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# Palpitations, periods and purpose



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## An inner resolve

A female patient, Rachel, came to my office a year ago for a consultation. She had been referred to me by her meditation teacher. The patient, in practising mindfulness meditation, was very much aware of a blockage in her breathing pattern, especially during exhalation. In addition, Rachel had had a tightness in her chest for most of her life which was very much fear and anxiety related. During the consultation, Rachel decided that the anxiety and chest tightness were her main concerns, but as will become apparent, there were other issues which Rachel very much wanted to address.

Rachel was a pleasant person, 37 years of age and of medium build. What was most striking to me was her very dull-pale complexion. In talking with her, she seemed a little shy, tense, and frightened and it was my sense that the fear and tension were long-standing and not simply due to her interaction with an acupuncturist for the very first time. In talking, I also sensed in her an inner resolve and a willingness to work with strong effort on her physical concerns and emotional issues.

## Palpitations and periods

Rachel also experienced daily palpitations which felt like a fluttering sensation in her chest, with her heart skipping beats. The palpitations were worse during stressful times or when very fatigued. A check-up with a medical doctor had shown no serious abnormalities.

Rachel's other concerns included her gynaecological problems. For the previous 10 years she had had abnormal Pap smears, yeast infections, Bartholin cysts<sup>1</sup> and uterine fibroids. The fibroids had caused heavy bleeding, leading to anaemia, and had been removed 8 years ago. After this surgery, her periods had not been so heavy, but her anaemia had continued to remain borderline. More recently, Rachel had begun spotting a few days after the last day of her period. Her periods were heavy at times and she took Anaprox to control the bleeding and cramping. Recently, she had had

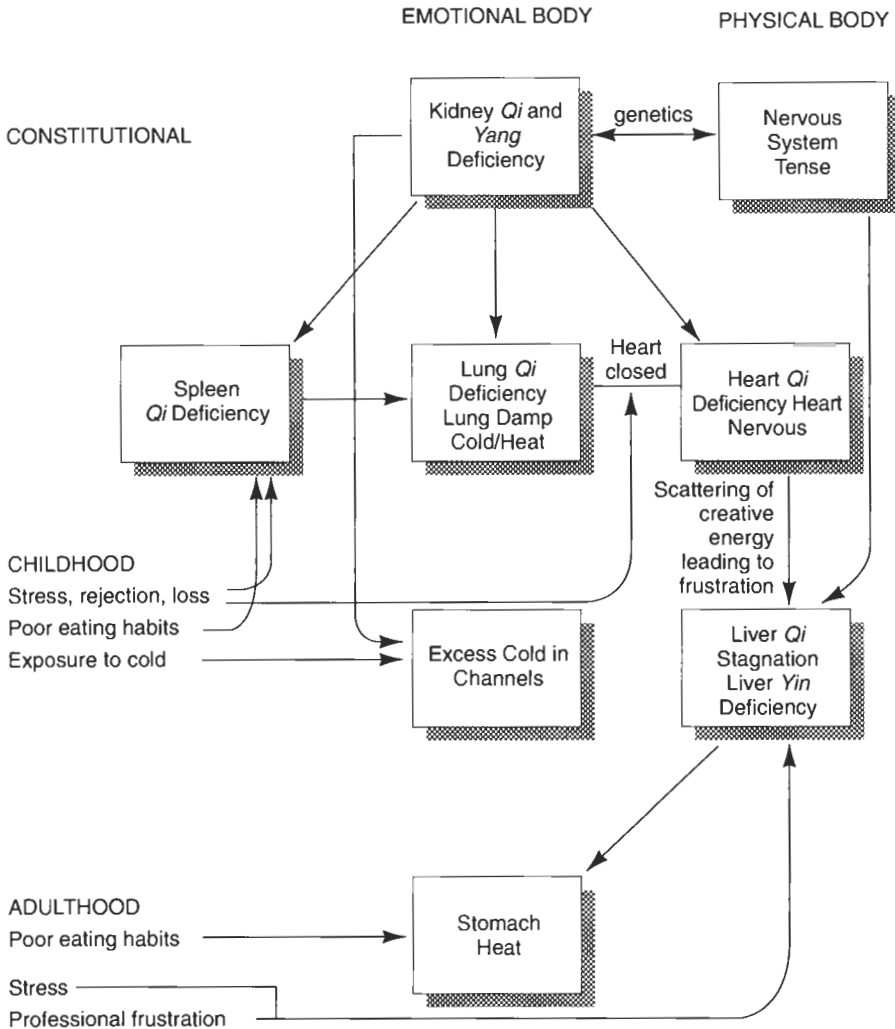


Fig. 23.1 Aetiology and pathology diagram.

It is my policy to adjust structure — the long-leg syndrome (Ewart 1972) — before I attempt other treatment unless there are more pressing immediate considerations. When structure is not corrected other interventions tend to be less effective.

However, because of Dr Z's extremely weak state, this was first postponed in favour of treating his acute external pathogenic factor and profound depletion. In the beginning more gentle magnets were often used instead of needles or moxa. The structural adjustment was made after 2 months.

Our initial thrust, achieved within 1 month, was to eliminate Damp Heat and Damp Cold from the Lungs and excess Cold from the channels,

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# Like mother, like daughter



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I am presenting a case study of a 49-year-old woman. I have chosen it for a specific reason: to demonstrate that acupuncture and energetic medicine can have an effect on the body, even in a genetically inherited condition. I do hope that the reader is not expecting some extraordinary exposition of traditional Chinese medicine.

## Hereditary anaemia

Christine came to me suffering from palpitations and fatigue. The woman sitting in front of me was weary and exhausted, but not disheartened, and she seemed enterprising and dynamic. She was very attractive with auburn hair and green eyes. She had an aquiline face with eyebrows that arched up and a nose like a beak. This was a person who knew what she wanted but, paradoxically, she also seemed to have a shy and fearful aspect to her personality.

She had brought a concrete diagnosis with her in the form of a blood test, so my investigation was not going to be very difficult. She was suffering from chronic anaemia: when she had seen a cardiologist for her palpitations, the results of her blood tests and her fatigue had led him to suggest a blood transfusion. However, she had decided to come for acupuncture instead.

Before looking at the case from a traditional Chinese medical perspective, I would like the reader to attempt a diagnosis.<sup>1</sup>

Christine had an hereditary anaemia known as thalassaemia, a disease endemic to the areas bordering the Mediterranean Basin (Weatherall & Clegg 1972). It can be either homozygotic or heterozygotic. In the latter case the anaemia is moderate and it was this kind of thalassaemia that Christine had. The red blood cells vary in size or are smaller than average, leading to a defective rate of production or syntheses of the globin chain which then recurs in the composition of the haemoglobin. This decrease in production is caused by a genetic defect in the chromosomes.

Would I be able to influence this process with acupuncture?