

THE LIVER AND THE SKIN A Practical Prospective

Overview

- “The liver governs spreading”.
- “The liver stores blood, and the blood is the residence of the *hun* (ethereal soul)”.
- “Stagnant qi easily transforms to heat”.
- The liver and gallbladder channels pass through the genitals and axillae, and dominate the sides.

- “The liver favours the harmonious and dislikes the depressed”.
- “When the qi stops flowing, the fluids and blood will pool”.
- “The liver controls the *Sea of Blood*”.
- “The body of the liver is yin whilst its function is yang”.

Vitiligo

1. Female, age 34

She developed small white patches of vitiligo on her cheeks one year ago following a sailing holiday. After the initial crop of white patches, the lesions remained the same size for approximately six months, however over the past 6 months the lesions have become progressively larger.

Menstruation – Normal cycle and flow, although she suffers from pronounced PMS and breast pains a week or so before the onset of the period.

Appetite – normal

Bowels IBS with frequent loose bowels and abdominal pains, especially after stress or on eating the ‘wrong’ foods

Tongue – Normal colour, slightly red tip. Thin white coating

Pulse Thready and wiry

Ba yue zha 30

Dang gui wei 9

Chai hu 9

Fang feng 12

Bai zhi 9

Bai ji li 15

Chen pi 12

Yi mu cao 24

Chi shao 12

Chao Bai shao 18

Cang er zi 12

Yu jin 9

Chao Bai zhu 12

Gan cao 4

External application : Bu Gu Zhi Ding

After 3 weeks clear improvement. Repeat prescription for further 3 weeks.

Developed irritation of the face.

Changed external treatment to Wu Mei Ding.

Re-prescribed with addition of **Mu dan pi 12**

2 weeks later further improvement can be seen.

Zhi He shou wu 15

Nu zhen zi 12

Bai guo ye 15

Chao Bai zhu 15

Dan shen 15

Chao Bi shao 24

Zhi Huang qi 30

Han lian cao 12

Chai hu 9

Fu ling 12

Dang gui 9

Zhi Gan cao 6

In total had 14 weeks of treatment.

Lichen Simplex

2. Male, 37 years

Developed small very pruritic papules on the right side of his neck five years ago following a bout of intense and sustained stress. After a while, with the incessant scratching that increasingly became a habit whenever he felt the slightest bit under pressure, the papules coalesced to form a couple of big plaques of lichenified skin.

Itching has become very distracting, so that he is unable to concentrate on work.

His sleep is invariably disturbed by itching, with difficulty falling asleep and frequent waking at night, which in turn leads to feeling fatigued during the day.

Itching is made much worse by any stress or physical heat.

Mood - Tendency to feel depressed. Lacks motivation. Can suffer with inability to take a satisfactory breath with oppression of the chest, much sighing etc.

Exercise regularly. This helps take his mind of the itching, although the heat generated aggravates his skin.

Appetite - Normal, but with a tendency to feel bloated with acid regurgitation.

Bowles - Normal

Tongue - Slight red sides, purple hue to middle. Thin white greasy coating

Pulse - Wiry

Chai hu 9

Dang gui wei 12

Ye jiao teng 30

Chi shao 15

Fu shen 12

Zhen zhu mu 30

Shi chang pu 9	He huan pi 15
Huang qin 12	Qing pi 12
Mei gui hua 9	Bai ji li 15
Cang er zi 12	Bo he 6
Gou teng 15 cook for 5 mins	Gan cao 6

External – She Chaung Zi Shui

On variation of the above for 10 weeks (with addition of ingredients such as **E zhu**, **San leng**, **Ji xue teng** to move blood and dissipate lichenification).

Very rarely has the desire to scratch his neck. His digestive system has normalised and he sleeps well most nights.

Tongue – Normal colour.

Dang gui 12	Chao Bai shao 30
Ji xue teng 30	Ye jiao teng 30
Sheng Xiang fu 9	Mei gui hua 9 9
Mei gui hua 9	
Yu jin 6	Chai hu 9
Shu di huang 12	Chuan xiong 9
Zhi He shou wu 15	Chen pi 9
Bai ji li 12	Gan cao 6

On the above formula for a further 4 weeks.

Atopic Eczema

3. Female, 41 years

Atopic eczema since early childhood. Also suffers with asthma and allergic rhinitis. Past two and a half years, following much stress and frustration eczema erupted more fully around axillae and genitals. The eczema of the genitals is prone to weep. Sleep – very disturbed by itching.

Appetite – delicate. Suffers with much bloating that starts with any food intake and persist all day long. Aggravated by a multitude of foods.

Bowels – Constipation. Incomplete evacuation. Opens bowels every 3-4 days.

Much flatulence and abdominal discomfort.

Mood – Worried, anxious, frustrated and irritable. Prone to depression.

Vitality – Exhausted. No stamina.

Pulse – Thready and wiry

Tongue – Thin white coating on normal coloured tongue body.

Sheng di huang 24
Yin chen hao 15
Huang qin 9
Mu dan pi 9
Bai xian pi 15
Ku shen 12
Da tong cao 6
Gan cao 6

Long dan cao 9
Sheng Huang bai 9
Chai hu 9
Chi shao 9
She chuang zi 12
Sheng Da huang 9 add at end
Dan zhu ye 9

Externally:

Shi Zhen Gao - To apply twice a day.

External wash -

She chang zi 15

Huang bai 15

After ten days:

Skin much improved, with significantly less itching. Exudation from genital lesions has stopped.

Bowels overactive. She is beginning to experience some nausea on taking the medicine.

Sleep improved. Far less often disturbed by itching.

Sheng di huang 30	Long dan cao 9
Yin chen hao 15	Sheng Huang bai 9
Huang qin 9	Chai hu 9
Mu dan pi 9	Chi shao 9
Bai xian pi 15	She chuang zi 12
Ku shen 12	Yu li ren 24
Tong cao 6	Dan zhu ye 9
Gan cao 6	

On above for a further 2 weeks:

Almost no itching at all. Very little erythema. Mild dryness of skin.

Chai hu 9	Chi shao 12
Chao Bai shao 24	Sheng Bai zhu 30
Huo ma ren 24	Hou pu 15
Zhi shi 12	Chao Zhi ke 9
Chen pi 12	Sha ren 9
Bai dou kou 9	Dang gui 9
Gan cao 6	

Externally: Zi Cao Shui Gao

Skin totally clear.

Bowels regulated.

Far less bloating and wind (only if persistently eats the wrong type of food, or eats when upset).

Vitality and optimism much improved

4. Male, 34 years

Atopic eczema first developed in childhood. The eczema was widespread and severe as a child, controlled with topical and at time internal steroids. It has never cleared, though it showed some improvement in his early teens.

Five months ago, following separation from his wife, his skin suddenly became much more active.

He also suffers with urticaria and polymorphic light eruption.

Skin is made worse with stress, alcohol, spicy food and smoking.

The skin is prone to weep and become eroded.

Wakes frequently at night scratching. Itching more controllable in day.

No sweating.

Appetite & bowels - Normal

Tongue. Pale with mid tongue fissures

Sheng di huang 30	Mu dan pi 12
Chi shao 12	Long dan cao 9
Huang qin 12	Chao Zhi zi 9
Bai xian pi 12	Sheng Xi xian cao 12
Dong gua pi 12	Cang zhu 12
Zi hua di ding 15	Lian qiao 12
Tong cao 4	Dan zhu ye 9
Gan cao 6	

10 day of above formula improved skin by 60%

Repeat with addition of Fang feng 9 for 3 weeks

All exudation ceased. Only slight erythema and mild lichenification present

Normal to dry stools

Sheng di huang 45	Mu dan pi 15
Ling xiao hua 12	Chao Zhi zi 9
Huang qin 9	Jing jie 9
Fang feng 12	Bai ji li 15
Bai xian pi 12	Xu chang qing 9
Dan zhu ye 9	Tong cao 4
Gan cao 6	

On the above formula for 4 weeks. Skin stabilised, no erythema, sleep improved. Mild itching only if stressed.

Sheng di huang 30	Mu dan pi 9
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Chao Bai zhu 12
Dan shen 15
Fang feng 12
Fu ling 12

Shan yao 15
Zhi He shou wu 12
Bai ji li 15
Gan cao 6

5. Female, 17 years

As a child suffered with flexure eczema. Controlled with topical steroids. Three years ago developed what was initially diagnosed as fungal infection of the left foot, affecting all the toes except for the fifth toe. Antifungal treatment had little effect. Over the following months the right foot was also affected. Over the years she has been prescribed and had used a variety of antifungal and steroid creams, with only limited benefit. About a year ago it settled in her left foot (in-between the toes, and the dorsum and planter aspect of the toes).

Skin of the area is prone to develop erosion and occasional exudation. The areas between the toes may become macerated.

Paroxysmal bouts of itching.

Over the past 4 years she has also developed seasonal allergic rhinitis.

Sleep - Mostly fine, occasionally disturbed by itching.

Appetite and bowels - Normal

Tongue Red tip, thin yellow coating

Pulse - Slippery

Sheng di huang 24	Mu dan pi 12
Long dan cao 6	Sheng Huang bai 9
Bi xie 9	Bai xian pi 12
Sheng Xi xian cao 12	Di fu zi 9
Jin yin hua 9	Dan zhu ye 9
Tong cao 4	Gan cao 6

Externally:

Huang bai 12	Hua shi 12
Ming fan 9	Da huang 9

Shi Zhen Gao

Second pictures - After three weeks, the itching has reduced by 60-70%. There is clear reduction in erythema.

No longer any maceration or erosion, but the skin is still oedematous.

Repeat formula for a further 2 weeks.

Third pictures - Two weeks later (week 5), itching has ceased, with far less erythema and oedema of the skin.

Prescribed the following for a further 3 weeks.

Sheng di huang 24	Mu dan pi 24
Chi shao 9	Bi xie 9

Xuan shen 18
Bai xian pi 12
Dan zhu ye 9
Gan cao 6

Dan shen 18
Sheng Xi xian cao 12
Tong cao 4

Externally:
Run Ji Gao

6. Female, 33 years

A Sheng di 30
Chi shao 9
Huang bai 9
Ma chi xian 15
Zi hua di ding 15
Bai xian pi 12
Fu ling 12
Hua shi 12

Mu dan pi 12
Huang qin 9
Long dan cao 9
Pu gong ying 15
Ku shen 12
Di fu zi 12
Che qian zi 12
Gan cao 6

Externally:

Ma chi xian 24
Huang bai 15

Di yu 24
Ku shen 15

B Sheng di 30
Chi shao 9
Huang bai 9
Bai xian pi 12
Xu chang qing 12
Che qian zi 12

Mu dan pi 12
Huang qin 9
Ku shen 12
Sheng Xi xian cao 12
Fu ling 12
Gan cao 6

Externally Shi zhen gao

C Sheng di 30
Chi shao 9
Huang bai 9
Bai xian pi 12
Xu chang qing 12
Fu ling 12
Gan cao 6

Mu dan pi 12
Huang qin 9
Bai ji li 15
Sheng Xi xian cao 12
Fang feng 9
Che qian zi 12

D Sheng di 30
Mu dan pi 12

Xuan shen 24
Ji xue teng 24

Bai ji li 15
Fang feng 9
Gan cao 6

Bai xian pi 12
Che qian zi 12

Nummular Eczema

7. Male, 31 years

Great emotional turmoil and massive frustration is followed quickly by an exceedingly pruritic eruption of nummular eczema on the arms (both flexure and extensor aspects) as well as the back.

Otherwise general health is good

Tongue : Red with thin white coating

Pulse : Wiry and rapid.

Hu zhang 15

Jin yin hua 12

Bai xian pi 12

Chai hu 9

Chi shao 9

Long dan cao 6

Mu tong 9

Long kui 9

Lian qiao 12

Huang qin 9

Sheng di huang 15

Fang feng 9

Chao Zhi zi 9

Gan cao 6

External - Shi Zhen Gao

On above for 4 weeks. Skin cleared with only post inflammatory pigment remaining.

Long dan cao 9

Chao Zhi zi 9

Sheng di huang 15

Yu jin 9

Fu ling 12

Mu tong 9

Huang qin 9

Chai hu 9

Chao Bai shao 15

Ze xie 9

Bai ji li 12

Gan cao 6

Seborrhoeic Dermatitis

8. Male, 44 years

Seborrhoeic dermatitis started after separation from partner and death of a close friend 3 years ago. Dermatitis started around the ears and spread to affect the neck, scalp and forehead. Itching is intense especially at night when it interferes with sleep. Over the past 6 months widespread weeping from the lesions around the ears and neck.

General health otherwise well.

Tongue - Red body, thin yellow coating. Pulse - Moderate.

Sheng di huang 15	Mu dan pi 9
Ye ju hua 12	Zi hua di ding 12
Lian qiao 12	Long dan cao 9
Huang qin 12	Chao Zhi zi 9
Bai xian pi 12	Cang er zi 9
Ma chi xian 15	Fu ling 12
Ze xie 9	Gan cao 4

After 3 weeks on above far less exudation, and significantly reduced itch.

Add

Hu zhang 12	Long kui 9
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On above for 6 weeks. Skin is clear with slight dryness, but no itching or erythema.

Sheng di huang 30	Xuan shen 12
Dan shen 12	Mai men dong 9
Mu dan pi 9	Fang feng 9
Chao Bai zhu 12	Huo ma ren 12
Zhi ke 9	Gan cao 4

Within 5 days of above, skin flared up with itching and slight weeping.

Prescribed previous formula for a further 4 weeks, and retuned to nourishing formula. Again skin was aggravated.

Sheng di huang 20	Dan shen 15
Dang gui 12	Chi shao 12

Hong hua 9
Hu zhang 12
Ze xie 12

Tao ren 9
E zhu
Gan cao 4

On above for a further 4 weeks. No relapse. Put on a further 2 weeks of above prescription on half dose and discharged.

Pompholyx Eczema

9. Female, 68 years

Developed pompholyx eczema following traumatic late divorce and split from her family 8 years ago. For the first 5 years it was relatively mild, waxing and waning in severity that echoed emotional state. She used a variety of topical steroids to control the eruptions.

Five years ago for apparently no reason, the eczema became much more active on the hands and erupted on the feet as well. The only way the eczema could be controlled was by regular applications of Dermovate with occlusion. She has been using this regime ever since. The pruritus is barley controlled by the steroid, but she feels she has no option but to carry on using it despite the fact that her skin has become exceedingly thin and prone to break and fissure at the slightest trauma. She now suffers frequent bouts of vesicular eruptions of both palms soles on a pronounced bed of erythema and scaling.

Extremely hot hands and feet, especially at night.

Appetite - Normal

Bowels - Dry stools

Dark urine

Dry mouth, with no great desire for fluids.

Sleep invariably disturbed by itching and heat

Tongue - Thick yellow greasy tongue coating with vivid red sides

Pulse - Slippery and Wiry

Long dan cao 9
Chao Huang bai 9
Bi xie 15
Ye ju hua 15
Zi hua di ding 15
Bai ji li 15

Huang qin 15
Tu fu ling 24
Chi shao 12
Hu zhang 12
Bai xian pi 15
Yu jin 9

Ze xie 12
Che qian zi 12
Hua shi 12

Chi ling 15
Cang zhu 12
Gan cao 6

Externally

Wang bu liu xing 30

Ming fan 9

After 2 weeks, bowels improved, but stools are still a little dry

Add :

Pu gong ying 30

After 8 weeks of above, skin significantly improved. She now only occasionally develops vesicular eruption, with erythema being the primary lesion. Scaling and itching is markedly reduced.

Long dan cao 9	Huang qin 15
Chao Huang bai 9	Chao zhi zi 9
Ling xiao hua 9	Chi shao 12
Mu dan pi 12	Hu zhang 12
Zi hua di ding 15	Pu gong ying 15
Bai xian pi 15	Bai ji li 15
Yu jin 9	Ze xie 12
Chi ling 15	Che qian zi 12
Cang zhu 12	Gan cao 6

Externally - Zi Cao Shui Gao

Wang bu liu xing 30	Ming fan 9
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On variation of the above for a further 9 weeks. Skin is stable for the first time in years. Bowels normal, erythema, scaling and itching vastly reduced. Skin is still weak and prone to fissure.

Tongue - Very little redness of sides, with a slightly greasy white coating.

Sheng di huang 24	Xuan shen 15
Dang gui 9	Chao Bai Shao 24
Zhi He shou wu 15	Mu dan pi 12
Chao Zhi zi 9	Ling xiao hua 9
Ye ju hua 12	Huo ma ren 18
Mai men dong 12	Tian men dong 12
Sheng Bai zhu 15	Zhi Ke 9
Ye jiao teng 24	Ji xue teng 24
Dan shen 18	Gan cao 6

Externally only Zi Cao Shui Gao

On above for a further 8 weeks.

Perioral Dermatitis

10. Female, 33 years

Developed perioral dermatitis insidiously over several months. During this time she was exceedingly stressed, changing job, moving house and breaking up from her partner.

She has always been prone to premenstrual tension, irritability, with breast distension and retention of fluid. She suffers much abdominal pain that radiates to the thighs just before and with the onset of her period. The flow is clotted, and congested.

Her skin is bad all month long, although its aggravated premenstrually.

Bowels - Sluggish with abdominal fullness and a reduced appetite.

Sleep - Often disrupted, waking between 2.00-4.00 am with difficulty falling back to sleep. When she does wake in the mornings she feels drained of vitality and low in mood.

Severe and persistent (on and off for months) headache over the right eye.

Tongue - Purple hue, with a thin white coating.

Pulse - Wiry and thready

Chai hu 9	Chi shao 12
Sheng Bai shao 15	Chuan xiong 24
Hong hua 9	E zhu 9
San leng 9	Dang gui wei 9
Jin yin hua 12	Sheng ma 9
Yu li ren 24	Zhi shi 12
Gan cao 4	

On above for 3 weeks. Headache cleared after 4 days, and no reoccurrence. Bowels significantly improved with no abdominal discomfort. Skin less erythema and fewer papules and pustules.

Premenstrually:

Chai hu 9	Chi shao 12
Chao Bai shao 15	Chuan xiong 12
Hong hua	E zhu 9
Dang gui wei 9	Yan hu suo 12
Cu Xiang fu 12	Bai zi ren 20
Yu li ren 12	Jin yin hua 12
Sheng ma 9	Fu ling 15
Gan cao 4	

On taking the above formula, premenstrual phase, and period almost normal. Flow is only slightly clotted, with a little pain. Skin much improved. Sleep improved, bowels normal.

Chai hu 9	Chi shao 12
Chao Bai shao 15	Chuan xiong 12
Chao Zhi zi 9	Ling xiao hua 9
Dang gui 9	Sheng Bai zhu 15
Sheng Xiang fu 9	Bai zi ren 20
Yu li ren 12	Sheng ma 9
Fu ling 15	Gan cao 4

Remained on variation of above formula for a total of 12 weeks.

Acne

11. Female, 40 years

Acne since teenage years. Over the past 15 years the acne has become more pustular and clearly aggravated premenstrually. Her skin also itches on occasions especially the week building up to the period. She has had many courses of antibiotics over the years, Diannet as well as Roacuatne.

Menstruation – 28 day cycle. Flow medium (normal colour) with clots and cramping pain that last 24 hours. Breast distension a week before onset, but stops 3 days before period begins.

General health, bowels sleep etc all normal.

Pulse Moderate Tongue Red tip. Thin white greasy coating.

Xu chang qing 15	Bai hua she she cao 30
Chai hu 9	Mu dan pi 9
Chi shao 9	Dang gui wei 12
Chan tui 9	Zi hua di ding 15
Yi mu cao 12	Dan shen 30
Huang qin 9	Gan cao 6

On above for 6 weeks. Skin is considerably better during the month, although premenstrually is still prone to be more active. Skin no longer itches. Continues to suffer breast distension premenstrually.

Xu chang qing 15	Bai hua she she cao 30
Chai hu 9	Mu dan pi 9
Chi shao 9	Dang gui wei 12
Zi hua di ding 15	Pu gong ying 15
Sheng Xiang fu 9	Qing pi 9
Yi mu cao 12	Dan shen 30
Huang qin 9	Gan cao 6

By week 14 she no longer produces papules or pustules. Only post inflammatory lesions evident. She has recently suffered with some epigastric fullness and belching (a problem she is periodically prone to).

Chai hu 9
Dang gui 9
Shu di huang 15
Sheng Xiang fu 9
Gan cao 6

Chao Bai shao 30
Chuan xiong 9
Mu dan pi 9
Mei gui hua 9

She is on the above for a further 3 weeks.

12. Female, 26 years

Acne started for the first time aged 23 following much stress. Prior to this her skin was completely clear. At the same time as the start of the acne, she developed marked pre-menstrual symptoms including spotting (7 days before period), distension of the breasts, depression, insomnia and great heat sensation with thirst.

Uterine bleeding continues until day 10.

Menstrual cycle is regular (28-29 days).

Flow - Fairly 10 days, heavy, bright red.

Bowels tend to constipation.

Tongue: Very red tip. Thin yellow coating.

Pulse: Rapid and wiry.

Hong hua 12
Chai hu 9
Mu dan pi 12
Yu jin 9
Zhi zi 9
Dan shen 15
Gan cao 6

Tao ren 9
Chi shao 9
Sheng di 15
Dang gui 9
Lian qiao 15
Bai zi ren 20

On above for 4 weeks. There is some reduction of papules on the chin and jaw line. Spotting has continued a week before onset of the period, as has the distension of the breasts, depression, insomnia and great heat sensation with thirst.

To take the following 7 days premenstrually until day 10:

Chai hu 9
Mu dan pi 12
Chao Zhi zi 9
Ji guan hua 12
Pu huang tan 9
Sheng Xiang fu 9
He huan pi 12

Chi shao 9
Sheng di 15
Ling xiao hua 9
Qian cao gen 15
Yu jin 9
Dan shen 15
Ye jiao teng 30

Gan cao 6

To take the following from day 10 until day 21:

Chai hu 9	Chi shao 9
Mu dan pi 12	Sheng di 15
Chao Zhi zi 9	Ling xiao hua 9
Ji guan hua 12	Dang gui 9
Hong hua 9	Tao ren 9
Dan shen 30	Gan cao 6

All symptoms and signs showed marked improvement. Uterine bleeding, heat and depression improved by weeks 8. By week 12 her skin is clear with only some post-inflammatory pigment remaining. Prescribed *Dan zhi xiao yao wan* for 2-3 months.