

## *Professor qiaoshuzhen's experience in treating tension type headache from liver*

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**Abstract:** This article summarizes professor qiaoshuzhen's clinical experience in treating tension type headache. Professor Qiao, based on the classics and the thought of syndrome differentiation and treatment in traditional Chinese medicine, believes that the onset of tension type headache is closely related to emotion, and is most closely related to the liver, spleen and kidney. The pathological factors include wind, fire, phlegm and blood stasis. When treating headache patients, the methods of calming the liver and calming the nerves, removing phlegm and dampness, promoting blood circulation and qi circulation, calming the mind, and tonifying deficiency are flexible, providing new ideas for the treatment of tension type headache with traditional Chinese medicine.

### 1. Introduction

About 90% of patients with primary headache are migraine and tension type headache. The pathogenesis of tension type headache is still unclear. It is generally believed that it is caused by central or peripheral neuropathy and other factors. Western medicine treatment is mainly symptomatic support, which is effective in the short term and has obvious side effects in the long term [1]. According to the book *Su Wen Wei Lun*, "the liver governs the fascia of the body", the liver blood cannot nourish the tendons it governs. If the tendons are not proud, they will be restrained and contracture, which is characterized by tight and oppressive headache. Most patients with tension type headache are accompanied by sleep disorders, anxiety and depression. When palpating, the muscles in the painful parts are tender, and the neck and shoulder are stiff. They feel comfortable after kneading [2]. Tension type headache can be classified as "headache" in traditional Chinese medicine, and its incidence is closely related to emotion. In recent years, traditional Chinese medicine has shown its unique advantages in the treatment of tension type headache [3-4]. The condition is not suitable to rebound, and the toxic and side effects of drugs are small. The clinical reports of traditional Chinese medicine decoction mainly focus on the liver, aiming at the different pathological factors such as Qi stagnation, blood stasis, phlegm turbidity, collateral closure, fire and heat, and the compatibility of drugs with different properties to achieve good curative effects. Professor qiaoshuzhen is the chief physician, a famous traditional Chinese medicine doctor in Shaanxi Province, the vice president of the brain disease hospital of Shaanxi Provincial Hospital of traditional Chinese medicine, and the

head of the Department of psychiatry of national key specialty. She has been engaged in clinical work for nearly 40 years and has unique views on the treatment of neuropsychiatric diseases such as stroke, dementia, epilepsy, headache, vertigo, muscular atrophy, insomnia, depression and anxiety. The author has the honor to learn from Professor qiaoshuzhen and learn a lot of experience in the treatment of psychosis.

## **2. Professor Qiao's understanding of the etiology and pathogenesis of tension type headache**

According to Professor Qiao's clinical experience, the onset of tension type headache is closely related to emotion, liver, spleen and kidney, and is most closely related to the liver. The pathological factors include wind, fire, phlegm and blood stasis.

### **2.1 Disturbance of liver Yang**

In Volume IV of the criteria for syndrome treatment, there is a record that "anger injures the liver and the liver Qi is not smooth. It rushes into the brain and makes people headache" [5]. Yang Yue et al. [6] believe that liver dysfunction is a common pathogenesis of tension headache, and liver fire, liver Yang and liver wind transform into each other. Professor Qiao believes that the main causes of liver Yang headache are high stress in daily work and life, long-term mental tension, depression, emotional anger, liver disorder, qi depression and yang hyperactivity, or liver depression turns into fire, Yang Hyperactivity fire generates, and the upper disturbance clears the orifices, resulting in headache, or wood fire injures Yin, kidney water is insufficient, and water does not contain wood, resulting in liver yang hyperactivity, upper disturbance clears the orifices, and headache. The main pathogenesis is that the liver loses catharsis, qi stagnation turns into fire, fire rises to Yang, or liver and kidney yin deficiency, liver Yang rises to hyperactivity, disturbing the brain orifices.

### **2.2 Qi stagnation turns into fire**

"Su Wen ·Linglan Secret Classic" says: "the liver is an officer of a general. How can you plan The liver dominates the catharsis and the emotion is not smooth, which is an important factor causing liver depression due to the dysfunction of liver catharsis. The liver depression turns into fire for a long time, which can cause the hyperactivity of liver yang. Professor wangsongling believes that liver depression is closely related to the occurrence of headache [7]. Professor Qiao believes that: the stagnation of liver Qi turns into fire over time. The liver meridian is stagnant, and the stagnation of fire cannot be dispersed outside. Burning the brain orifices leads to headache. At present, the pace of life is fast and the pressure of life is increasing, which leads to long-term emotional disorder in the current people. Too much depression leads to qi stagnation, and then leads to a series of pathological changes, leading to tension type headache. Long term stagnation of liver Qi will lead to internal fire, wind evil will be external heat when encountering heat, and internal fire and external heat will cause brain collateral damage.

### **2.3 Qi stagnation and blood stasis**

The onset of tension type headache is related to qi stagnation. For example, as stated in "classic like diseases" [8]: "all diseases originate from Qi." Sun Qingji [9] believed that the stagnation of liver Qi leads to qi stagnation, and the blockage of Qi and blood in the brain orifices leads to headache. Professor Qiao believes that with the development of society, people use computers to work for a long time, which leads to local muscles and blood stagnation and headache. Qi stagnation is caused by local blockage of Qi. Qi stagnation can make local tendons and veins unfavorable. Moreover, "Qi

is the commander of blood". Qi stagnation can cause blood stasis, block the brain orifices, and lead to pain.

## **2.4 Phlegm dampness obstructing orifices**

Professor Qiao believes that: stagnation of liver and gallbladder Qi takes advantage of the spleen, or thinking about hurting the spleen, or improper diet, which leads to the loss of healthy movement of the spleen, the failure of clearing Yang, and the long-term impact on the normal operation of body fluid, resulting in internal disturbance of phlegm, failure to clear the orifices, and headache.

## **2.5 Disturbed mind**

"Neijing" says: "the heart... The place where the spirit gives up... All itches and sores belong to the heart." It reveals the relationship between heart, mind and pain. Professor Qiao believes that tension type headache is also closely related to the mind. In clinical practice, it is often accompanied by symptoms of disturbed mind such as upset palpitations and restless sleep.

## **2.6 Visceral disorders**

Professor Qiao pointed out that the deficiency of vital energy and the dysfunction of the viscera are the internal factors. Just as the book "Su Wen ·comment on Febrile Diseases" said that "the Qi must be deficient if the evil is gathered together", which is closely related to the liver, spleen and kidney. The deficiency of liver blood is so Yin but not Yang, and the hyperactivity of liver Yang disturbs the brain orifices; Wood fire injures Yin, kidney water is insufficient, and water does not contain wood, resulting in hyperactivity of liver Yang, upper disturbance of clear orifices and headache; The day after tomorrow, the spleen and stomach lose Qi and blood, leading to the loss of nourishment of the liver and insufficient use of the liver. The stagnation of Qi turns into fire and generates wind. The liver Yang is too high, disturbing the brain orifices, and can also lead to headache.

# **3. Professor Qiao's experience in treating tension type headache**

## **3.1 Pay attention to calming liver, calming wind and relieving pain**

Professor Qiao believes that: stagnation of liver qi and deficiency of Yin can not restrict hyperactivity of Yang, but can lead to hyperactivity of liver Yang and the transformation of liver Yang into wind. The combination of *Gastrodia elata* and *pueraria lobata* can calm the liver and latent Yang. *Gastrodin* is the extract of *Gastrodia elata*, a precious traditional Chinese medicine. Modern pharmacological studies show that *gastrodin* has the effect of calming the liver and relieving pain; It can also relieve spasm and improve cerebral circulation by expanding cerebral blood vessels. Traditional Chinese medicine believes that *puerarin* has the function of relieving muscle and dredging collaterals. Modern research shows that *puerarin* can improve the deformability of red blood cells and improve blood cell aggregation [11]. Professor Qiao believes that both *Gastrodia elata* and *Uncaria* have the effect of calming the liver and calming the wind. *Gastrodia elata* tastes sweet and smooth, and its heat clearing effect is inferior to *Uncaria elata*. However, if there is internal movement of the liver wind, it can be used regardless of the deficiency of cold and heat; *Uncaria* is good at clearing away heat and calming the wind. *Pueraria lobata* is beneficial to relieve the head banding and compression of tension headache; The medicine combination of raw keel and raw oyster with heavy quality and sedimentation is used to calm the liver and suppress Yang. It has a strong effect of calming the liver when it is used in health, and has a good effect of astringent and astringent when it is used

in forging. It is often used in the treatment of hyperhidrosis. Professor Qiao usually uses 20-30g of raw keel and raw oyster when he is in clinical.

### 3.2 Focus on relieving depression, clearing away heat and relieving pain

Professor Qiao believes that the key to this disease lies in the stagnation of fire, so it is disturbed. The "stagnation" is the primary cause. Drugs should not be used to relieve the fire simply by bitter cold. Attention should be paid to dispersing the depression. If the depression is dispersed, the fire will go away. It is appropriate to treat the disease by clearing away the stagnant heat and penetrating the heat to the surface. Professor Qiao uses the combination of Yujin and Cyperus drugs to soothe the liver and relieve depression. The nature of Cyperus is too warm. He specializes in Qi distribution and is good at soothing the liver and relieving pain. The nature of Yujin is too cold. Both Qi distribution and blood distribution can be used to treat the pain syndrome of liver depression, qi stagnation and blood stasis. The combination of the two is best for liver depression, qi stagnation and pain caused by running away. The physiological function of liver dominating hair generation and blood storage determines its characteristics of using Yang for body Yin. If the liver is too lax, it will rob liver yin, Therefore, Professor Qiao used Cyperus, Yujin to soothe the liver and relieve depression at the dosage of 12g to 15g. *Scutellaria baicalensis* Georgi is good at clearing liver and gallbladder stagnant heat. Professor Qiao generally uses a small amount of 3G to 6G. For patients with fire heat and phlegm heat, Professor Qiao often cooperates with Zhuru 12g to 15g to clear liver and gallbladder stagnant heat and phlegm heat. *Rhizoma Coptidis* is good at clearing heart fire. Professor Qiao attaches importance to the five elements generating and restraining relationship between the viscera. For example, as stated in the difficult classics 69, the "deficiency will supplement its mother, in fact, it will purge its son". The liver tree is the mother, and the heart fire is the son. Therefore, purging the heart fire is helpful to purging the liver fire. The Yujin *Rhizoma Coptidis* drug combination can be used to purge the heart fire. If it is accompanied by a bitter mouth, it can also be used to clear the heat of the coke in *Rhizoma Coptidis*. If the patient is very depressed, add 15g of bupleurum root and *Albizzia* bark to enhance the effect of relieving depression and calming the nerves. Bupleurum root is hard, slightly cold, and enters the liver, gallbladder and lung meridians. The "hundred kinds of records of Shennong materia medica classic" says: "bupleurum root is also a medicine for the intestines and stomach. The therapeutic effects described in the Scriptures are mainly for the intestines and stomach. Its smell is light and clear, and it can calm the stagnant Qi with the stubborn soil"; If the patient is irritable, add *Prunella vulgaris* to clear the liver and reduce the fire; If the eyes are dry, red, swollen and painful, *chrysanthemum* 6G can be used to evacuate the wind heat from the liver meridian, and it can also clear the liver heat to brighten the eyes.

### 3.3 Pay attention to promoting blood circulation, qi circulation and pain relief

Professor Qiao believes that: cold coagulation of the meridians or stagnation of liver Qi or prolonged illness into the collaterals can lead to local Qi and blood block. The combination of *Ligusticum chuanxiong* 15g vinegar and *Corydalis yanhusuo* 15g can promote blood circulation and qi circulation, expel wind and relieve pain. According to the secret of indications, "there are four uses of *Ligusticum*, one for Shaoyang meridian, two for headache, three for purging, and four for dampness.". The conventional dosage of *Ligusticum chuanxiong* in clinical application is 6 ~ 10g, and Professor Qiao usually uses it up to 15g to enhance the function of promoting blood circulation and relieving pain. Modern research shows that [12] *Ligusticum chuanxiong* may play a therapeutic role in tension type headache through anti-inflammatory, anti-oxidation and cell protection. The effective analgesic ingredients of *Rhizoma Corydalis* are not easy to decoct. After vinegar is made, the effect of qi circulation and pain relief is enhanced. It is widely used in a variety of pain syndromes

in various parts of the body. The effective component of *Rhizoma Corydalis* for analgesia is alkaloid. The content determination results of five alkaloids show that the content of protopine, berberine hydrochloride and palmatine hydrochloride in vinegar *Rhizoma Corydalis* is higher than that in raw *Rhizoma Corydalis* [13], and vinegar preparation may also increase the dissolution of some alkaloid components [14]. Professor Qiao used wine to promote blood circulation and remove blood stasis. Modern research shows that [15], the content of ferulic acid in *Radix Achyranthes Bidentatae* after wine roasting is increased, which is consistent with the literature records that "after wine roasting, it can enhance the effect of removing blood stasis and dredging joints".

### 3.4 Pay attention to resolving phlegm, removing dampness and relieving pain

Professor Qiao believes that qi stagnation leads to abnormal distribution of body fluid, and body fluid stops accumulating into phlegm. If the patient has red tongue, greasy fur and slippery pulse, if the patient has dry stool symptoms, Professor Qiao gives birth to *Atractylodes macrocephala* 30g to strengthen the spleen and relieve constipation. Professor Qiao uses stir fried *Atractylodes macrocephala* here to dry dampness and remove phlegm. The conventional dosage of stir fried *Atractylodes macrocephala* is 10-15g. Professor Qiao uses stir fried *Atractylodes macrocephala* mostly 20g-30g. Stir fried *Atractylodes macrocephala* can also strengthen the spleen and benefit Qi, so as to prevent liver wood from multiplying the spleen soil; If the patient has severe phlegm and headache, use *Radix Polygalae* 15g, *Acorus tatarinowii* 15g and other drugs to open the orifices and remove phlegm. *Radix Polygalae - Acorus tatarinowii* is a common drug combination used by Professor Qiao. *Radix Polygalae* is fragrant and clear, with pungent and warm dispersing powder, calming the mind, dispersing depression and resolving phlegm, *Radix Acorus tatarinowii* Xinsan is warm, promoting qi and clearing the orifices, removing turbidity and dampness, regulating qi and resolving phlegm, promoting blood circulation and relieving pain. *Radix Polygalae* connects the kidney to the heart, and *Acorus tatarinowii* opens and closes the orifices and calms the mind. With the combination of the two drugs, the power of opening and closing the orifice, It is the first choice for those who suffer from liver depression and insomnia and prefer phlegm to clear the orifices; For patients with unfavorable speech, add stiff silkworms to dispel wind and unblock collaterals. Professor Qiao uses 15g tangerine peel and 6G to 9g clear *Pinellia ternata* to strengthen the spleen and remove phlegm. Raw *Pinellia ternata* is soaked in alum and becomes clear *Pinellia ternata*. The ability of drying dampness and resolving phlegm is increased. The combination of 30g raw keel and 30g raw oyster can be used to treat phlegm. According to Fengyuan in the book of scriptures, "the keel penetrates into the liver to astringe the soul and the floating Qi. Although its nature is astringent, it can penetrate into the liver and break the knot." if the keel oyster is used together, its astringency will be strengthened. Chenxiuyuan once said: phlegm and water rise with the fire. The keel can lead the upward fire. The flooded water belongs to its house. If it is used with oysters, it is a magic product for treating phlegm.

### 3.5 Pay attention to calming the heart, calming the nerves and relieving pain

Professor Qiao believes that headache patients can not relieve the pain continuously, which is easy to disturb the divine mechanism and cause negative emotions such as tension, anxiety, irritability and depression. These emotions can also further disturb the divine mechanism, thus inducing headache or aggravating headache. Therefore, regulating the mind is the most important treatment. Professor Qiao uses *Radix Polygalae*, which tastes bitter and pungent. He prefers happy Qi to calm his mind, especially for insomnia and palpitation caused by heart kidney disharmony; Both tuckahoe and tuckahoe can calm the mind and strengthen the spleen. Tuckahoe tends to calm the heart and calm the mind, while tuckahoe tends to strengthen the spleen and diuresis. Professor Qiao applied dialectically

and flexibly in clinical practice; The drug combination of baiziren and Suanzaoren can be used to calm the mind and cause forgetfulness and poor sleep. Baiziren can nourish the mind and calm the mind, especially for those with Yin blood deficiency and intestinal dryness and constipation. Suanzaoren tastes sour and sweet, has a flat nature, and is mainly used to calm the mind and calm the mind. Fried Suanzaoren has strong astringency. Professor Qiao often uses it if the patient has spontaneous sweating or night sweating; In addition, the combination of raw keel and raw oyster is added to calm the nerves.

### 3.6 Pay attention to tonifying deficiency and relieving pain

Professor Qiao believes that the dysfunction of viscera is an important factor in tension type headache, and pays attention to tonifying deficiency to treat tension type headache. For patients with liver blood deficiency, white peony and Angelica sinensis in Siwu Decoction can be used to replenish liver blood. White peony can replenish liver Yin blood. A small dose of 5g to 10g is mainly used to reconcile Ying and Wei; The medium dosage of 10G to 30g is mainly to harmonize the liver and spleen. Professor Qiao's general dosage is 12g to 15g, which can be applied to patients with liver blood deficiency and dizziness. It can also alleviate the isothermal dryness of Polygala tenuifolia and Acorus tatarinowii. If patients with liver blood deficiency and constipation can consider adding 12g Angelica sinensis and 30g raw Atractylodes macrocephala to supplement blood and promote blood circulation, strengthen the spleen and defecate; For tonifying the kidney, it can be combined with Achyranthes bidentata, Radix Rehmanniae and Cornus officinalis to tonify the kidney yin. The reason why Achyranthes bidentata is used here is that it has a stronger effect of Tonifying the liver and kidney and strengthening the muscles and bones than Radix Achyranthes bidentata. Take the Radix Rehmanniae and Fructus officinalis in Liuwei Dihuang pill and add 12g Poria cocos to tonify the kidney and reduce diarrhea, so as to prevent too much greasy; For spleen tonifying, it can be combined with tangerine peel, pinellia tuber, roasted licorice, lotus seeds, etc. to invigorate the spleen and regulate the stomach, so as to provide the source of blood and blood biochemistry. If the patient has food accumulation and stomach bloating, add 12g tangerine peel and 6G to 9g pinellia tuber to regulate qi and strengthen the spleen. If the patient has less intake and loose stool, add 12g to 15g Poria cocos and 6G roasted licorice to invigorate the spleen and stop diarrhea; If the patient is prone to stomach discomfort after taking traditional Chinese medicine decoction, he can take traditional Chinese medicine after dinner, and add 2 pieces of ginger and 3 jujubes to reconcile the spleen and stomach.

## 4. Examples of medical records

Patient Li, a 58 year old female, was initially diagnosed on March 4, 2021.

Chief complaint: intermittent headache for 1 month. Current medical history: the patient reported that he suffered from intermittent headache after quarreling with his family one month ago. The nature of headache is mainly tight bundle and swelling pain. He is prone to tension, neck stiffness and pain, accompanied by tinnitus, depression, poor sleep, poor appetite, stomach distension and two bowel movements after anger. No obvious positive signs were found in nervous system examination. Previous medical history: none. Aspiration, smell and palpation: red tongue, yellow fur, pulse string number. Auxiliary examination: no abnormality was found in CT and MRI of the head (February 26, 2021, external hospital). TCM diagnosis (TCM syndrome type): headache (hyperactivity of liver Yang). Western medicine diagnosis: tension type headache. Treatment: calming the liver and calming the wind, relieving depression and clearing away heat, promoting blood circulation and qi circulation, resolving phlegm and dampness, calming the heart and mind, and tonifying deficiency. Prescription: Rhizoma Gastrodiae 15g, Rhizoma Chuanxiong 15g, Radix Puerariae 15g, Uncaria 12g, Acorus

tatarinowii 15g, Yujin 12g, Rhizoma Cyperi 12g, Zhuru 15g, raw sour jujube kernel 15g, Polygala tenuifolia 15g, cypress kernel 20g, Scutellaria baicalensis 15g, Fu Shen 15g, licorice 6G, vinegar Rhizoma Corydalis 15g, raw keel 30g, raw oyster 30g, Chen PI 12g. 7 pairs, 1 pair / day, 400ml in water, 200ml each time after breakfast and dinner.

Second diagnosis on March 11, 2021: head tightness, head swelling pain, neck stiffness pain, tinnitus and depression were reduced, poor sleep, poor appetite and stomach bloating were relieved compared with the initial diagnosis, eyes were dry and two stools were adjusted. Remove the bark of Albizzia Albizziae from the top, reduce the kernel of cypress to 10g, add 6G chrysanthemum, and take 7 servings. The rest is the same as before. Ask patients to adjust their emotions, get along well with people around them, drink more water and strengthen exercise.

Three visits on March 18, 2021: the patient's symptoms were significantly relieved, and there was no other obvious discomfort. He was asked to continue to take the upper part for consolidation.

Follow up for half a year, no recurrence.

Note: Professor Qiao thinks: this patient has a headache due to hyperactivity of liver Yang after quarreling with his family; Patients tend to be nervous, liver depression and qi stagnation lead to blood stasis, blood stasis blocks brain orifices, and tight bundle headache; Hyperactivity of liver Yang, head swelling and pain when rushing up the brain orifices; Qi stagnation can make local muscles and veins unfavorable, so the neck is stiff and painful; Stagnation of liver Qi leads to depression; After anger, the liver Yang is too hyperactive, and the liver fire disturbs the brain orifices, so tinnitus and poor sleep can be seen; Hyperactivity of liver Yang, deficiency of spleen soil caused by liver wood riding on soil, and loss of healthy movement of spleen, so poor appetite and stomach distention can be seen. This case belongs to headache according to its pulse differentiation. Professor qiaoshuzhen diagnosed it as hyperactivity of liver yang. Medicinal Gastrodia elata and pueraria lobata are used to calm the liver, calm the wind, clear the collaterals and relieve pain; Yujin and Cyperus root were used to soothe the liver and relieve depression, Uncaria crassifolia to clear away heat and wind, Scutellaria baicalensis Georgi to clear liver and gall, Ligusticum chuanxiong and Corydalis yanhusuo to promote blood circulation and qi circulation to relieve pain; It uses Polygala tenuifolia to soothe the mind and intelligence, communicate with the heart and kidney, Fu Shen to soothe the mind, Baizi kernel and sour jujube kernel to soothe the mind, Shichangpu to open the mind and eliminate phlegm, bamboo Ru to clear away heat and remove phlegm, orange peel to gasify phlegm, keel to settle the quality, oyster to calm the liver and Yang, which are all official drugs; Licorice is used to mix various medicines. In the second diagnosis, considering that the patient's sleep is obviously relieved, the semen Platycladus can be reduced to 10g, and 6G chrysanthemum can be added above to alleviate the dry eye symptoms. In the whole process of treating diseases, Professor qiaoshuzhen always adheres to the overall concept of traditional Chinese medicine and the treatment based on syndrome differentiation. He treats the patients and the disease itself, cures its symptoms and eliminates its roots, calms the liver and calms the wind, relieves depression and heat, promotes blood circulation and qi circulation, dissolves phlegm and dampness, calms the mind, replenishes deficiency, distinguishes syndromes accurately, and uses drugs flexibly.

## 5. Conclusion

As a frequently occurring disease in clinic, tension type headache is mainly caused by the disturbance of liver Yang, qi stagnation and fire, qi stagnation and blood stasis, phlegm dampness blocking orifices, disturbed mind and internal organs. Professor qiaoshuzhen, based on his years of clinical experience, applied such treatment methods as calming the liver and relaxing wind, relieving depression and clearing heat, promoting blood circulation and qi circulation, resolving phlegm and dampness, calming the heart and calming the mind, and tonifying deficiency, based on the syndrome

differentiation and treatment of traditional Chinese medicine, and proceeding from the nature of the disease, identified diseases, examined syndromes, and legislated according to the evidence, Selecting prescription by law and applying it flexibly in clinic; He is good at using traditional Chinese medicine to improve his clinical symptoms, adjust the physiological functions of the viscera, and improve the quality of life of patients. At the same time, he also instructs him to take care after recovery, recuperate and use it together. The clinical effect is very good. In the course of clinical treatment, Professor Qiao advocated Zhangzhongjing's spirit of syndrome differentiation and treatment of "observing pulse syndrome and treating it with syndrome". According to the change of disease pathogenesis and syndrome type, he grasped the main contradiction of the disease, gave consideration to the primary and secondary of positive deficiency and evil excess, and the priority of the severity of the disease. He successively used different prescriptions for treatment, and achieved good treatment results.

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