

Li Shimei's Experience in Treating Chloasma by Tonifying the Kidneys and Removing Blood Stasis Based on the Menstrual Cycle

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Abstract: Chloasma is a common melanin deposition and disfiguring skin disease, which is common in women of reproductive age and is easy to diagnose and difficult to treat. Dr Li Shimei, Chief Physician of the Department of Medicine, believes that kidney deficiency and blood stasis is the core pathogenesis of chloasma, and clinical evidence based on the menstrual cycle to tonify the kidneys and eliminate blood stasis, and internal and external treatment, with good clinical results. The clinical results were good. The experimental case is cited to support the evidence.

Chloasma belongs to the Chinese medicine “sallow spot”, “face dust”, “black”, is a common chronic, recurrent, acquired pigmentation disease, clinical manifestations of symmetrical distribution in the cheeks, The clinical manifestations are light or dark brown patches of varying shades and indistinct borders on the cheeks, forehead and jaw [1]. It is more common in females than males, and its disfiguring features have a negative impact on patients' socialization and physical and mental health. Chloasma has many causes, complicated pathogenesis, diverse pathology, and is easy to diagnose and difficult to treat. In western medicine, chloasma can be treated with oral or topical medication and laser therapy, which are quick in onset and short in duration, but with more adverse reactions and easy to recur.

Chinese medicine has a long history of treating chloasma, focusing on the overall treatment, internal and external adjustment, with precise efficacy and few side effects, which has unique advantages. At present, there is no effective and stable treatment method for both Chinese and Western medicine, and joint treatment is advocated in clinical practice.

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learning and experience, gynecological diseases, skin diseases, treatment is quite ingenious, prescription and selection of Chinese and Western medicines based on good results. This article summarizes Director Li's clinical experience in treating chloasma in women of childbearing age who are identified as having kidney deficiency and blood stasis based on the staging of the menstrual cycle, tonifying the kidneys and removing blood stasis, and adopting the integrated treatment of internal medication, external compresses, and footbaths.

1. Kidney deficiency and blood stasis is the core pathogenesis of chloasma.

1.1 Weakness of kidney qi is the root of chloasma formation.

The theory of chloasma traces its origin to the theory of “seven-seven” in Huangdi Neijing. “Su Wen - Shang Gu Tian Zhen Theory” says: “When a woman is seven years old, her kidneys are full of vitality, and her teeth are longer than her hair; two or seven years old and the heavenly capricorn arrives, the Ren vein passes through, and the Taichong vein is full of vitality, and menstruation occurs in a timely manner, so that there is a child.... ..When the Yangming Vessel fails in the fifth and seventh year, the face becomes scorched and the hair begins to fall; in the sixth and seventh year, the three Yang Vessels fail in the upper part of the body, the face becomes scorched and the hair begins to turn white. The Ren Vessel is weak in the seventh year, the Tai Chong Vessel is weak, the Heavenly Decadence is exhausted, and the Earthly Path is impassable; therefore, the form is bad and there are no children.” Kidney qi is the key factor in the occurrence of chloasma, as it determines whether a woman's menstruation and reproduction are normal or not, and the process of kidney qi declining from abundance to decline.

Kidney qi covers kidney essence, kidney yin and kidney yang. Kidney is the residence of water and fire, the foundation of yin and yang, the internal dimension of menstruation and reproduction, and the external protection of face and body shape. Yin and yang are secret, menstruation and reproduction are regular, and skin color is constant. “What do you mean? What do you mean? What is wrong with you? When the kidneys are deficient in essence, the color of the kidneys will be upward, and the face will be sallow.

The kidney is the root of the five organs, and the face is the mirror of the five organs. The origin of all diseases theory” cloud: “five organs, six bowels, twelve meridians blood, are on the face. The line of blood, all honor the surface.” Kidney qi is related to the harmony of the five organs. Kidney qi full of solid, help heart and kidney, spleen and kidney, liver and kidney with the same source, lungs and kidneys, the harmony of the five organs, qi and blood and smooth, then the surface of all the glory, the month to the time, pregnancy and heir, skin white and moist. Women since the “five seven” from the beginning of the kidney gas from the flourishing to the decline, easy to lead to the spleen and kidney disinvestment, liver and kidney insufficiency, heart and kidney, lungs and kidneys, five-organ imbalance, qi and blood disharmony, the appearance of all the damage, menstrual disorders, conception and breeding is not attempted, the face of the spot haggard. Modern research has also confirmed that women at the age of 35 are considered to be of high age or even at high risk by the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology and Reproduction. Chloasma is highly

prevalent in middle-aged and elderly women, and those >40 years of age are predominantly characterized by evidence of kidney deficiency, and may continue to worsen after the seventy-seven menopause [2].

Therefore, the weakness of kidney qi is the core factor of chloasma and the root of the disease mechanism.

1.2 Stagnation of veins is the key to the formation of chloasma.

The Spiritual Pivot - Five Retained Liquids and Fluids” says: ‘The kidney is the master of the outside’. Kidney deficiency and weak yang qi, or essence deficiency and blood weakness, the face loses nourishment, the blood line is sluggish for a long time, and the veins and basilicas are blocked, and the blood stasis on face and face will be formed outside the face. “The blood does not flow the beard color is not glossy, so its face black as paint firewood“ (“Spiritual Pivot - Meridian“) ‘gas and blood and not, or astringent or turbid, can not be glorified in the skin, so the change of the black $\frac{1}{2}$ ’ (“the origin of the disease theory”). Modern studies have also shown that the activity of melanocytes and the increase of melanin aggregation in the true epidermis is a distinct pathological feature of chloasma, and that chloasma patients have elevated blood viscosity and an increase in the viscosity of whole blood [3]. Blood stasis is the pathological basis of chloasma, and it is the pathological product of kidney deficiency, and blood stasis can be the cause of kidney deficiency, so the vicious circle, the more the kidney is deficient, the heavier the spot is. Therefore, stasis in the veins and channels is an important factor and key link in the formation of chloasma.

Therefore, kidney deficiency and blood stasis is the core mechanism of chloasma. Kidney deficiency is the root cause of chloasma, while blood stasis is the key link in the formation of chloasma.

2. Staging and regulating to replenish the kidney and eliminate blood stasis is the treatment principle of chloasma.

Chloasma occurs in women of reproductive age from puberty to menopause, which can be seen as a disorder of female hormone levels [4]. Kidney deficiency and blood stasis are the common pathologies of chloasma and menstrual disorders, and the treatment is to replenish the kidneys and eliminate blood stasis. The treatment should be based on the staging of the menstrual cycle, tonifying the kidney and nourishing blood in the late menstrual period, supplemented by removing blood stasis; tonifying the kidney and nourishing blood in the intermenstrual period, and removing blood stasis; and removing blood stasis in the premenstrual period, supplemented by tonifying the kidney and nourishing blood. The medication can be stopped during menstruation. In this way, it can lighten the spots and eliminate them without affecting the menstrual cycle, and can treat kidney deficiency and blood stasis type of menstrual diseases such as low menstrual flow in the late menstrual period.

3. The trinity of internal medicine and external foot bath is the treatment method of chloasma.

Su Wen - Different Methods and Formulas “Therefore, the saints mixed together to cure, each has the appropriate, so the treatment is different and the disease is healed, get the disease, know the general body of the treatment also.” “Mix and match to cure” is the embodiment of TCM comprehensive therapy. The previous treatment of chloasma is usually based on internal administration of traditional Chinese medicine and facial mask [5]. We adopt the three-in-one “mixed combination to cure” chloasma by applying face mask, taking Chinese medicine and foot bath, so as to eliminate chloasma and nourish the skin by circulation of qi and blood, and to make the internal and external flow smooth.

3.1 Internal method

As pointed out in “Su Wen - Lafang Lun”, “Kidney governs in the interior”. Kidney deficiency is the root cause of chloasma, so medication should be taken to regulate it from the inside to treat the root cause.

Treating chloasma with kidney deficiency and blood stasis by tonifying the kidney, eliminating blood stasis and eliminating spots. Ingredients: Cuscuta 10g, Fructus Lycii 10g, Raspberry 10g, Angelica Sinensis 10g, Rhizoma Ligustici Chuanxiong 10g, Radix Paeoniae Alba 15g, Poria 10g, Atractylodes Macrocephala 15g, Rhizoma Polygonati Odorati 10g, Cortex Eucommiae 5g, Efficacy: Tonifying the Kidney and nourishing the blood, resolving blood stasis and eliminating maculae. In this formula, Cuscuta, Fructus Lycii and Raspberry tonify the kidney qi, benefit the essence and blood, lighten spots and eliminate blemishes; Angelica sinensis, Paeonia lactiflora and Rhizoma Ligustici Chuanxiong tonify the blood and activate the blood, Poria and Atractylodes macrocephala strengthen the spleen and benefit the qi, treating blackness with white color as the subject medicines; and supplemented with Phellodendron Bidentatae and Pellet Fungus to eliminate blood stasis and eliminate spots. The combination of these herbs can tonify the kidney and essence, nourish and invigorate Blood, and eliminate stasis and spots, reflecting the concept of tonifying without stagnating Qi, and promoting without harming Blood. For chloasma patients with normal menstrual cycle, use less or not use Toujiao and Pu Huang in the late menstrual period to avoid activating Blood and promoting Blood circulation, which may lead to early menstruation, or add Scutellaria baicalensis to restrain the heat of the formula and dispel the spots [6]. Usage: 1 dose of 200 ml per day, taken orally, 1 time in the morning and 1 time in the evening, 1 hour after meal. Stop taking during menstruation. Combined use for 3 menstrual cycles.

3.2 External Treatment

External treatment of chloasma by Chinese medicine is characterized by safety, high efficiency, green and no toxic side effects. It follows the principle of Chinese medicine: “If we look at the external response to know the internal organs, then we will know what is wrong” (Ling Shu - The Essential Viscera), “To treat the external, we must seek the internal” (Dan Xi Xin Fa), “The principle of external treatment is the principle of internal treatment, and the medicine of external

treatment is the medicine of internal treatment” (Dan Xi Xin Fa). The reason for external treatment is the reason for internal treatment, and the medicine for external treatment is the medicine for internal treatment“ (”Li Bo Pian Wen”). Adopting masks and foot baths to assist in the external treatment of chloasma, regulating the internal organs and unblocking the veins and channels, there is an increase in the efficiency and stabilizing the effect of the harvest.

3.2.1 Chinese medicine mask

Chloasma is located on the surface of the skin, and local external application of mask can directly reach the place of disease. Whitening spot powder composition: pearl powder, ligustrum powder, Angelica dahurica powder, water hyacinth powder, according to 5:5:4:4 composition, take appropriate amount of honey paste, now with now use. Usage: Apply to the facial pigmentation every night, wash the mask after 30 minutes. 1 time in 2 days, available during menstruation.

3.2.2 Chinese medicine foot bath

It is recorded in “Spiritual Pivot - Evil Viscera and Organs Disease Form”: “Twelve meridians, three hundred and sixty-five collaterals, their blood and gas are all on the face and go to the empty orifices”, take Chinese medicine foot bath in order to reach the meridians and collaterals and improve the blood viscosity of chloasma, and the blood and qi run smoothly, then the blood does not stagnate and the spots are hard to grow. Composition: Semen Cuscutae, Rhizoma Atractylodis Macrocephalae, Radix Paeoniae Alba, Rhizoma Ligustici Chuanxiong, Rhizoma Polygonati Odorati, Radix Angelica Dahuricae, Rhizoma Succinatae, Rhizoma Polygonati Odorati, 20g/packet. Effects: Tonifying the kidney and spleen, invigorating blood circulation and tranquilizing the mind, dispelling wind and clearing collaterals.

The whole formula tonifies the kidney, strengthens the spleen, nourishes qi, nourishes blood, activates blood, relaxes the tendons and passes through the collaterals, there is a pass in the tonic, passes through but nevertheless, combines the tonic and pass to make the meridians and collaterals fluent and the qi and blood fluent, and indirectly improves the color. Usage: 5g, warm water, 20-30 minutes. 1 time for 3 days during late menstruation, 1 time for 2 days during intermenstrual period, 1 time for 1 day during premenstrual period. Stop during menstruation.

4. Examples of cases

Patient: Female, 38 years old, first seen on September 15, 2023, complaining of facial pigmentation for more than 1 year.

Complaint: Facial pigmentation for more than 1 year, aggravated for 1 month. 1 year due to taking care of sick children, her face became darker and the pigmentation gradually appeared. Accompanied by fatigue, lumbago, loose stools. Menstruation was delayed for 5-7 days, with small amount of dark color and blood clots. Last menstrual period 2023-9-8, no abnormality in physical examination. Examination: yellowish color, brownish deposits on both cheeks, butterfly-shaped distribution, clear boundary. The tongue is pale and dark with white moss, the veins at the bottom of

the tongue are bruised and purple, and the pulse is dull and fine.

Western medicine diagnosis: chloasma. Chinese medicine diagnosis: sallow spot. Diagnosis: Kidney deficiency and blood stasis.

Treatment: tonifying the kidney, benefiting the qi, resolving blood stasis and eliminating sallow spots.

Prescription: (1) Internal formula: Cuscuta 10g, Fructus Lycii 10g, Raspberry 10g, Angelica Sinensis 10g, Rhizoma Ligustici Chuanxiong 5g, Paeonia lactiflora 15g, Poria 10g, Atractylodis Macrocephalae 15g. 7 times a day, 1 times a day, decocted in water up to 400ml, divided into morning and evening service.

(2) mask: pearl powder 50g, ligustrum powder 50g, dahurian dahurica powder 40g, water hyacinth powder 40g, mix well. Every night, take appropriate amount of honey to mix the paste, apply on the face of pigmentation, 30 minutes after the mask will be washed. 2 days 1 time. Apply behind the patient's ear before first use to prevent allergies or other discomfort.

(3) Foot bath: Before going to bed, the patient can use 5g Shujin Tongluo foot bath powder, add boiling water, wait until the temperature of the water down to moderate enough to enter the water, each time for 30 minutes, 3 days, 1 time.

The patient is advised to combine work and rest, live on time, emotional comfort.

Second diagnosis: September 23, 2023. Complained of improvement in lumbago and fatigue, and the color of the face seemed to be bright. It is the peri-ovulatory period between menstruation adjustment formula: the original formula plus lily of the valley to nourish the heart and tranquilize the mind, soapberry, Coix lacryma, Ba Ji Tian to promote ovulation and regulate menstruation. The treatment was continued for 7 times, and the external treatment method remained unchanged.

The third diagnosis: September 30, 2023, the face has a zephyr. The color of the face is lustrous, and the pigmentation has become lighter than before. At the time of premenstrual period, Chuanxiong was increased to 10g, with the addition of Bulbus Fritillariae Cirrhosae and Fritillariae Cirrhosae to strengthen the effect of removing blood stasis and regulating menstruation.

Fourth consultation: October 18, 2023. Facial color improved, spots reduced and lightened. Menstruation came on October 9 as scheduled, the color of menstruation improved and the blood clots decreased. The patient should continue to take the first diagnostic formula. After three menstrual cycles of continuous treatment according to the phases of late menstruation, intermenstrual period, premenstrual period and menstrual period, the patient's complexion was moist, the color of spots was vague and the menstruation was regular.

The patient stopped taking traditional Chinese medicine and asked to take mask and foot bath 1-2 times a week to consolidate the therapeutic effect. 3 months later, the patient was followed up without any new and recurrence, and was asked to protect herself from the sun and not to stay up too late and exert herself.

Press: The patient is a kindergarten teacher, Long distance from husband, they have two children. Her daughter is in the 5th grade of elementary school, and she is bored with school and stays up late at night. The patient has to take care of her young son and is worried that her daughter will not sleep at night, so she is physically and mentally frightened and tired, and she brings her daughter with her

to the clinic. The patient's over-exertion injured the kidney, qi deficiency and essence loss, blood stagnation, facial loss of glory, blood stasis and sallow spots over a long period of time. Lumbar soreness and fatigue due to the loss of nourishment in the lumbar region, and delayed menstruation due to the lack of regulation of the flushing period. Identified as chloasma with kidney deficiency and blood stasis. Taking the theory of “Kidney-Tianki-Chongren-Cystic Uterus” as the guide, the treatment was based on the phased treatment of menstrual cycle, tonifying the kidney and removing blood stasis, eliminating the spots and regulating the menstruation. The first diagnosis coincided with the clean menstruation, and the blood sea was empty at the end of menstruation, and there was little blood in the kidney, so the main purpose was to tonify the kidney, nourish the blood and benefit the qi, and to tonify the kidney, eliminate blood stasis and remove spots, and to reduce the blood stasis and blood-breaking Pu huang, and Tou Bei Cui, which were used in the treatment of the disease for 7 times. The mask was given once every 2 days and foot bath once every 3 days. At the second consultation, her mood changed for the better, her complexion was slightly shiny, and her lumbar soreness and fatigue were reduced. At the time of intermenstrual period, the transformation of yin and yang, easy to heart and kidney disorders, plus lily of the valley to nourish the heart and tranquilize the mind, soapberry, Coix lacryma, Morinda citrifolia to promote the discharge of menstruation regulation. At the third consultation, the color of the two cheek spots became lighter. It coincided with the premenstrual period, and the first diagnosis formula was added with Pu Huang and Tou Bei Ci to activate blood circulation and eliminate blood stasis in order to lighten the spots and regulate menstruation. The foot bath was changed to once a day. At the fourth consultation, the spots were reduced and the face was moist. In this way, according to the menstrual cycle staging tonifying the kidney and removing blood stasis, taking internal mask foot bath comprehensive treatment for three menstrual cycles, the patient's second diagnosis started to take effect, and the fourth diagnosis saw the effect, after three menstrual cycles of treatment, the patient's face spots nearly eliminated, face moist, lumbar acidity and fatigue disappeared. Her daughter's sleep improved after treatment, her mood stabilized, and she went back to school.

5. Discussion

Chloasma is a reflection of dirty disease in the face, which belongs to internal and external common disease. The etiology of chloasma is complex and multifarious, and the main mechanisms include enhanced melanocyte activity, increased melanin synthesis and impaired skin barrier function. Pathological manifestations [7] are mainly increased melanin deposition above and below the basal layer, alteration of the basement membrane, deformation of elastic fibers, and capillary dilatation, etc. The diversity of its histopathological manifestations makes melasma difficult to treat.

Chloasma is related to women's special physiopathology: first, chloasma is related to women's age. The Neijing points out that chloasma appears from the age of “five or seven” and worsens from the age of “six or seven”. This is also confirmed by modern research, in which the obstetrics and gynecology department designates women at the age of 35 as being of high age or even at high risk. Chloasma is highly prevalent in women of childbearing age, and kidney deficiency is predominant in those >40 years old. Secondly, chloasma is related to menstrual disorders, and abnormal sex

hormone level is one of the three important factors in chloasma, which plays a dominant role in the pathogenesis of chloasma. Thirdly, chloasma is related to multiple pregnancies. The Spiritual Pivot - The Five Sounds and Five Flavors said, “The birth of a woman, there is more than enough gas and less than enough blood, and the number of them is taken off from the blood”. Kidney main reproductive, through pregnancy and lactation blood consumption and injury to the essence, repeated loss of kidney qi.

Traditional Chinese medicine believes that the dysfunction of liver, spleen, kidney and internal organs is the inherent pathogenesis of chloasma, and the past treatments were mainly based on the identification of oral plus Chinese medicine mask. Director Li, who has been engaged in gynecology of Chinese medicine for a long time, pointed out that kidney deficiency and blood stasis is the core pathogenesis of chloasma according to the physiology and pathology of women, and based on the physiological characteristics of women's menstruation, she would adjust the weekly period in phases, and adjust the internal and external organs together, treating the symptoms and root cause at the same time. It adopts the integrated treatment of chloasma with internal medicine, facial mask and foot bath, which has fast effect and less recurrence. “The skin is separated from the hair orifices, and the viscera are not seen, and the viscera are directly reached“ (“Li Bo Eqi Wen”). Mask and foot bath are simple to operate, and can be used as health care regimen, long-term intermittent application to consolidate the efficacy of chloasma, which is easy to accept by patients and has good compliance.

The whitening efficacy of the drugs used has been documented in ancient books [8], such as *Cuscuta chinensis*, *Lycium barbarum*, Raspberry, *Angelica dahurica*, *Atractylodes macrocephala*, *Poria cocos*, *Ligustrum lucidum*, and *Bletilla splendens*. *Cuscuta* “smooth with fat cream juice to face (Shennong Ben Cao Jing) ‘pearl coated face, people moist and good color, coated hands and feet, go skin against the skin, can be transformed face bleak, so that the luster of white ’ (“Materia Medica Compendium “) *Bletilla hyacinthina* Can “wash the face black, dispel spots” (“Compendium of Materia Medica”) “expel blood stasis to generate new in addition to the face of herpes, coated with chapped hands and feet, people smooth muscle” (“Materia Medica Preparation”) *Atractylodes macrocephala* “The main face of the light and happy, the face to dispel spots“ (“Treatise on medicinal properties“) *Angelica dahurica* ‘long skin, moisturizing, can be used as a face fat’ (“Ben Jing”).

Modern research has confirmed that *Angelica sinensis* and *Rhizoma Ligustici Chuanxiong*, *Rhizoma Atractylodis Macrocephalae*, *Poria*, *Angelica dahurica*, *Paeonia lactiflora*, *Bletilla splendens*, and Pearl Powder inhibit the activity of liguidinase and reduce the production of melanin [9-14]. *Cuscuta*, *Lycium barbarum*, raspberry, *Poria*, *Atractylodes macrocephala*, *Angelica dahurica*, and *Rhizoma Chuanxiong* are antioxidant, delay aging [15-16], and improve skin color. Pu Huang and Tu Bai Zhi can improve blood circulation and reduce blood viscosity [17-18].

Therefore, through the combined application of internal administration, external application and foot bath, multi-component, multi-pathway and multi-mechanism can improve the function of internal organs, promote microcirculation of the face, and achieve the therapeutic goal of fading discoloration.

6. Conclusion

Chloasma is a difficult-to-treat skin disease. Traditional Chinese medicine and appropriate technology of Chinese medicine for treating chloasma have the unique advantages of reliable efficacy and few side effects. The treatment of chloasma is based on tonifying the kidney, removing blood stasis and eliminating spots with kidney tonifying and removing blood stasis, treating both the symptoms and the root cause of the disease; supplemented with whitening and lightening mask for near-term treatment, and footbath for distant treatment, which had a good clinical effect. Based on the menstrual cycle, the medication was administered in stages, which was beneficial to the treatment of spots and avoided affecting menstruation. The three-in-one integrated treatment of top dressing, Chinese medicine and foot bath embodied the theory of Chinese medicine, which is “mixed and combined to cure” and improved the clinical efficacy. It is worthwhile to further study the mechanism of the empirical prescription and further popularize the experience.

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