suspensae) 10g
Mu Dan Pi (Cortex Moutan Radicis) 10g
Sheng Di Huang (Radix Rehmanniae Glutinosae) 10g
Di Gu Pi (Cortex Lycii Radicis) 10g
Gan Cao (Radix Glycyrrhizae) 6g

- **Accumulation and binding of Damp-Heat**

Treatment principle

Clear Heat, transform Dampness and regulate the functions of the Fu organs.

Prescription

YIN CHEN HAO TANG JIA JIAN

Oriental Wormwood Decoction, with modifications

Yin Chen Hao (Herba Artemisiae Scopariae) 10g
Yi Yi Ren (Semen Coicis Lachryma-jobi) 15g
Dang Gui (Radix Angelicae Sinensis) 10g
Ku Shen (Radix Sophorae Flavescens) 15g
Zhi Zi (Fructus Gardeniae Jasminoidis) 10g
Huang Bai (Cortex Phellodendri) 10g
Ye Ju Hua (Flos Chrysanthemi Indici) 10g
Ji Guan Hua (Flos Celosiae Cristatae) 10g
Jie Geng (Radix Platycodi Grandiflori) 3g
Zi Hua Di Ding (Herba Violae Yedoensis) 10g
Chen Pi (Pericarpium Citri Reticulatae) 10g
Gan Cao (Radix Glycyrrhizae) 6g

- **Phlegm-Damp congealing and binding**

Treatment principle

Fortify the Spleen, transform Phlegm and eliminate Dampness.

Prescription

SHEN LING BAI ZHU SAN JIA JIAN

Ginseng, Poria and White Atractylodes Powder, with modifications

Bai Zhu (Rhizoma Atractylodis Macrocephalae) 10g
Fu Ling (Sclerotium Poriae Cocos) 10g

Yi Yi Ren (Semen Coicis Lachryma-jobi) 20g
Sha Ren (Fructus Amomi) 6g, added 5 minutes before
 the end of the decoction process
Shan Yao (Radix Dioscoreae Oppositae) 15g
Jie Geng (Radix Platycodi Grandiflori) 3g
Xia Ku Cao (Spica Prunellae Vulgaris) 6g
Hai Zao (Herba Sargassi) 10g
Mu Li† (Concha Ostreae) 15g
Chen Pi (Pericarpium Citri Reticulatae) 10g
Lian Qiao (Fructus Forsythiae Suspensae) 10g
Ban Xia (Rhizoma Pinelliae Ternatae) 6g

With all patterns, one bag a day was used to prepare a decoction, taken twice a day for one month.

BASIC FORMULAE MODIFIED IN ACCORDANCE WITH SYMPTOMS

1. **Sun** formulated the following basic prescription to invigorate the Blood and clear Heat from the Lungs.⁷

Prescription ingredients

Chuan Xiong (Rhizoma Ligustici Chuanxiong) 5-10g
Hu Zhang (Radix et Rhizoma Polygoni Cuspidati) 15g
Shan Zha (Fructus Crataegi) 15-30g
Tu Da Huang (Radix Rumicis Madaio) 10g
Sang Ye (Folium Mori Albae) 10g
Sang Bai Pi (Cortex Mori Albae Radicis) 10g
Chan Tui‡ (Periostracum Cicadae) 10g
Huang Qin (Radix Scutellariae Baicalensis) 5g
Shi Gao‡ (Gypsum Fibrosum) 15g, decocted for
 30 minutes before adding the other ingredients
Huang Lian (Rhizoma Coptidis) 3g
Bai Hua She She Cao (Herba Hedyotidis Diffusae) 30g

Modifications

- For white comedones, *Qiang Huo* (Rhizoma et Radix Notopterygii) 3g, *Yi Yi Ren* (Semen Coicis Lachryma-jobi) 15g and *Fu Ling* (Sclerotium Poriae Cocos) 10g were added.
- For red papules, *Chi Shao* (Radix Paeoniae Rubra) 10g, *Mu Dan Pi* (Cortex Moutan Radicis) 10g and *Dan Shen* (Radix Salviae Miltiorrhizae) 10g were added.
- For pustules, *Bai Jiang Cao* (Herba Patriniae cum Radice) 15g and *Shu Da Huang* (Radix et Rhizoma Rhei Conquutum) 10g were added.
- For nodules and cysts, *Tao Ren* (Semen Persicae) 10g and *Hong Hua* (Flos Carthami Tinctorii) 5g were added.
- For pale residual pigmentation, *Gan Cao* (Radix Glycyrrhizae) 3g and *Bai Zhi* (Radix Angelicae Dahuricae) 10g were added.

One bag a day was used to prepare a decoction, taken twice a day. Initial results were seen after 15 days.

2. **Ou** treated acne with a basic formula and modified it according to the pattern involved.⁸

Basic prescription

AN CHUANG JING TANG

Acne-Cleansing Decoction

Bai Hua She She Cao (Herba Hedyotidis Diffusae) 20g
Jin Yin Hua (Flos Lonicerae) 15g
Ban Bian Lian (Herba Lobeliae Chinensis cum Radice) 15g
Pu Gong Ying (Herba Taraxaci cum Radice) 15g
Zhe Bei Mu (Bulbus Fritillariae Thunbergii) 15g
Zao Jiao Ci (Spina Gleditsiae Sinensis) 15g
Hai Zao (Herba Sargassi) 12g
Mo Yao (Myrrha) 10g
Xuan Shen (Radix Scrophulariae Ningpoensis) 30g

Modifications

- For Blood-Dryness due to Wind-Heat, *Bo He* (Herba Menthae Haplocalycis) 6g, *Lian Qiao* (Fructus Forsythiae Suspensae) 10g, *Zi Cao* (Radix Arnebiae seu Lithospermi) 10g, and *Chan Tui*‡ (Periostracum Cicadae) 10g were added.
- For exuberant Heat Toxins, *Huang Lian* (Rhizoma Coptidis) 10g, *Da Huang* (Radix et Rhizoma Rhei) 10g, *Yi Yi Ren* (Semen Coicis Lachryma-jobi) 15g, and *Dong Gua Ren* (Semen Benincasae Hispidae) 15g were added.
- For Blood stasis and binding of Phlegm, *Bai Jie Zi* (Semen Sinapis Albae) 10g, *San Qi* (Radix Notoginseng) 6g, *Wu Gong*‡ (Scolopendra Subspinipes) 3g, and *Quan Xie*‡ (Buthus Martensi) 3g were added.
- For internal accumulation of Phlegm-Damp and turbid Dampness, *She Chuang Zi* (Fructus Cnidii Monnieri) 6g, *Bai Jie Zi* (Semen Sinapis Albae) 10g, *Shan Zha* (Fructus Crataegi) 10g, and *Ku Shen* (Radix Sophorae Flavescens) 10g were added.
- For Phlegm congealing and Blood stasis due to insufficiency of Qi and Blood, *Huang Qi* (Radix Astragali seu Hedysari) 15g, *Dang Shen* (Radix Codonopsis Pilosulae) 10g, *Dang Gui* (Radix Angelicae Sinensis) 10g, and *San Qi* (Radix Notoginseng) 6g were added.

One bag a day was used to prepare a decoction, taken twice a day.

External prescription

AN CHUANG JING TU MO JI

Mask Preparation for Cleansing Acne

Huang Lian (Rhizoma Coptidis)
Da Huang (Radix et Rhizoma Rhei)
Mo Yao (Myrrha)
Zao Jiao Ci (Spina Gleditsiae Sinensis)
San Qi (Radix Notoginseng)

Liquid extracts of these herbs were added to polyvinyl alcohol or other base substances. The mask was applied to the face every evening and washed off the following morning. Results were seen after 7 to 15 days.

3. **Guo** formulated a basic prescription to clear Damp-Heat from the Lungs and Stomach.⁹

Prescription ingredients

Pi Pa Ye (Folium Eriobotryae Japonicae) 10g
Sang Bai Pi (Cortex Mori Albae Radicis) 10g
Huang Qin (Radix Scutellariae Baicalensis) 10g
Zhi Zi (Fructus Gardeniae Jasminoidis) 10g
Chi Shao (Radix Paeoniae Rubra) 10g
Ku Shen (Radix Sophorae Flavescentis) 10g
Ye Ju Hua (Flos Chrysanthemi Indici) 8g
Huang Lian (Rhizoma Coptidis) 6g
Bai Mao Gen (Rhizoma Imperatae Cylindrica) 30g
Huai Hua (Flos Sophorae Japonicae) 15g

Modifications

1. For constipation, *Da Huang* (Radix et Rhizoma Rhei) 6g was added 10 minutes before the end of the decoction process.
2. For severe infection, *Pu Gong Ying* (Herba Taraxaci cum Radice) 15g and *Zi Hua Di Ding* (Herba Violae Yedoensis) 15g were added.
3. For cysts, *Xia Ku Cao* (Spica Prunellae Vulgaris) 15g and *Zhe Bei Mu* (Bulbus Fritillariae Thunbergii) 10g were added.
4. For seborrhea, *Yi Yi Ren* (Semen Coicis Lachryma-jobi) 15g, *Zhi Ke* (Fructus Citri Aurantii) 10g and *Bai Zhu* (Rhizoma Atractylodis Macrocephalae) 10g were added.

One bag a day was used to prepare a decoction, taken twice a day. Results were seen after 15 days.

4. **Li** formulated a basic prescription to clear Heat and dry Dampness.¹⁰

Prescription ingredients

Huang Bai (Cortex Phellodendri) 15g
Cang Zhu (Rhizoma Atractylodis) 15g
Yi Yi Ren (Semen Coicis Lachryma-jobi) 50g
Jin Yin Hua (Flos Lonicerae) 50g
Pu Gong Ying (Herba Taraxaci cum Radice) 50g
Lian Qiao (Fructus Forsythiae Suspensae) 25g

Modifications

1. For aggravation of lesions prior to menstruation, *Chai Hu* (Radix Bupleuri) 15g, *Dang Gui* (Radix Angelicae Sinensis) 15g, *Mu Dan Pi* (Cortex Moutan Radicis) 10g, and *Sheng Di Huang* (Radix Rehmanniae Glutinosae) 25g were added.
2. For constipation, *Da Huang* (Radix et Rhizoma Rhei)

5g and *Huang Qin* (Radix Scutellariae Baicalensis) 15g were added.

3. For itching on the face, *Fang Feng* (Radix Ledebouriae Divaricatae) 15g, *Chi Shao* (Radix Paeoniae Rubra) 10g and *Dan Shen* (Radix Salviae Miltiorrhizae) 30g were added.

One bag was used to prepare a decoction, taken twice a day. Results were seen between 7 and 28 days.

SPECIAL PRESCRIPTIONS

1. **Zhang** reported on his treatment of facial acne in women.¹¹

Prescription

QING GAN DA YU TANG

Decoction for Clearing Heat from the Liver and Driving Out Depression

Chen Pi (Pericarpium Citri Reticulatae) 6g
Ju Hua (Flos Chrysanthemi Morifolii) 10g
Mu Dan Pi (Cortex Moutan Radicis) 10g
Zhi Zi (Fructus Gardeniae Jasminoidis) 10g
Chai Hu (Radix Bupleuri) 10g
Dang Gui (Radix Angelicae Sinensis) 12g
Bai Shao (Radix Paeoniae Lactiflorae) 12g
Bai Zhu (Rhizoma Atractylodis Macrocephalae) 12g
Fu Ling (Sclerotium Poriae Cocos) 12g
Gan Cao (Radix Glycyrrhizae) 5g
Sheng Jiang (Rhizoma Zingiberis Officinalis Recens) 3g
Bo He (Herba Menthae Haplocalycis) 3g, added 5 minutes before the end of the decoction process

One bag a day was used to prepare a decoction, taken twice a day. Fourteen days made up a course of treatment. Results were seen after one to two courses.

2. **Liu** formulated an empirical prescription to treat acne.¹²

Prescription

KE CUO TANG

Overcoming Acne Decoction

Pi Pa Ye (Folium Eriobotryae Japonicae) 10g
Ku Shen (Radix Sophorae Flavescentis) 10g
Dan Shen (Radix Salviae Miltiorrhizae) 10g
Lian Qiao (Fructus Forsythiae Suspensae) 20g
Jin Yin Hua (Flos Lonicerae) 20g
Chan Tui† (Periostracum Cicadae) 6g
Tian Hua Fen (Radix Trichosanthis) 6g
Chi Shao (Radix Paeoniae Rubra) 12g
Pu Gong Ying (Herba Taraxaci cum Radice) 15g

One bag a day was used to prepare a decoction, taken twice a day. Seven days made up a course of treatment. Results were seen after three courses.