

Peyronie's Disease

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Peyronie's disease refers to fibrosis of the cavernous sheath of the penis leading to contracture of the investing fascia of the corpora of the penis resulting in deviated and painful erection. In Western medicine, the cause of this condition is unknown. It occurs in adult men and may prevent intromission. It is rarely seen in those under 20 years of age. It is a slow and gradually developing disease. If the fibrosis extends into the corpus cavernosum, it may compromise tumescence distally. Fortunately for some, resolution of this condition may occur spontaneously over a period of many months, and minor Peyronie's disease which does not cause sexual dysfunction does not typically warrant treatment by Western medicine. Such treatment primarily consists of surgical removal of the fibrosis and replacement with a path graft. Unfortunately, treatment results are unpredictable and surgery may result in further scarring and exaggeration of the condition. Local injections of verapamil or high-potency corticosteroids may also be effective. Orally administered corticosteroids are not. In some cases, a prosthesis may have to be inserted to assist potency. Since Western medicine's treatment of this condition is not entirely satisfactory, alternative treatments, and especially nonsurgical treatments, are desired by many sufferers of this frustrating and embarrassing disease. Recently, Zhang Bao-xing and Zhang Hai published an article on the Chinese medical treatment of Peyronie's disease. Titled, "The Treatment of 30 Cases of Penile Sclerosis & Nodulation with *Chu Jie Tang* (Eliminate Nodulation Decoction)," this article appeared in *Shan Xi Zhong Yi (Shanxi Chinese Medicine)*, #4, 2001, on page 43.

Cohort description:

All 30 cases included in this study were seen as outpatients at a hospital attached to the Henan College of

Chinese Medicine. Three of the men were between 20-30, six were 31-40, 12 were 41-50, and nine were 50-60 years old. Ten cases had had this condition for one year or less, 12 cases had had it 1-2 years, and eight cases had had it for three years or more. All the patients met the diagnostic criteria appearing on page 227 in *Nan Xing Sheng Zhi Su Wai Ke (External Medicine for the Male Reproductive System)* published by the People's Health & Hygiene Publishing Co. in Beijing in 1989. These criteria were the same as the Western medical description given above.

Treatment method:

In order to dispel dampness and eliminated phlegm, transform stasis and soften the hard, and rectify the qi and free the flow of the network vessels, the following medicinals were administered: Pericarpium Citri Reticulatae (*Chen Pi*), 12g, Rhizoma Pinelliae Ternatae (*Ban Xia*), 10g, Sclerotium Poriae Cocos (*Fu Ling*), 12g, Rhizoma Curcumae Zedoariae (*E Zhu*), 15g, Rhizoma Sparganii (*San Leng*), 15g, Spica Prunellae Vulgaris (*Xia Ku Cao*), 20g, Semen Sinapis Albae (*Bai Jie Zi*), 15g, Bulbus Fritillariae Thunbergii (*Zhe Bei Mu*), 12g, processed Resina Olibani (*Ru Xiang*), 10g, processed Resina Myrrhae (*Mo Yao*), 10g, Fructus Meliae Toosendanii (*Chuan Lian Zi*), 12g, Radix Bupleuri (*Chai Hu*), 10g, Radix Achyranthis Bidentatae (*Niu Xi*), 12g, Rhizoma Atractylodis Macrocephalae (*Bai Zhu*), 10g, Fasciculus Vascularis Luffae Cylindricae (*Si Gua Luo*), 15g, and Herba Ranunculi Ternati (*Mao Zhao Cao*), 20g.¹ One *ji* of these medicinals was decocted in water and administered orally per day, with one month equaling one course of treatment and three continuous courses being given. During this time, patients were forbidden to eat acrid, peppery, sweet, and fatty foods. They were counseled to keep a smooth and easy affect and to keep their sexual activity suitable. No further explanation of "suitable" is given by the Chinese authors of this study. However, sexual activity was not prohibited during therapy.

Treatment outcomes:

Cure was defined as disappearance of sclerosis and nodu-

lation, no curvature of the penis during erection, and no aching or pain. Marked effect was defined as partial softening and lessening of penile sclerosis and nodulation, improvement in any aching and pain, and curvature of the penis during erection. Based on these criteria, 23 cases were cured and seven got a marked effect. Thus the total amelioration rate was 100%.

Discussion:

According to Zhang and Zhang, this disease is associated with the three channels of the liver, spleen, and kidney. If the patient's emotions are unfulfilled, the liver may become depressed and the qi stagnant. Thus the movement of the blood loses its smooth and easy flow and there is qi stagnation and blood stasis in the yin organ. If sexual desire is without limit, this may damage and consume kidney essence, resulting in yin vacuity and the movement of the blood becoming slow and relaxed. This may also cause blood stasis in the yin organ. A predilection for eating fatty, sweet foods and drinking too much alcohol may cause detriment and damage to the spleen and stomach, brewing and engendering phlegm and dampness. If this phlegm and dampness pour downward, they may congeal and bind in the yin organ.

Based on these disease causes and mechanisms, Zhang and Zhang believe that the appropriate treatment principles for dealing with this condition are to dispel dampness and eliminate phlegm, rectify the qi and free the flow of the network vessels, and transform stasis and soften the

hard. Within this formula, *Chen Pi*, *Ban Xia*, *Fu Ling*, *Bai Jie Zi*, *Zhe Bei Mu*, and *Bai Zhu* fortify the spleen, dispel dampness, and transform phlegm. *San Leng*, *E Zhu*, *Xia Ku Cao*, *Mao Zhao Cao*, *Ru Xiang*, and *Mo Yao* quicken the blood and transform stasis, soften the hard and scatter nodulation. *Chuan Lian Zi*, *Chai Hu*, and *Si Gua Luo* course the liver, rectify the qi, and free the flow of the network vessels, while *Niu Xi* guides the other medicinals in this formula to move downward to the reproductive organs. Because these medicinals and these disease mechanisms are in accord, the treatment effects were completely satisfactory.

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For further information on the Chinese medical treatment of male urological and reproductive diseases, see Anna Lin's *A Handbook of TCM Urology & Male Sexual Dysfunction* available from Blue Poppy Press.

Endnote:

1. This medicinal is sweet, acrid, and warm and enters the liver and lung channels. It treats scrofula, subcutaneous nodulations, pulmonary tuberculosis, and malaria-like disease. When taken internally as in decoction, its dose is 0.5-1 *liang*. It is classified as a heat-clearing medicinal. This medicinal's common English name is Cat's Claw, and it is a species of buttercup. In the U.S., it is available from both Mayway Corp. and Nuherbs Co.

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