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4 Imbalances and 5 Organs

A new system for diagnosis and treatment

4 Ungleichgewichte und 5 Organe

Ein neues System für Diagnose und Therapie

Abstract

This article describes a new system of diagnosis and treatment termed the 4 Imbalances and 5 Organs. The system can be used for different treatment methods, including Western herbs, Chinese herbs, acupuncture, and Chinese nutrition. Its clear visual presentation is designed for rapid and easy clinical use. The first level, the 4 Imbalances gives a clear simple overview of the patient. It cuts through complexity and focuses on the patient's basic needs, in terms of just four factors: Deficiency, Stagnation, Disturbance, and Excess.

The second level, the 4 Imbalances + 5 Organs, focuses on the parts of the picture in precise detail. This increases the accuracy of diagnosis, which is the key to safe and successful treatment.

Keywords

4 Imbalances (and 5 Organs), Jeremy Ross, Combining Western herbs (Chinese Medicine, and Phytopharmacology), A new system of Diagnosis (and treatment), Western herbal medicine

Zusammenfassung

Der nachstehende Artikel stellt ein neues System für Diagnose und Therapie vor, das als „4 Ungleichgewichte und 5 Organe“ bezeichnet wird. Dieses System kann unter verschiedenen Behandlungsansätzen Anwendung finden, etwa in der Westlichen Kräuterheilkunde, Chinesischen Kräuterheilkunde, Akupunktur und Chinesischen Ernährungslehre. Dank seiner klaren, visuellen Darstellung ist das System für den raschen klinischen Einsatz gut geeignet.

Auf der ersten Ebene vermitteln die 4 Ungleichgewichte einen aussagekräftigen, einfachen Überblick über den Patienten. Das System reduziert komplexe Gegebenheiten und richtet den Fokus auf die Grundbedürfnisse des Patienten im Sinne von nur vier Faktoren: Mangel, Stillstand, Störung und Übermaß.

Auf der zweiten Ebene richten die 4 Ungleichgewichte + 5 Organe den Fokus mit großer Präzision auf die Einzelteile des Bildes. Dadurch erhöht sich die Genauigkeit der Diagnose, dem Schlüssel zu einer unbedenklichen und erfolgreichen Behandlung.

Schlüsselwörter

4 Ungleichgewichte (und 5 Organe), Jeremy Ross, Verbindung von Westlicher Kräuterheilkunde (Chinesische Medizin, Phytopharmakologie), ein neues System für Diagnose (und Behandlung), Westliche Kräutermedizin

The 4 Imbalances and 5 Organs is a new system for differential diagnosis, which can make treatment easier and more effective, whether the treatment is with Western herbs, Chinese herbs, acupuncture, qi gong, or nutrition.

Complex patients

The problem for practitioners is that modern chronic patients are rarely simple. Many have up to 10 different Chinese syndromes at the same time, and sometimes up to 20. This makes two problems for the beginner, and even for the experienced practitioner.

First problem

After the consultation, the practitioner is buried in data, and may lose sight of a clear overall picture of the patient's needs.

Second problem

The practitioner does not know where to focus their attention, so that differential diagnosis lacks precision of the details.

Solution

It was to solve these two related problems that the system of 4 Imbalances + 5 Organs was developed.

Four imbalances

We can say that there are four main things that go wrong with the energy of the body:

- Deficiency
- Stagnation
- Disturbance
- Excess

4 IMBALANCES		
OSWALD		
43	MALE	ID#
WARM		COOL
★ ★ ★ ★	TONIFY	CALM ★ ★ ★ ★
EXHAUSTION	RESTLESSNESS	
DEFICIENT YIN	SPIRIT DISTURBANCE	
★ ★	MOVE	DRAIN ★ ★
CHEST DISCOMFORT	HEAT SENSATIONS	
STAGNANT QI	DEFICIENCY HEAT	

Fig. 1: 4 Imbalances Example

Deficiency

This is not enough energy, for example with symptoms of exhaustion or physical weakness.

The principle of treatment is to **tonify**: that is, to increase the energy of the body of a whole, or of some specific organ system.

Stagnation

Here, there is energy, but the flow of energy is blocked, for example with symptoms such as obstruction sensations in the chest, or emotional constraint.

The principle of treatment is to **move**: that is, to move obstruction to the flow of energy in the body of a whole, or of a specific organ system.

Disturbance

The energy is disturbed or unstable, for example with emotional symptoms such as anger or anxiety, or physical symptoms such as vomiting or cough.

The principle of treatment is to **calm**: that is, to calm the disturbance, whether this is physical, emotional, or mental.

Excess

Here, there is a temporarily too much energy, as in hyperactivity or fever, or too much material, for example when there is excessive bronchial phlegm.

The principle of treatment is to **drain**: that is, to reduce the amount of energy or material, either in the body of a whole, or in a specific organ system.

An example of draining from acupuncture is bleeding, and an example from herbal medicine is the use of purgative herbs.

Importance of 4 Imbalances

The 4 Imbalance system gives a simple clear overview of the patient.

The practitioner can reduce the complexity of the case history to the basic question:

‘Do I tonify, move, calm, or drain this patient?’

Potential mistreatment If the practitioner does not understand the 4 Imbalances, and, for example, drains a Deficient patient, then that patient will be more ill than before the treatment.

Combinations of Imbalances

Often a patient has more than one of the 4 Imbalances at the same time: they may have two, three, or all four Imbalances together.

Example: Oswald

For example, the patient Oswald has all four Imbalances, but to differing degrees, as shown in fig. 1, and explained in the text below.

Prioritization and the star rating system

Relative importance of each Imbalance

Because the patient may have more than one Imbalance, the practitioner must decide the **relative importance** of each Imbalance. Also, the practitioner must also have some way to record this.

Star rating system

The relative importance of each Imbalance is shown by its **star rating**.

Star rating from 0-5

The star rating system awards from 0-5 stars ★ for each of the 4 Imbalances, according to the severity of the main disorder that is associated with that Imbalance.

Oswald as an example The star ratings for Oswald’s four Imbalances, and associated disorders, are shown in fig. 1 above. The most important disorder for Oswald is the exhaustion, with four stars, but the Deficiency syndrome is Deficient Yin, with associated restlessness, insomnia, and heat sensations. Oswald is warm in temperature, and therefore requires a cool herb combination to balance him.

Star rating and herbs

The importance of the star ratings is that they determine the **relative number of herbs in the combination**.

The more stars awarded to an Imbalance, the more herbs allocated to that Imbalance in the herb combination.

For example, for Oswald, in a 6-herb combination, the relative proportions would be approximately:

- 2 tonic herbs
- 2 calming herbs
- 1 moving herb
- 1 draining herb

Patient and practitioner

The practitioner and patient together can prioritize the patient’s different disorders, giving star ratings for each. For example, the practitioner may ask the patient:

‘Oswald, you say that your main illnesses are exhaustion, restlessness, a sensation of chest discomfort, and feeling too hot. How many stars, out of five, would you give to each?’

After some discussion, the Oswald decides four stars for exhaustion, two for restlessness, one for chest discomfort, and one for heat sensations.

The practitioner can always alter this rating later, for example in the light of data from pulse and tongue.

4 Imbalances + 5 Organs

4 Imbalances: simplify complexity

This first level gives a clear simple overview of the patient. It cuts through complexity and focuses on the patient’s basic needs, in terms of just four factors: Deficiency, Stagnation, Disturbance, and Excess.

4 Imbalances + 5 Organs: increase precision

This second level focuses on the parts of the picture in precise detail. This increases the accuracy of diagnosis, which is the key to safe and successful treatment.

Each of the five Organ systems of Chinese medicine – Spleen, Lung, Kidney, Liver, and Heart – is considered in terms of Deficiency, Stagnation, Disturbance, and Excess.

Example: Oswald and the Heart system

Oswald is now specifically questioned about the Heart Organ system: see fig. 2. The practitioner finds that his chest discomfort is associated with sadness, and diagnoses Heart Stagnant Qi. Oswald’s restlessness is associated with the Heart-specific symptoms of anxiety and insomnia, so the diagnosis is Heart Spirit Disturbance.

His heat sensations are worse the more anxious he gets, so the practitioner associates these with Heart Deficiency Heat, based on Deficient Yin.

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