

Spleen, Digestion, Fatigue, Hemorrhage

Traditional Chinese Medicine Explores the Connection Between Them

Unlike Western anatomy, the spleen is a very important organ in the traditional Chinese medicine system. The definition of the spleen is not the same as it is in Western medicine. The spleen and stomach in traditional Chinese medicine represent the digestive system. The spleen plays an essential role involving the transportation and transformation of nutrients, control of blood flow, and responsibility for anxiety. The spleen also is related with the muscles.

Transportation and Transformation

Traditional Chinese medicine explains that the intake of food is digested by the stomach, and then the nutrients are transported and transformed by the spleen to all parts of the body. These nutrients are used for production of Qi-blood and body fluids. It fulfills a nourishing and moistening role.

When patients have chronic fatigue and digestive disorders, they are often diagnosed by traditional Chinese medicine as spleen deficient. Generally, this means that the spleen's role is dysfunctional. Because of spleen deficiencies, nutrients cannot be distributed properly for the body's needs. The body lacks energy, so fatigue occurs. Spleen deficiency also causes digestive dysfunction. Typical symptoms are poor appetite, bloating of the abdomen, or chronic diarrhea.

Normal functioning of the spleen can prevent body fluids from accumulating. Whereas, a dysfunction of the spleen in transporting and transforming will lead to stagnation of body fluids and cause dampness, water retention and phlegm.

The dysfunction of the spleen can be caused by improper diet, internal injury, or stress and other negative emotions.

We often hear the terms "internal dampness" and "internal phlegm." Generally this condition also is due to spleen deficiency, because the spleen function of transportation and transformation slows down and nutrients become stagnant. The nutrients, instead of creating energy for body use, become a burden to the body. This condition manifests itself as poor appetite, nausea, abdominal pain, a flat taste in the mouth and loose stools. Excessive intake of cold drinks and raw or unripe fruit, and cold and damp living conditions, can lead to the formation of damp and phlegm pathogens. Excessive intake of fatty,

sweet and greasy food also can cause dampness and phlegm.

From the view of spleen physiology and pathology, many difficult conditions, such as Crohn's disease and irritable bowel syndrome, can be successfully treated by traditional Chinese medicine.

Blood Flow

Spleen deficiency is one of the major reasons for chronic haemorrhage conditions. The spleen helps to keep blood flowing within vessels and prevent it from seeping into tissues. I can give you many successful cases about treating menstrual hemorrhaging by strengthening spleen Qi.

In the case of the spleen's dysfunction in transportation and transformation, Qi-blood will be insufficient and its controlling ability will be reduced, leading to various kinds of chronic haemorrhages. The inability of the spleen to keep blood flowing in the vessels is due to an insufficiency of the spleen Qi.

It is caused mainly by an injury to the spleen from chronic disease or overfatigue. Hemafecia, metrorrhagia, hematuria, hematohidrosis, and gingival hemorrhage can result, accompanied by lassitude, shortness of breath, poor appetite, loose stools, pale complexion, pale tongue, and thready and weak pulse.

Anxiety and the Spleen

The spleen has its specific emotion in anxiety. Moderate anxiety causes little stress on the physiological functions of the organs. However, too much anxiety may disturb the proper function of the spleen. The spleen will be deficient in its ability to transport, transform and send up nutrients. This can result in stagnation and depression of Qi. If Qi is depressed from too much anxiety, anorexia, epigastric stuffiness and distress, and dizziness can occur. This can also explain why anxiety happens when some people become overhungry, and why anxiety sometimes is accompanied by fatigue.

