

# AETIOLOGY, PATHOLOGY AND TREATMENT OF BLOOD STASIS



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## Why are we discussing Blood stasis?

Blood stasis is a major pathogenic factor that is responsible for very many serious diseases. It is a pathogenic factor that is particularly frequent in chronic Western diseases, in inflammatory diseases and in autoimmune diseases.

Moreover, Blood stasis is present in major Western diseases such as cancer, heart disease and stroke. In all these diseases, Blood stasis is frequently (but not always) combined with Phlegm.

Another reason Blood stasis is so important is that the Blood-invigorating herbs have a very interesting pharmacology (see later slide).

I think one reason Blood stasis may be underestimated is terminology, i.e. using the term “Blood-moving” herbs which seems to imply that they simply “move” Blood. This will also be discussed soon.

I will first discuss the aetiology, pathology, diagnosis and treatment of Blood stasis in general. After that, I will discuss the treatment of certain diseases but only when they are caused by Blood stasis. The diseases discussed are:

Chest Bi

Goitre

Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia

Erectile dysfunction

Endometriosis

Myoma

Infertility

Cancer

Please note that these diseases will be discussed only in the context of Blood stasis.

When these diseases are caused by Blood stasis they share certain common characteristics, which are:

Chronic stage

Hardness, masses

Pain (but not always)

Dark colour, purple

Purple tongue (but not always)

Wiry, Choppy or Firm (Confined, *Lao*) pulse

For each of the above diseases, Blood stasis is only one of the patterns, there are many others, e.g. Dampness in Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia, Kidney deficiency in Erectile Dysfunction, Phlegm in infertility, etc.

## BLOOD STASIS

Blood stasis is a common and damaging pathogenic factor that is at the root of many serious diseases.

A characteristic of Blood stasis is that it can only occur after a prolonged period of time: thus, it is always a relatively serious pathogenic factor and one that leads to more serious diseases than Qi stagnation: for example, coronary heart disease, abdominal masses, tumours, high blood pressure, stroke, etc.

By definition, Qi stagnation cannot, by itself, cause any of the above problems. Thus, whenever we see signs of Blood stasis, we know that the condition is one of long duration and the prognosis is less good than that for Qi stagnation.

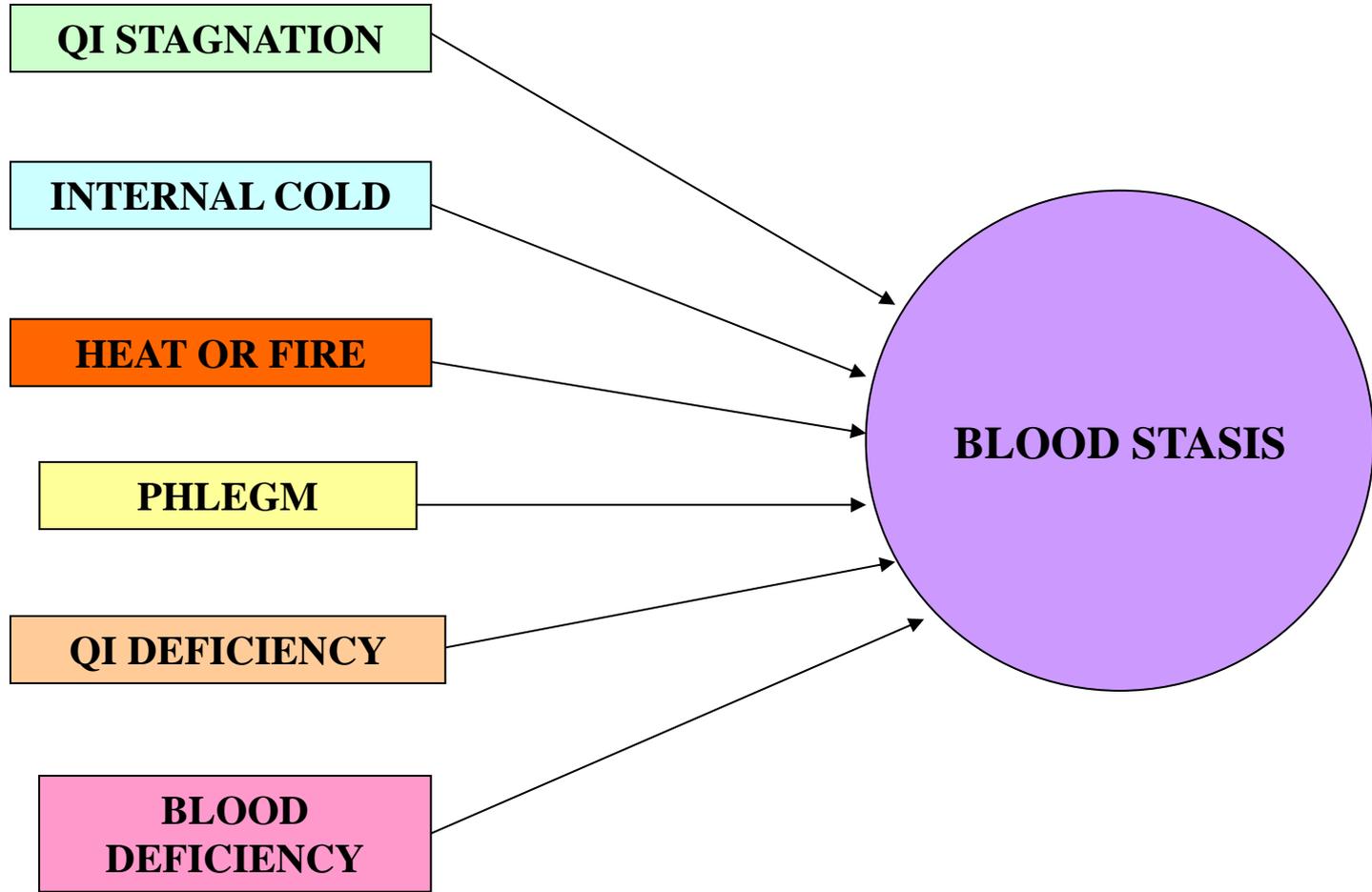
Blood stasis occurs after a prolonged time, but there are two exceptions: surgery and trauma from accidents.

Much more important than Qi stagnation.

## 1. AETIOLOGY

Blood stasis never arises independently (like Qi stagnation) but is always the consequence of other conditions, usually after a long period of time. Thus, there are no aetiological factors (diet, emotions, etc.) that give rise to Blood stasis directly and by themselves. The following are the conditions leading to Blood stasis, with the main organs involved:

- Qi stagnation – Liver and Heart
- Internal Cold – Uterus, Stomach and Heart
- Heat or Fire – Stomach, Intestines, Heart, Liver, Uterus
- Qi deficiency – Stomach and Heart
- Blood deficiency – Uterus, Heart and Liver
- Phlegm – Stomach, Intestines and Uterus



**QI STAGNATION**



**INTERNAL COLD**



**HEAT OR FIRE**



**PHLEGM**



**QI DEFICIENCY**



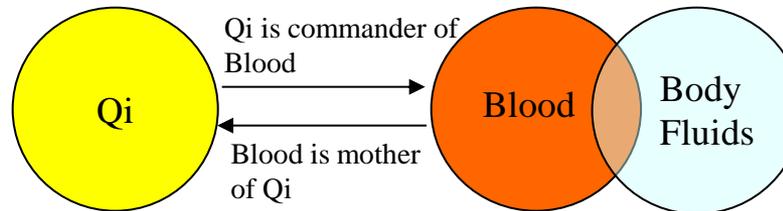
**BLOOD  
DEFICIENCY**



## 2. PATHOLOGY

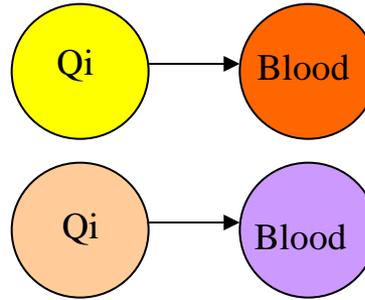
Blood is related to Qi and to Body Fluids. It is related to Qi first of all because Blood itself is a (dense) form of Qi and secondly because it relies on Qi for its movement. *“Qi is the commander of Blood; when Qi moves, Blood moves. Blood is the mother of Qi; where Blood goes, Qi goes”*.

On the other hand, Blood is part of Body Fluids and is formed from them (with the participation of Gu Qi). Thus, both Qi and Body Fluids pathology may play a role in Blood stasis.



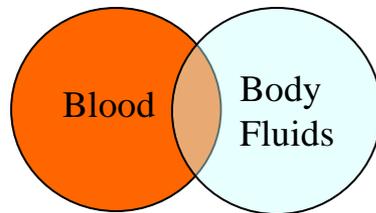
For example, Qi stagnation is a very common cause of Blood stasis

Qi is commander of Blood

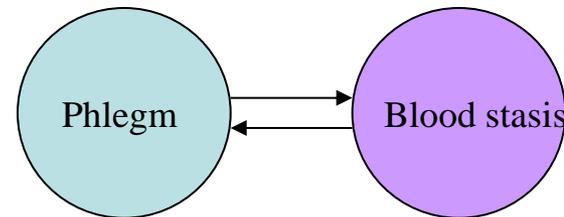


Qi stagnates, Blood stagnates

A pathology of Body Fluids, such as Phlegm, may also lead to Blood stasis.

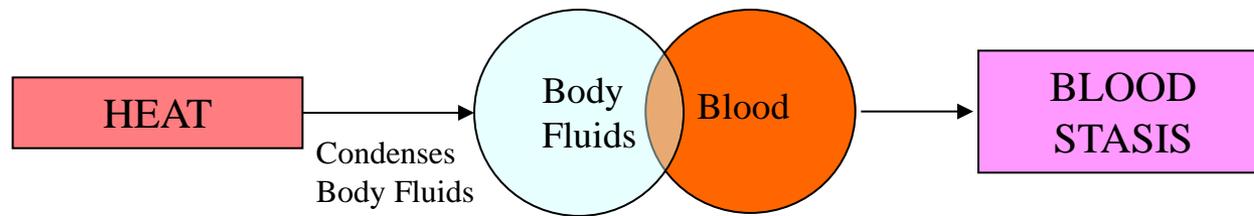


Interchange between Blood and  
Body Fluids



Body Fluids pathology

Another pathology of Body Fluids leading to Blood stasis occurs when Heat or Fire condense the Body Fluids and make the blood more dense, leading to Blood stasis.



## a) QI STAGNATION

This is the most common cause of Blood stasis: since Qi is the commander of Blood and Blood relies on the pushing action of Qi for its movement, any Qi stagnation may lead to Blood stasis after some time.

Liver-Qi stagnation is the most common cause of Blood stasis but other organs may also be involved and Qi stagnation in an organ may induce Blood stasis in another.

For example, Heart-Qi stagnation may also lead to Heart-Blood stasis; Liver-Qi stagnation may lead to Liver-Blood stasis and this, in turn, to Heart-Blood stasis. Liver-Blood stasis may also influence the Uterus and the Intestines.

