

# Clinical Experience of Applying the Theory of "Fire and Yuan Qi are Mutually Exclusive" in the Treatment of Deficiency-Heat Skin Diseases

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**Abstract:** Lee Dong-won's "Fire and Yuan qi are mutually exclusive" discusses the pathological mechanism of internal Yin fire due to the failure of Yuan qi. He proposed the use of sweet warmth to remove heat in the treatment of this type of internal fever, and the representative formula is Buzhong Yiqi Decoction. In skin diseases, patients often do not have symptoms of "fever" but have rashes that are red, swollen, and thickened due to deficiency heat. The "heat" of internal injury fever is not just a simple "fever" disease. Any internal injury fever with heat evidence can be treated with pungent, sweet and warm products to replenish the Yuan qi, so as to achieve the purpose of smooth flow of qi and the elimination of Yin fire. In-depth understanding of the theory of "Fire and Yuan qi are mutually exclusive" and its application in the clinical treatment of skin diseases can improve the clinical efficacy of Chinese medicine in the treatment of skin diseases.

**Keywords:** Yuan qi, Yin fire, fire and vital energy are not mutually Fire and Yuan qi are mutually exclusive, skin diseases, sweet warmth and heat removal, dialectical treatment

Chinese medicine has a long history of evidence-based treatment of dermatological diseases with proven efficacy. At present, the evidence-based treatment proposed in the textbooks of TCM dermatology, although it has a certain guiding effect on clinical practice, is still insufficient to cope with the complex and changing clinical situation. In order to improve the clinical efficacy of TCM in the treatment of dermatological diseases, it is necessary to study the evidence-based treatment of TCM in depth. The development of Chinese medicine was deeply influenced by ancient Chinese philosophy. The Nei Jing laid the foundation of Chinese medicine, and the Treatise on Typhoid established the discriminatory treatment of Chinese medicine, and later medical practitioners continued to improve the discriminatory treatment on its basis. Therefore, it is crucial to improve the level of Syndrome differentiation and treatment by studying the classical ancient texts of TCM and their related theories. The core theories of the Treatise on the Spleen and Stomach are the "theory of Yuan qi" and the "theory of Yin fire in the spleen and stomach". It discusses the pathogenesis of all diseases due to the deficiency of the spleen and stomach, resulting in the weakening of the Yuan qi and the deregulation of the qi flow, and discusses the characteristics of the treatment of spleen and stomach diseases. We have found in the clinical practice of dermatology that the theory of "Fire and Yuan qi are mutually exclusive" is effective in treating deficiency-heat type of dermatology.

## 1. Example of Experimental Cases

Case 1: The patient, female, 42 years old, complaining of facial erythema with burning and itching for more than 2 years, aggravated by heat, and had intermittently used topical hormone cream. She is still using the cream externally, and her condition varies from time to time. 2 weeks ago, she took oral herbal medicine to clear heat and cool blood, and in the past 1 week, her facial burning sensation has increased, accompanied by itching and tightness. At the time of consultation, the face was red and swollen, with numerous erythematous spots and scattered red papules. The patient hates cold and likes warmth, self-conscious weakness, regular menstruation, no panic attacks, no dizziness, poor appetite, and normal defecation and urination. On examination of the tongue and pulse, the tongue is pale, the tongue coating is thin and white, and the pulse is weak and floating. The evidence is due to deficiency of the spleen and stomach, the body is not full of Yuan qi and Yin fire is generated. The treatment is to

use sweet warmth to remove heat, and at the same time nourish Yin and clear heat. This formula is based on the formula of tonifying Zhong Yi Qi Tang with addition and reduction, with Dudanpi 10g, Gardenia 10g, Duckweed 30g, Forsythia 10g. And stop using hormone creams. After 1 week, the facial swelling disappeared, the color of erythema became lighter, there were still red papules, the burning sensation on the face was reduced, and itching was felt. Take 1 week, facial recurrence of red papules, less than the initial diagnosis, considered as a normal reaction after discontinuation of hormones, to the above plus dahurica 10g to reduce swelling, 1 week after the papules significantly reduced, continue to take the original prescription, 1 month after follow-up cured.

Facial hormone dependent dermatitis is because of hormone misuse, abuse, resulting in facial skin barrier damage inflammatory skin disease. It manifests as local capillary dilation, red and swollen rash, and the patient feels burning and discomfort. Most TCM practitioners consider that hormones are substances that help generate Yang and heat, and their long-term external use causes localized heat to turn into fire, which manifests as a red and swollen rash, and the prolonged heat damages Yin and turns into dryness, causing dryness and itching of the skin. The disease is characterized by dampness, heat and stasis, and the treatment is based on clearing heat and cooling the blood.[1] so many doctors in the past to clear heat, cool the blood and activate the blood as the method of treatment of this disease, can still achieve certain results. However, we found in the clinic that there is a group of patients who are treated with the method of clearing heat and cooling the Blood to invigorate the Blood, but the initial treatment is effective, but later it is aggravated.

For example, the above patient, with obvious facial redness and swelling at the initial diagnosis, complained that he had taken oral herbal medicines to clear heat and cool the Blood, and when asked about his medical history, the patient complained that he was afraid of cold, felt tired, and occasionally had shortness of breath. The patient's body is deficient in the spleen and stomach, the Yuan qi is not full, the middle qi is sunken, the qi and yin and yang are out of balance, and the fire is out of control, following the Yang Ming meridian and disturbing the head and face, plus hormones and other products that help Yang, and the dermatitis develops. The patient's body is deficient, and after taking cooling products, the bitter-cold products further hurt her Yuan qi, which in turn aggravates the imbalance of yin and yang in the body, and the "Yin-fire" becomes more vigorous, so the patient's condition is recurrent and difficult to be cured. Therefore, the formula is given to tonify the spleen and stomach, help the Yuan qi, regulate the yin and yang, so that the Yin fire submerged, the formula astragalus, ginseng, roasted licorice are tonic qi products, Lee Dong-won called "the holy medicine to get rid of damp heat and annoying heat", accompanied by white atractylodes to tonify the qi and strengthen the spleen, ascending marijuana, Chai Hu to ascend the sunken middle qi, spleen and Stomach Health, clear yang ascending, then the internal heat will be removed. Add Dudanpi, Gardenia nourish Yin and clear fire, Duckweed diffuse head and facial wind-heat, Forsythia clear heat and detoxify swelling. The main purpose is to nourish the spleen and stomach and replenish the Yuan qi, so that the vital energy of the Zhongjiao is sufficient, the qi can rise and fall and be harmonized, accompanied by heat-clearing products to draw down the yin fire and achieve a balance of yin and yang in the body. This method is based on tonifying and clearing heat at the same time, reflecting the TCM treatment principle of using heat because of heat and attacking and tonifying at the same time.

Case 2: The patient, male, 22 years old, complaining of intermittent wind masses all over the body for 3 years, complaining that the rash would develop in response to heat and would subside on its own after a few hours. At the time of consultation, the rash had subsided. On examination of the tongue and pulse, the tongue was light red, the fur was thin and white, the left inch and ruler pulse was weak, and the right Guan pulse was floating. The patient is cold, has occasional dry mouth, no shortness of breath, no fatigue, no insomnia and irritability, normal diet, normal urination and defecation. This is a case of weakness of the spleen and stomach, with internal Yin fire and stagnation of liver fire. The principle of treatment is to nourish the spleen with sweet warmth, accompanied by draining the liver and clearing heat. Chinese herbal medicine: Liu Jun Zi Tang, Addition of Shengma 10g, Chaihu 10g, Huangqin 10g, Huanglian 6g, Sangye 10g, Chantui 10g, Jiangcan 10g, Fangfeng 10g, Baixianpi 10g. Combined antihistamine treatment above. After 7 doses, the patient reported a significant reduction in the rash and relief from itching after taking seven doses of the drug and the itching was alleviated, so the antihistamine was stopped and the original prescription was taken for 1 week. When the patient returned to the clinic, he was told that he was basically pruritus-free and that his treatment was satisfactory.

The chronic urticaria is called "addiction rash" in Chinese medicine, which is considered by modern medicine to be a recurring limited edema reaction, often accompanied by itching, and can often subside within a day. According to Chinese medicine, addiction rash is mostly caused by the attack of wind evil

on the human body due to the lack of solidity of the body surface. Treatment is based on removing wind and dispersing cold, or removing wind and clearing heat and relieving itching. Some doctors also suggest that the disorder of the internal organs is also an important cause of addiction rash. Inadequate lung qi, liver and blood deficiency, and spleen deficiency and internal heat can all lead to wind stagnation in the skin, resulting in addiction rash. The above patient complained of a rash in the presence of heat, the rash is red in color, accompanied by dry mouth and bitterness, but usually afraid of cold, loss of appetite, light red tongue, thin white fur, pulse diagnosis is floating signs, suggesting that the identification should be a combination of deficiency and reality. The patient's right guan pulse is floating, with signs of external sensation, the left side pulse inch guan ulnar pulse with weak, considered as internal injury to the spleen and stomach, insufficient Yuan qi, the glory of the guard is not solid, so that the skin cold and heat disorders, the "spleen and stomach theory" said "the spleen and stomach gas downflow, so that the grain gas can not rise floating, is the spring birth of the order does not work, there is no yang to protect its glory, it is not allowed to wind and cold, it is cold and heat." The disease of the spleen and stomach and the disease of external wind and cold are the same in form but different in reality. If the disease of internal injury to the spleen and stomach is mistaken for the disease of external injury, and a large number of antiphlogistic drugs are used to counteract the diarrhea, the disease will be more deficient. The deficiency of the spleen and earth, and the liver and wood taking advantage of the earth, leads to heat depression in the liver meridian, imbalance of the qi flow in the middle jiao, and the liver meridian being out of balance, which leads to the development of yin fire floating on the surface of the body, and external sensation leading to red wind masses. The patient's evidence is a mixture of deficiency and reality, so the treatment should be both offensive and remedial. Therefore, Liu Jun Zi Tang is given to benefit the qi and strengthen the spleen, so that the spleen and stomach can restore their functions of transportation and transformation, and a small amount of Sheng Ma and Chai Hu can help the stomach qi to move up and return to its original position, so that the order of growth can be carried out, the vital energy can be filled, and the yin fire can not be regenerated.[2] with scutellaria and mulberry leaves to clear liver heat to help suppress liver wood; Li Dongyuan said "sweet warmth to benefit the middle qi, accompanied by sweet cold products to diarrhea yin fire, with Huang Lian, Huang Bai ,Zhi Mu and so on." [3]Therefore, a little Huang Lian is added to relieve Yin fire; Fang Feng and Bai Xian Pi relieve the surface and dispel wind to help the evil heat to reach outside; Cicadelle and Stachybotrys pungens to penetrate the rash and dispel wind to relieve the patient's itching. The whole formula promotes yang to benefit qi and clears Yin fire, so that the qi in the body can be regulated and the Yin fire can be eliminated. [4]

Case 3: The patient, a 38-year-old female, complaining of erythema and scaling of the extremities for 7 years, with aggravation for 3 months. She had taken internal and external medications with poor efficacy, and her condition was recurrent, sometimes mild and sometimes severe. At the time of consultation, the extremities were covered with red plaque rash, slightly thick, covered with white scales, most of the rashes were connected into a large area, the skin was reddish, the desquamation was more obvious, the throat was not red, the tongue and pulse were examined, the tongue was light red, the moss was thin and white, the pulse was weak, and the guan pulse was weak and floating. The patient complains of heat fear, occasional panic attacks, fatigue, premenstruation, pale color, poor night rest, difficulty sleeping, poor appetite, and normal urination and defecation. This is a case of deficiency of the heart and spleen, with internal Yin fire, burning the fluids. The principle of treatment is to nourish the heart and spleen together, nourish Yin and generate fluid. Oral Chinese herbal medicine is Gui Shen Tang, Addition of Chaihu 10g, Huangqin 10g. The patient took the medicine for 1 week and then the rash area was reduced, the color became lighter, a small amount of flaking, fatigue and panic were reduced, sleep was improved, the rash became flat at the third consultation, the efficacy was satisfactory, and the patient was basically cured after taking 7 doses of follow-up.

Psoriasis is a chronic inflammatory skin disease, the rash is mainly erythematous and scaly. The disease is complex and is a difficult disease to treat. Chinese medicine is called "white mange" and has rich experience in its understanding and treatment. According to the etiology and pathogenesis of the disease and its pathogenetic characteristics, many doctors have proposed to treat the disease from blood heat and blood stasis, which has achieved certain clinical efficacy, and some doctors have proposed that psoriasis can also be considered from lung, from poison, from paralysis, and from spleen.[5] In the process of studying the Spleen and Stomach Theory, we found that the patient's body is deficient, the vital energy is weak, and the yin fire is waiting for the opportunity to disturb the skin, which can easily develop into white mange. The patient, such as the above, complained of fear of heat, dry mouth, irritability, red rash, initially identified as blood heat within the evidence, treatment to clear heat and cool the blood as the main treatment, the effect is very little. The patient complained of fatigue, occasional panic attacks, shortness of breath, poor sleep, light red tongue, thin white fur, weak pulse,

and weak floating Guan pulse. The patient's heart and spleen are deficient, the middle jiao is not full of Yuan qi, and the Yin fire is internally generated, so the patient is fearful of heat and irritable; the deficiency heat is gathered on the trunk and extremities and develops into an erythematous rash; the yin fire burns yin and injures fluid over time and manifests as white scales over the body surface. Treatment is based on strengthening the spleen and nourishing the heart, with the complementary treatment of clearing the heat and dipping the fire. Strengthen the spleen to energize the middle jiao and regulate the rise and fall of qi, so that the yin fire can be submerged. Add Chai Hu and *Scutellaria baicalensis* to clear the Yin fire, and stiff silkworm to dispel the wind and disperse the knots. By tonifying the heart and spleen together, enriching the vital energy to eliminate yin fire, the rash will disappear.

Discussion: In his treatise on the Spleen and Stomach, Li Dong Yuan described that "the Qi of the spleen and stomach is injured, and the Yuan qi cannot be enriched, and all diseases arise from it". He did not elaborate further on what Yuan qi is, but we can get a glimpse of it from his discussion. The lack of Yuan qi makes all diseases arise, indicating that Yuan qi directly provides the source of power for life activities, and can be described as the sum of the Qi of the human body, the "right Qi" that leads the whole body. [6] On this basis, he also proposed the theory of Yin and fire in the spleen and stomach, and in the Treatise on the Spleen and Stomach, he said, "Fire and vital energy are not mutually exclusive; one victory is one loss." In his treatise on the spleen and stomach, he said, "Fire and Yuan qi are mutually exclusive, and if one wins, the other loses. The "fire" and the Yuan qi are opposed to each other and restrain each other. As early as in *Suwen*. This "fire" is not a physiological fire, but a pathological product of the organism's disorder, which exists in opposition to the Yuan qi, that is, the "Yin fire" mentioned by Li Dong Yuan. Yin fire, whose pathological characteristics are, on the one hand, due to the impaired function of the spleen and stomach and the diminished function of the spleen source and pivot, resulting in the weakening and stagnation of Yuan qi, [7] and the internal growth of "Yin fire", and on the other hand, due to the depletion of Qi by "Yin fire" and the weakening of Yuan qi. Therefore, in the process of internal fever, the failure of vital energy is the root cause of the disease, and the lack of vital energy is mostly due to the injury of the spleen and stomach. The relationship between the spleen and the stomach and the vital energy are complementary to each other. If the spleen and stomach are damaged, the vital energy will be weakened if it is not nourished, and if the "positive energy" of the person is weakened, "yin fire" will be created internally.

In skin diseases, the clinical manifestations of such patients are fatigue, drowsiness, shortness of breath, or insomnia, or dullness, or loose stools, etc. The tongue is light red or red, the moss is thin white or thin yellow, and the pulse is weak, or the pulse of the inch or the Guan is weak and floating. If the patient's spleen and stomach is deficient, the clear yang of the spleen and stomach loses its ascension and development, so it is not able to develop the coup, and the actual limbs, and the yin fire is internally generated and develops in the coup, leading to localized erythema and papules on the skin, which develops into urticaria or eczema; if the yin fire gathers on the body surface and burns the fluids, so that the local skin is not moistened and becomes dry, which manifests as scaling and flaking, then it develops into psoriasis or seborrheic dermatitis; "Jing" cloud: those with heat on the face have foot yangming disease. If yin fire follows the meridian and disturbs the head and face, then acne or facial dermatitis will develop. The author believes that this type of deficiency-heat skin disease can also be considered as the evidence of Qi deficiency "with" heat as Li said, and the same pungent, sweet and warm products can be used to remove the heat.

## 2. Conclusion

The sweet-warm method of removing heat is now mostly used in clinical practice to treat "fever" diseases such as qi deficiency fever, cancer fever, post-surgical fever, and postpartum fever. [8] In our opinion, in the clinical application of dermatological diseases, most patients do not show the symptoms of "fever", instead of red rash, swelling and other heat symptoms, this evidence can still be considered, not "fever" is heat, do not stick to a certain symptom, but should focus on The treatment should be based on dialectical evidence and applied flexibly according to the pathological mechanism and the development of the process of Yin fire. He believed that the spleen and stomach are in the Zhongjiao, mediating between yin and yang, raising the qi and lowering the turbidity, and are the hub of the body's qi flow. By nourishing the spleen and stomach, one can nourish the vital energy, and the other can regulate the qi lift function, so that the internal body qi flow smoothly, the yin fire will disappear. We believe that Li Dong Yuan said: "All diseases are caused by the failure of the spleen and stomach". It is not just that the spleen and stomach deficiency causes restlessness in the remaining organs, but

highlights the importance of the spleen and stomach to nourish the Yuan qi and the spleen and stomach as the pivot of the qi flow, reflecting that the most crucial thing for the human body is to regulate the qi flow in order to calm the yin and yang and harmonize the internal organs. In treating diseases, the main focus should be to regulate the qi flow, and when the qi flow is smooth, the five organs are in harmony. The movement of qiqi depends on the adequacy of the body's "vital energy". The core of TCM theory is holistic view and evidence-based treatment. Skin diseases are complex, easily recurring, mostly red, swollen, hot and painful, and the clinical treatment is based on elimination and support. In a large number of clinical cases, we found that not all red, swollen, and painful rashes in dermatology are actual heat, and the remedy is also particularly important, while most clinical practitioners often give heat-clearing, blood-boosting, and detoxifying products directly based on the appearance only. In the clinical treatment process, we should combine the classical theory of TCM, learn the ancient TCM identification, and grasp the key points of identification, so as to avoid the abuse of heat-clearing, blood-clearing and detoxifying products, which will cause the disease to be prolonged and difficult to be cured. While learning the etiology and treatment plan of a single disease, we should also refer to ancient texts and actively expand the existing disease patterns to achieve more satisfactory clinical results.

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