

DIZZINESS



Chinese character for “longevity” (*shou*)

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Full

- Liver-Yang, Liver-Fire and Liver-Wind rising
- Turbid Phlegm in the head
- Liver-Yang rising with Phlegm in the head

Empty

- Qi and Blood deficiency
- Kidney deficiency

DIZZINESS

Dizziness in Chinese medicine is called *Xuan Yun* 眩 晕. *Xuan* means “dizziness” but its character contains the radical for “eye” so it also suggests “burred vision”; while *Yun* means “dizziness”.

This symptom may range from a very slight dizziness, sometimes only on changing posture, to very severe vertigo with loss of balance when everything around the patient seems to be spinning.

The first reference to dizziness occurs in the Nei Jing which links it to various patterns.

The “SuWen” in chapter 74 relates it to Liver-Wind:

“Wind causes dizziness and it pertains to the Liver.”

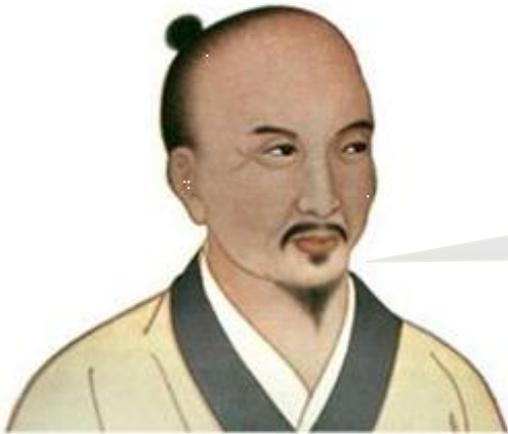
The “Ling Shu” in chapter 28 attributes dizziness to Qi not reaching the head:

“When the Qi of the Upper Burner is deficient, the brain is not full [this causes] dizziness and blurred vision.”

In chapter 33 it relates it to deficiency of the Sea of Marrow:

“When the Sea of Marrow is deficient there is dizziness.”

Zhu Dan Xi in "Essential Methods of Dan Xi" (1347) relates dizziness to Phlegm and goes as far as saying:



“There is no dizziness without Phlegm.”

He therefore advocates resolving Phlegm as the main method of treating dizziness. As we shall see, Phlegm is a very common cause of dizziness in the elderly.

Zhang Jing Yue, on the other hand, in his book “The Complete Book of Jing Yue” (1624), relates dizziness to Deficiency and says: “*Deficiency above causes dizziness*” and “*There is no dizziness without Deficiency*”. He therefore recommends tonifying as the main method to treat dizziness.

The differentiation and treatment of Dizziness together with those of Headaches can be used as a guideline to treat hypertension.



The discussion of Dizziness will be conducted according to the following topics:

1. AETIOLOGY

- a) Emotional strain
- b) Overwork
- c) Irregular diet

2. PATHOLOGY

3. IDENTIFICATION OF PATTERNS AND TREATMENT

- a) Liver-Yang, Liver-Fire or Liver-Wind rising
- b) Turbid Phlegm in the head
- c) Liver-Yang rising with Phlegm in the head
- d) Qi and Blood deficiency
- e) Kidney deficiency

4. Modern Chinese literature

5. Western differentiation

a) Ear

i. Acute labyrinthitis

ii. Ménière's disease

b) Eighth cranial nerve

c) Brainstem

1. AETIOLOGY

a) EMOTIONAL STRAIN

Anger, frustration, resentment, worry, shame and guilt and any other emotion that affects the Liver may cause Liver-Yang to rise. This is a common cause of dizziness of the Full type.

On the other hand, prolonged stagnation of Qi from emotional strain often gives rise to Fire, in this case Liver-Fire which may also cause dizziness. Moreover, Liver-Fire may generate Wind which causes even more intense dizziness, to the point of loss of balance.

b) OVERWORK

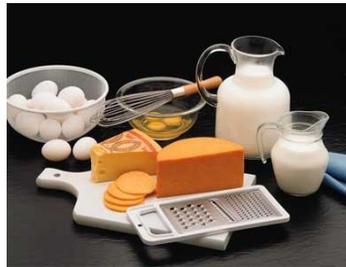
Overwork over many years without adequate rest weakens the Kidneys.

These fail to generate enough Marrow to nourish the brain and dizziness results. This is dizziness of the Empty-type.

c) IRREGULAR DIET

Excessive consumption of greasy foods or dairy products or simply irregular eating may weaken the Spleen and lead to Dampness and Phlegm.

When this is associated with a deficiency of Qi in the Upper Burner, the clear Qi cannot rise to the head and turbid Phlegm stagnates there, giving rise to dizziness, blurred vision and a sensation of muzziness (fuzziness) and heaviness of the head.



2. PATHOLOGY

The most important pathological distinction to be made in dizziness is that between:

Deficiency

The sensation of dizziness quite simply arises either because not enough Qi reaches the head (Deficiency-type)



Fullness

Or because a pathogenic factor in the head prevents the clear Yang from reaching the head and the turbid Qi from descending (Full-type)

