

# *Ma Shuanquan's Clinical Experience in Treating Dermatoses with Siwu Decoction*

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**Abstract:** Siwutang and Yingshengxue can be used to treat diseases caused by qi deficiency, blood deficiency and blood stasis. Clinical evidence should be added and subtracted with the evidence and used flexibly. Based on the application of prescriptions learned by the author from Professor Shuanquan Ma, this paper summarizes that Professor Ma's use of Siwu Decoction to treat various skin diseases caused by blood deficiency, wind and dryness or stagnation of qi and blood has a remarkable effect.

## 1. Introduction

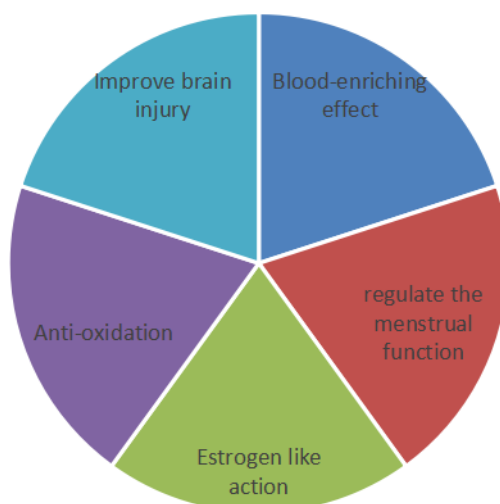


Figure 1: Pharmacological effects of Siwu decoction

The prescription of Siwutang first appeared in the Secret Recipe of Immortal Therapy for Wounding and Dipping, written by Lin Daoren in Tang Dynasty, and was used for traumatic blood stasis and pain. Later, it was published in China's first national pharmacopoeia, namely "Taiping

Huimin Heji Bureau Prescription" in Song Dynasty, and it was recorded that Siwu Decoction was mainly composed of Radix Rehmanniae Preparata, Radix Paeoniae Alba, Radix Angelicae Sinensis and Rhizoma Chuanxiong. Function of enriching blood and regulating blood, used for all deficiency and stagnation of blood. From the point of view of modern pharmacology, ferulic acid, paeoniflorin, verbascoside, gallic acid, ligustilide I and other quality-controlled components in Siwu Decoction can act on estrogen, amino acids, MAPK, TNF and other signal pathways directly or indirectly, and play a role in promoting bone marrow hematopoiesis, improving peripheral blood picture, repairing damaged red blood cells, changing blood rheology and exerting estrogen-like effects, which are widely used in various blood diseases, orthopedic diseases, gynecological diseases and skin diseases [1]. (Figure 1)

## 2. Principle of Siwu Decoction in Treating Dermatitis

Traditional Chinese medicine believes that the five internal organs and skin diseases are interrelated and influence each other. Although they are in different positions of the body, they are integrated inside and outside. Skin diseases can be seen from the appearance of corresponding visceral diseases, and visceral diseases will also be manifested through the skin. There is an inevitable connection between them. For example, the lung governs qi, regulates breathing, closes fur, and enlightens the nose. The five elements belong to gold, and the dermatosis reflected by the lung is directly related to dryness. When the lung is diseased, the skin will be dry and desquamated, the hair will lose moisture and even fall off because it cannot be normally moistened by lung qi. In addition, skin pruritus is known as "blood wind sore" and "itching wind" in TCM literature. It is said in Medical Zong Jin Jian that "blood wind sore syndrome is born all over the body, and millet-shaped itching, fat and water are obscene" [2]. The description of "itching wind" in The Complete Book of Surgical Syndrome Differentiation and Treatment is "itching all over the body, but there is no such thing. From the description of literature, its symptoms are very similar to skin pruritus. Su Wen says: "All kinds of pains, sores and itching belong to the heart", "All kinds of blood belong to the heart" and "Blood governs the body"; It is also said that "all pains are real, and all itching is virtual" [3]. The pathogenesis of skin pruritus is that blood deficiency loses its moistening nature, which is easy to cause weathering and dryness, and wind dryness will cause itching all over the body[4]. Therefore, the fundamental focus of Siwutang's treatment of dermatosis lies in the matching of Radix Rehmanniae Preparata, Radix Paeoniae Alba's feminine and blood-enriching products with spicy Angelica sinensis and Chuanxiong, which can replenish blood without stagnation and promote blood circulation without injury. The whole prescription has the effects of enriching blood and nourishing blood to moisten dryness, dispel wind and relieve itching, and regulate and nourish blood to make blood flow smoothly.

## 3. Clinical application of Siwu decoction

The theory of "treating different diseases at the same time" in traditional Chinese medicine holds that diseases with different manifestations can adopt the same treatment because of the same pathogenesis [5]. With the development of the research on "treating different diseases with the same treatment", the indications of Siwu decoction for treating different skin diseases are becoming wider and wider. In this article, according to the common diseases of Teacher Ma's clinical Siwutang, mainly including psoriasis, urticaria and atopic dermatitis, the incidence of these three diseases in China has also shown an increasing trend in recent years. (Figure 2)

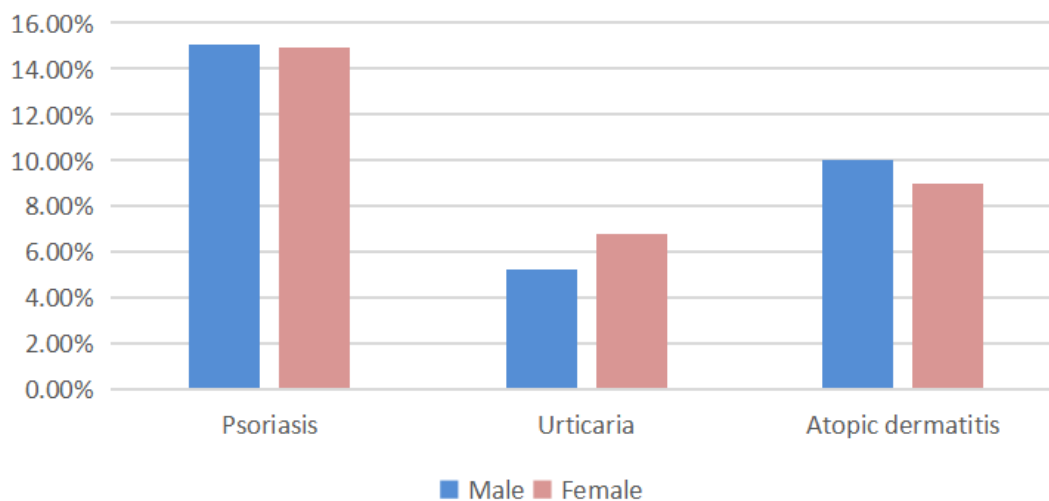


Figure 2: Incidence of psoriasis, urticaria and atopic dermatitis in China

#### 4. Psoriasis

Li Moumou, female, 45 years old, saw a doctor on July 5, 2021. Half a month ago, the patient developed a rash on the limbs, chest, back and trunk, with red itching accompanied by desquamation, and the rash gradually increased in the past half a month, accompanied by upset mouth and dry stool. Physical examination: the skin rash on the chest, abdomen, back and limbs is patchy, such as the size of a coin, with clear edges, red rash covered with white scales, scratching it off, rapid pulse, red tongue and thin yellow fur, and it is diagnosed as psoriasis. The treatment principle is to nourish blood and promote blood circulation, dispel wind and clear heat. Jiawei treatment with Siwu decoction: *Angelica sinensis* 14g, *Ligusticum Chuanxiong* 12g, *Radix Rehmanniae* 15g, *Radix Paeoniae Rubra* 10g, *Glycyrrhizae Radix* 10g, *Cortex Dictamni Radicis* 10g, *Cortex Moutan* 12g, *Radix Saposhnikoviae* 10g, *Herba Schizonepetae* 10g, *Cortex Moutan* 10g, *Rhizoma Smilacis Glabrae* 20g, decocted in water, one dose per day, and two doses at different temperatures. After taking 15 doses, the color of the rash becomes lighter and the itching is relieved. On the basis of this prescription, *Rhizoma Chuanxiong* and *Fructus Gardeniae* were added, and 15g of *Rhizoma Paridis* and 6g of *Scorpio* were added. After 14 doses, the rash basically subsided. After 2 months of follow-up, the lesions basically returned to normal.

Press: Psoriasis is a chronic and recurrent inflammatory skin disease with erythema, papules and scales as the main manifestations. The clinical feature is that the erythema is covered with multiple layers of silvery scales, and the scales are scraped off with thin films and dewdrops. The course of disease is long, recurrent and difficult to cure. Traditional Chinese medicine calls it dandruff wind, psoriasis, etc. This disease is often caused by exogenous wind evil, which beats on the skin and turns into heat due to depression; Or overeating spicy and greasy things, evil heat is endogenous; Or emotional disorder, imbalance of yin and yang of zang-fu organs. Wind-heat is depressed in the skin, and when wind is strong, it itches; when heat is strong, the rash turns red; when blood is dry due to yin deficiency, the skin loses nourishment, and scales fall off. Psoriasis is based on yin deficiency and blood dryness, and exogenous pathogenic wind-heat is its standard. Siwu decoction is used to nourish blood and promote blood circulation. If wind-heat is strong, honeysuckle, forsythia suspensa and *Saposhnikovia divaricata* are added. If it itches badly, add centipede and scorpion; If the rash is red and burning obviously, *Rhizoma Paridis*, *Flos Lonicerae*, *Radix Scrophulariae* and *Cortex Moutan* can be added [6]. (Figure 3)

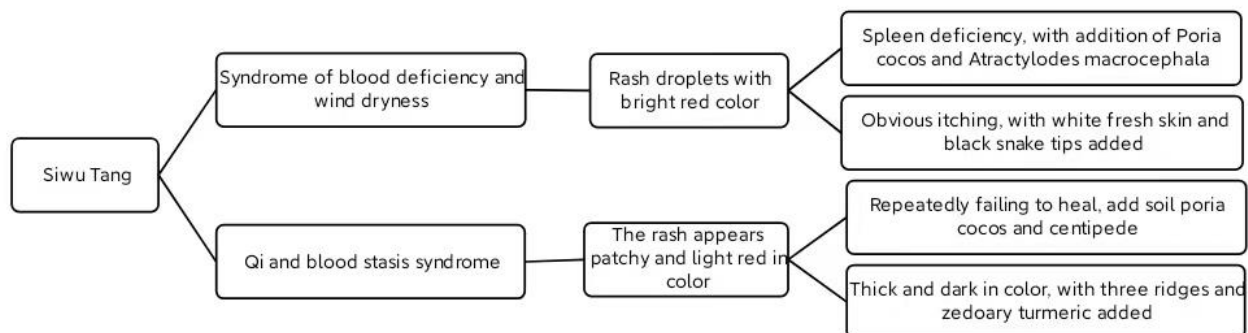


Figure 3: Clinical application of Siwu decoction in psoriasis

## 5. Urticaria

Wang, female, 23 years old, was first diagnosed on August 7, 2021. Urticaria broke out intermittently for more than one year. The patient reported that eating fish, shrimp and seafood was easy to occur, and the whole body was full of wheals and severe itching. There are 11 kinds of allergens in medical examination, including pollen, dust, seafood and bean products. Injection of antiallergic injection has no obvious effect. With cold limbs, dysmenorrhea, not very thirsty, physical examination: slow pulse, reddish tongue with thin white fur. In order to diagnose urticaria, Siwu decoction combined with Guizhi decoction was used to add flavor: Radix Rehmanniae Preparata 12g, Radix Rehmanniae 12g, Radix Angelicae Sinensis 12g, Radix Paeoniae Alba 10g, Rhizoma Chuanxiong 9g, Semen Armeniacae Amarum 12g, Herba Schizonepetae 6g, Radix Saposhnikoviae 9g, Periostracum Cicadae 6g, Ramulus Cinnamomi 9g, Radix Glycyrrhizae 6g, Rhizoma Zingiberis Recens 3 tablets, and Zizyphus jujubae 3 tablets, which were decocted in water, one dose per day, and two doses at different temperatures. After taking 14 doses, the rash is relieved, light in color and punctate, only scattered in limbs, and lasts for about half an hour every day. This prescription was cured after 14 doses. After 1 year's follow-up, there was no recurrence and dysmenorrhea was relieved.

Press: Urticaria is an itchy and allergic skin disease with wheal on the skin. Its clinical characteristics are wheal on the skin, red or white in color, with different shapes, no fixed place for hair, sudden retreat, leaving no trace after retreating, and conscious itching. Traditional Chinese medicine calls it rubella and addiction rash. Most of them are caused by exogenous pathogenic factors such as wind-cold and wind-heat, and the guests are in the skin; Or eat too much, accumulate damp heat and stagnate in the skin; Or weakness, blood deficiency, wind dryness and endogenous disease [7]. In this case, the essence of rubella is deficiency of yin and blood, which can't encourage yang pathogen to spread out from the skin and be detained. Weak camp means blood deficiency, while strong defense means that pathological defensive qi is floating in the outside, that is, wind and evil are beating on the skin. Those with blood deficiency can't sweat and drive away evil spirits from the exterior, so it is rubella [8]. Treatment must follow the principle of "harmony between ying and Wei" and adopt the method of nourishing ying blood and dispersing Wei evil. Guizhi decoction in Fangzhong "relapses its sweat", harmonizes ying and defending, and mainly dispels external evils, supplemented by Schizonepeta tenuifolia, Fangfeng, and cicada slough to dispel wind, detoxify and relieve itching. However, for those with blood deficiency, Guizhi decoction is not enough to supplement the weak camp, so Siwu decoction is used to enrich the blood and weaken the camp, and to ward off evil spirits, that is, "treat the wind first, and the blood will be destroyed by the wind." Combined with it, the effect is remarkable. (Figure 4)

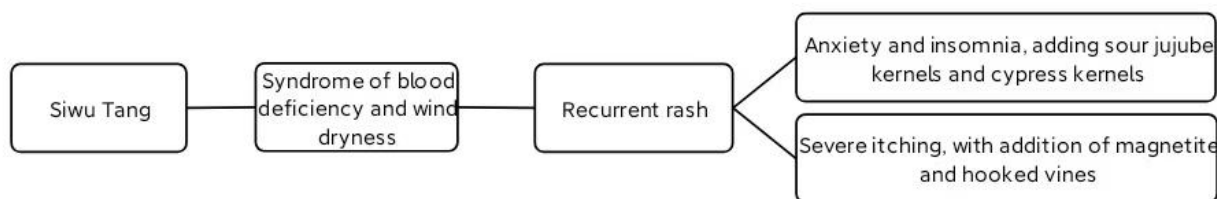


Figure 4: Clinical application of Siwu decoction in urticaria

## 6. Atopic dermatitis

Zhang, male, 33 years old. August 23rd, 2021. Itching of the back and waist for 1 year, aggravated repeatedly for 1 month. The patient's skin is dry all over the body, and he has a history of allergic rhinitis and recurrent attacks. Itching at night is obvious, accompanied by palpitation, insomnia, forgetfulness, skin lesions and common scratches or blood scabs around them. Physical examination: pale tongue with thin coating and deep and thin pulse. The diagnosis is atopic dermatitis, which is differentiated into blood deficiency and wind dryness syndrome. The treatment principle is to nourish blood and moisten dryness, and to stop wind and relieve itching. Jiawei Siwu Decoction is used for treatment: 12g of *Angelica sinensis*, 15g of *Radix Rehmanniae*, 12g of *Radix Paeoniae Alba*, 9g of *Rhizoma Chuanxiong*, 9g of *Radix Gentianae Macrophyllae*, 9g of *Polygonum Multiflori Radix*, 6g of *Fructus Tribuli*, 12g of *Semen Ziziphi Spinosae* and 6g of *Glycyrrhizae Radix* are decocted in water, one dose per day, and two doses at different temperatures. After taking 7 doses, the skin is moisturized, itching is relieved and sleep is ok. This prescription recovered after 14 doses, and there was no recurrence after 1 year of follow-up.

A: Atopic is a chronic inflammatory skin disease related to hereditary allergic constitution. It is named because skin lesions are prone to bend parts of limbs. The characteristics of this disease are that the rash is prone to occur on the flexion side of the body, dry and itchy, and has a tendency to ooze. Its clinical characteristics are: it is common in popliteal fossa, elbow fossa, limbs and trunk, etc., mainly manifested as lichen-like transformation of the skin, dry papules, severe itching, scabs, scales and pigmentation after scratching. Sometimes it can be acute or subacute. Ancient literature called it "four winds". At the beginning of this disease, spleen deficiency and dampness stagnation are the basis of the disease, and rheumatic fever is the standard of the disease. Congenital endowment intolerance, improper aftercare, spleen loss of health, water retention, depression and heat, re-infection of rheumatic fever, internal and external evils stagnation in the skin and disease. Prolonged illness, repeated attacks, consumption of yin and blood, resulting in yin deficiency and blood dryness, skin dystrophy. In this case, the patient suffered from emotional stimulation, depression and overwork, resulting in malnutrition and dryness of the skin. Later, due to long-term consumption, blood deficiency caused wind and dryness. Therefore, it is atopic dermatitis. The principle of treatment mainly follows the principle of "treating the wind first and treating the blood, and the blood will be destroyed by the wind". Siwutang and Yingtiaoxue; In addition, *Gentiana macrophylla* and *tribulus terrestris* can dispel wind and relieve itching; *Semen Ziziphi Spinosae* is effective in treating insomnia.

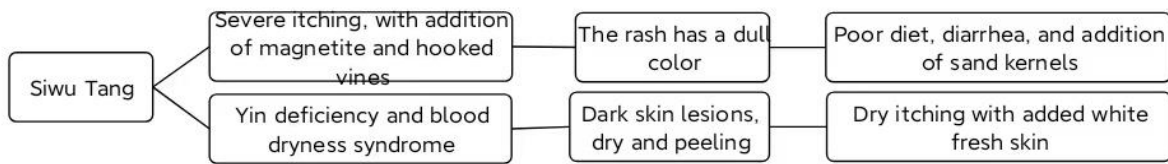


Figure 5: Clinical application of Siwu decoction in atopic dermatitis.

## 7. Chronic eczema

Wang, male, 55 years old, was first diagnosed on October 28, 2021. Generalized erythema with itching for 3 years. Three years ago, the patient began to develop dark red macules with different sizes all over the body, and the itching was obvious. He was diagnosed as "eczema" in many hospitals, and the treatment effect of oral Chinese medicine was not good. The diagnosis showed that the whole body skin was covered with dark red spots, and the skin of both lower limbs and waist and abdomen was flaky dark brown patches with dry and desquamation surface. Physical examination: red tongue with little fur and thin pulse. Diagnosed as chronic eczema. It is distinguished as long-term accumulation of damp heat, blood deficiency and wind dryness. Treatment should nourish blood and moisten dryness, promote blood circulation and dispel wind. Treatment with Siwu Decoction: 12g of *Angelica sinensis*, 15g of *Radix Rehmanniae*, 12g of *Rhizoma Chuanxiong*, 15g of *Radix Paeoniae Alba*, 15g of *Polygonum Multiflori Radix*, 12g of *Tribulus terrestris*, 10g of *Schizonepeta*, 10g of *Radix Saposhnikoviae*, 15g of *Cortex Dictamni Radicis* and 9g of *Radix Glycyrrhizae*. Decoct with water, 1 dose per day. After 7 doses, itching was relieved, skin lesions became thinner after 14 doses, and the main symptoms improved obviously after 1 month. Seven doses were given again to consolidate the curative effect. After 3 months of follow-up, the old disease did not recur.

Press: Eczema is a common skin inflammatory reaction with obvious exudation tendency caused by various internal and external factors. It is characterized by various rashes, severe itching, prolonged course of disease and easy to repeat, and is collectively referred to as wet sore in Chinese medicine. According to the course of disease, it can be divided into acute, subacute and chronic categories. As for the cause of eczema, dampness invading the exterior stagnates in the veins of the skin, which leads to yang qi blocking and qi and blood knotting and rash. "Great achievements in surgery, small defects in all parts" says: "All sores and itching belong to fire. When the wind is strong, it itches. If it is covered with wind, it will be the sign of fire. Anyone who suffers from wind-heat on the skin and itches and starts to millet should be treated to dispel wind. "It can be seen that wind, heat and fire are all important factors of surgical diseases, which have been discussed by doctors in past dynasties. The cause of eczema is nothing more than the accumulation of rheumatic fever and soaking the skin. If it does not heal for a long time, repeated illness will hurt yin and consume blood, turn dryness into wind, so itching will occur frequently. In this case, the patient suffered from excessive internal heat, stagnant dampness, fumigating the skin for a long time, consuming yin and blood, and blood deficiency and wind dryness, resulting in generalized erythema with itching. Therefore, the treatment is to nourish blood and dispel wind. Medicinal *Angelica sinensis*, *Radix Rehmanniae*, *Radix Paeoniae Rubra* and *Rhizoma Chuanxiong* nourish blood and promote blood circulation, *Polygoni Multiflori Radix* nourishes yin and moistens dryness, *Tribulus terrestris* and *Schizonepeta Herba* dispel wind and relieve itching, and *cortex Dictamni Radicis* is added. Both symptoms and root causes are taken into account, and the condition is improved.

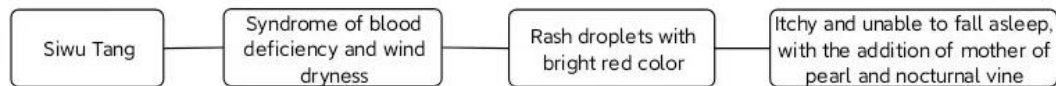


Figure 5: Clinical application of Siwu decoction in eczema

## 8. Tag

All kinds of skin diseases listed in this paper have qi and blood disorders to varying degrees. Under normal circumstances, the normal operation of the functions of the internal organs and skin and muscle membrane must be nourished by qi and blood. Once the qi and blood run abnormally, as far as the skin is concerned, various skin lesions will occur [9]. In this paper, the famous prescription Siwu decoction is selected clinically to add and subtract with the syndrome, which can nourish blood and promote blood circulation, enrich blood without stagnation, and promote blood circulation without hurting blood [10]. If it is used to promote blood circulation, it can remove the acidity of *Paeonia lactiflora* and aggravate the blood circulation products; For hemostasis, it can remove the pungent powder of *Chuanxiong*, aggravate the cooling of blood and replenish qi to absorb blood; Pain can obviously aggravate the dosage of *Paeonia lactiflora*. For those with qi deficiency, *Radix Astragali* and *Radix Codonopsis* can be added to invigorate qi; For those with blood stasis, peach kernel and safflower can be added to promote blood circulation; *Rhizoma Sparganii*, *Rhizoma Curcumae*, *Thallus Laminariae*, and *Bulbus Fritillariae Cirrhosae* can be added for softening and resolving hard masses; For patients with blood deficiency and cold syndrome, cinnamon, processed ginger and aconite root are added to dispel cold; For patients with blood deficiency and fever, *Scutellaria baicalensis Georgi* and *Cortex Moutan* are added to clear away heat; *Radix Asparagi*, *Radix Ophiopogonis*, *Caulis Spatholobi* and *Radix Polygoni Multiflori* are added for nourishing blood and moistening skin, calming wind and relieving itching. In a word, siwutang has achieved good curative effect in treating various skin diseases.

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