

Chronic Fatigue Syndrome and Breast Lumps / Myomas: the Liver Link - a TCM perspective

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During the last years I have been attending several patients, women, suffering initially a chronic fatigue syndrome.

All of them came with no idea of what was happening.

They complained of severe fatigue, low concentration, poor memory, a feeling of being incapable of doing the everyday activities, headaches, or body aches (on the back, on the legs,...) sometimes so severe that rarely could move. Depression and a lack of energy for mental / intellectual works.

Being a woman, a complete woman and living all the roles one has to live is quite complicated. We want, we need, to do our best as women, as mothers of our children, as couples of our men, as individual persons. Over the last years many women are suffering conditions related to their role as females individuals, something is changing and we should have eyes, ears and heart opened.

Let us have a look to the Th1 and Th2 phases of activity in the immune system from the Traditional Chinese Medicine point of view, and after from this special point of view:

TH1: It is a yang phase of activity in which body defends itself with cells and substances related to antiviral and antibacterial actions. During Th1 time, daytime, Defensive Qi flows into the yang organs, in such sequence: tai yang (small intestine, bladder), shao yang (san jiao, gall bladder), yang ming (stomach, large intestine), and begins a new cycle.

TH2: It is a yin phase of activity in which body has inflammatory and repairing effects mediated by humoral immunity. During Th2 time, at night, Defensive Qi changes and flows into the yin organs in this sequence: Kidney, Heart, Lung, Liver, Spleen and so on in cycles.

* What does it mean a TH1 to Th2 shift? Of course we know a lot of this now, but let consider other factors.

When there is a TH1 to TH2 shift, it means that the pattern of cytokines is moved from an attacking antiviral and antibacterial pattern to an inflammatory pattern. And this means too that being TH2 predominant during all day, an inflammatory situation is lived during all day. Body may think something is happening continuously, and immune system is defending us continuously. The real situation is that there is a little, but continuous fight. And this little fight day by day, means weeks, months, years of fighting and the immune system goes down from all the points of view, physical and emotional / spiritual.

* We could say more:

From the naturopathics point of view, yin phase of the day is also an acidose phase. And this is really very important as this acidose underlying the condition gives rise to many of the symptoms.

Besides, Liver works hard at night, trying to clean up blood and the extra-cellular spaces from toxins. As body is not properly cleaned and purified, pure Qi cannot rise the head. Blood is not fresh and pure, the mind cannot rest quietly... this contribute to the fatigue sensation

Kidney, Heart, Lung, Liver, are yin organs that very often suffer from yin deficiency conditions leading to deficiency-Heat. Yin deficiency – Deficiency Heat syndromes represent inflammatory conditions with low fever, aches and so on: the TH2 phase is being predominant.

Etiologies:

Emotions are one of the almost always present etiologies: in our case, anger, frustration, depression, stress, over a long period of time can lead to Liver Qi stasis. We enter in a self-protective mode, but very often it means we act as if each problem was huge, tremendous. We defend ourselves before having been attacked. We are always “emotionally inflamed”.

We have to work, we have to be mothers, to be friends of our friends, to be wife or partner of your couple, we have to be real women, and we have to be ourselves. And how can we do all that, taking into account that we have to do our best? It takes a lot of energy, really, lots of emotional and physical energy.

In my experience, women living like that are living mostly as men. Always trying to show we can.

Men are yang in nature, women are yin in nature. During the last years, women have reached “great mountains” in social terms, but we have paid for it. There is lot of frustration, lot of anger, lot of sadness. We have not enough time to live everything, we cannot work downtown, and take care of ourselves, of our family, and still want to grow up in all senses. The price is very high. We as women have demonstrated already that we can. So... why such a pressure?

All this pressure, all these emotions is kept in our Hearts, in our Livers, and in Chinese terms lead to Liver Qi stasis. Breast and uterus /ovaries are the female organs, if we are ill in our female emotions, our body can show us this condition. And this is the only place where it is possible: breast and uterus /ovaries. Could it be otherwise?

Liver Qi stasis can lead to different states of unbalance, for example, Liver Qi stasis is responsible for the formation of qi and blood masses, such as, breast lumps and myomas in uterus, also for ovarian cysts.

In these years, I found that ALL the women I was treating because of CFS were intelligent, good workers, in jobs related to education, or advertising, or similar, but in general, they really worked hard, they had prepared themselves, they had a family or couple to care and enjoy, but... they were so tired... so depressed... They had a feeling of “I am not doing well, I am not doing what I was supposed to do (...but I have no energy)”. Some feel out of place, should it mean a change is necessary?

ALL of them had positive titles in EBV blood test. They used to suffer of sore throat when they were young or girls, and still do. The white cells counts were normal. So a TH2 pattern was sure, also for all the symptoms.

As we know CFS requires a long treatment, above all, when they have been untreated or the treatment has been not correct.

I treat these cases with acupuncture and Chinese herbs, and homeopathics, but I have noticed, and clinical results have confirmed this, that supplementation with *Coriolus versicolor*, gives one

of the fastest results in terms of energy, good sleeping and good mood. In few days they experience an energy increase, even with very low doses, 2 or 3 per day, and low pain, best quality of life, in general.

As time has passed by, I noticed that these women I was treating began to show more gynecological problems. ALL of them had diagnoses of breast lumps or myomas in uterus. With this fact in my mind, I began to investigate and saw that the longer was the CFS, the easier to have already developed breast lumps or myomas.

As a result of all this, now I explain my female patients undergoing CFS that even though the treatment is going to be long, it is important to treat all the condition, menstrual problems included, correctly as there is a real risk of developing these gynecological conditions.

So in that case, conversation takes a certain path: let us look for the real etiology of this advanced situation: the one underlying everything despite diet, organic causes..., and it is not EBV nor any other virus, but an emotional unbalance. This unbalance perhaps can be related to education (most of the women tell this), or to this western society that has lead us, women, to a very anti-natural, anti-female, way of living.

Of course I am not saying that we have to tell our females clients not to work, for example, but just to consider how are they living and feeling as women.

Treatment Guidelines:

As soon as Liver is the main cause for this CFS and the development of breast lumps and myomas, acupuncture is needed once or twice per week, of course one should make the correct selection of the points to be needle. In general terms, a suitable selection could be at least the following:

L2 Xingjian or L3 Taichong, choose between one of these taking into account if Liver-fire is shown, in this case L2 is preferred. We will help Liver Qi in order to let it flow smoothly and it will support general Qi flowing.

S6, Sanyinjiao, this will support Liver yin, very important in these cases as it acts on Blood, menses, uterus. Liver Qi flowing.

S36, Zusanli, this will increase general Qi, and so, help to its flow. Do not forget we are dealing with fatigue conditions. Sometimes, also S3 taibai, should be considered.

Ren4, Guanyuan and extrapoints for uterus, as specific points for the uterus..

GB41, Zulinqi, will help breasts; SJ6, Zhigou, also as GB41 will help Liver Qi flowing, and release heat.

Regarding Chinese Herbs, basically, one of the most common situations is that of yin deficiency, a very general yin deficiency, so one of the most used formulae is Jade Spring (Three Treasures formulae) plus the classical Xiao Yao San or a suitable variation of it, in order to treat the basic Liver Qi stasis. With this combination we can also act on the Spleen Qi deficiency that usually is shown. Of course, we can see other patterns combinations but these are the basis.

I also include Coriolus versicolor supplementation, with extraordinary results: as a guide I use six tablets per day in the 2 or 3 first weeks, and then as soon as, the patient has the feeling of energy improvement the dose is reduced half. I have noticed, to my surprise, that many women need

even lower doses; I decide the dose should be lower when they tell they are feeling very "speedy". I can say that some patients take only 2 tablets per day and they are very comfortable feeling energy increase, better sleep, feeling much better in general, which is a real important goal.

As I said before, it is not uncommon that I use homeopathics in all this treatment, but the fact is that when I began treating this condition, I did not use mushrooms nutrition, and an important change came when I started including Coriolus. And even though some times I use Ganoderma lucidum or even Cordyceps, the one more frequently included as supplementation is Coriolus, also I should say that I have not found any problem in the long term supplementation. Besides the results achieved with Coriolus are very well appreciated by patients"

Conclusion:

Liver is the link between a CFS and the development of gynecological masses such as breast lumps or myomas. Let us pay attention to that, in short time they can appear, above all when these women are close to menopausal phase. So we can prevent these conditions with appropriate treatment and focusing on the real etiology.

Perhaps the time has come to make a stop and think / meditate and change.