

# Chinese medicine for depression

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# What is depression?

- There are 3 types of depression.
- 1. Major depression: Symptoms interfere with work, sleep, study and life. Episodes
- 2. Persistent depressive disorder: Symptoms last for 2+ years. Examples: psychotic depression, postpartum depression, Seasonal affective disorder (SAD).
- 3. Bipolar disorder: manic-depressive episode

# Causes

- Combination of
- Genetic, biological
- Environment
- Psychological factors
- The parts of the brain involved in mood, thinking, sleep, appetite, and behavior appear different.
- trauma, loss of a loved one, a difficult relationship, or any stressful situation may trigger a depressive episode.

# Symptoms

- Persistent sad, anxious, or "empty" feelings
- Feelings of hopelessness or pessimism
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, or helplessness
- Irritability, restlessness
- Loss of interest in activities or hobbies once pleasurable, including sex
- Fatigue and decreased energy
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering details, and making decisions
- Insomnia, early-morning wakefulness, or excessive sleeping
- Overeating, or appetite loss
- Thoughts of suicide, suicide attempts
- Aches or pains, headaches, cramps, or digestive problems that do not ease even with treatment.

# Number facts

- Each year about 6.7% of U.S adults experience major depressive disorder.
- Women are 70 % more likely than men. Blacks are 40% less likely than whites to experience depression during their lifetime.
- The average age of onset is 32 years old. Additionally, 3.3% of 13 to 18 year olds have experienced a seriously debilitating depressive disorder.

# Depression is common

- More than 3 million US cases per year
- Treatable by a medical professional
- Medium-term: resolves within months
- Requires a medical diagnosis
- Lab tests or imaging not required

# Western Treatment

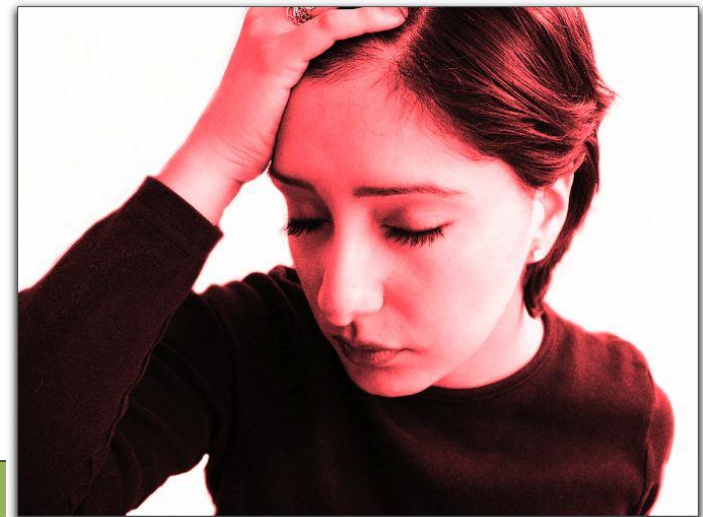
- Treat the co-occurring illness if there is any.
- Medications: Antidepressant: SSRIs- selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors- zoloft, prozac, etc. side effect: suicidal thought
- Psychotherapy: “Talk” therapy
- Electroconvulsive therapy and other brain stimulation therapies:

# Eastern approach

- In Chinese medicine, the reasons are Qi stagnation.
- It starts with liver qi stagnation, then can involve Yin or other organ's deficiency. Stagnations are :
  - Anger
  - Pensiveness
  - Worry
  - Sadness
  - Shock
  - Fear



# The five emotions



## The five emotions, part 2



Wood: planning, courage,  
direction



Fire: inspiration, calm, passion,  
clarity



"Contemplation" © Nathan Jon Tillett 2003 [www.FuzzyPlanet.co.uk](http://www.FuzzyPlanet.co.uk)

# Earth: harmony, stability, balance



# Metal: refinement, maturity



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# Etiology

- Emotional Stress: primary role. Anger, sadness, grief, worry, guilt, etc.
- Constitutional traits: kidney deficiency-will power, planning, etc.
- Irregular diet : 2<sup>nd</sup> role. Excessive consumption of Dairy products, sweets, sugar or breads create phlegm, cloud the shen.
- Over work: long hours of working without adequate rest for several years, lead to kidney yin deficiency.



## Etiology (con'd)

- Anger – Liver qi Stagnation or Liver yang rising
- Sadness, grief – Lung and Heat qi deficiency – qi stagnation
- Worry – Spleen, Lung, Heart qi stagnation
- Guilt – Heart and Kidney qi stagnation

# TCM Patterns:

Liver-Qi stagnation

Heart- and Lung-Qi stagnation

Stagnant Liver-Qi turning into Heat

Phlegm-Heat harassing the Mind

Blood stasis obstructing the Mind

Qi stagnation with phlegm

Worry injuring the Mind

Heart and Spleen deficiency

Heart-Yang deficiency

Kidney- and Heart-Yin deficiency, Empty Heat  
blazing

Kidney-Yang deficiency.

# Liver qi stagnation

- Symptoms: Depression, moodiness, worry, frustration, feeling uptight and tense, pain or tightness of neck and top of the shoulder.
- Pts: Pc6, Liv3, GB34, SJ3, GB13, UB47 (Hunmen-Ethereal soul), Du20
- Formula: Yue Ju wan, Chai hu shu gan wan, xiao yao wan

# Heart & Lung Qi stagnation

- Symptoms: Depression, sadness, slight anxiety, palpitations, slight chest oppression, slight short of breath, sighing, poor appetite, dislike to lying down, weak and cold limbs, pale complexion. Common in young people (<35 y).
- Pts: Ht5, Ht7, Pc6, Ren15(Jiuwei), Ren17, Lu7, St40, Li4
- Formula: Ban xia hou po tang (pinellia-magnolia decoction)

# Stagnant Liver qi turning into heat

- Symptoms: Depression, moodiness, worry, frustration, feeling uptight and tense, anxiety, agitation, short temper. dry mouth, bitter taste, constipation, headache, red face and eyes, hypochondriac pain and distension, tension and ache of the muscles of the neck and top of the shoulders.
- Pts: Pc6, Liv3, GB13, SJ3, GB34, Du20, UB47, Liv3, GB43, Tai yang
- Formula: Dan zhi xiao yao san

# Phlegm-Heat harassing the Mind

- Symptoms: Depression, mental restlessness, anxiety, agitation, restless sleep, excessive dreaming, insomnia. palpitations, dizziness, oppression of the chest, expectoration of phlegm, nausea, bitter taste, sticky taste.
- Pts: Ren12, UB20(sp), St40, Sp9, 6 Pc5, St8(touwei), Du24, GB13, 17, 18, Du20
- Formula: Wen dan tang

# Blood stasis obstructing the Mind

- Symptoms: Depression, mental restlessness, agitation at night, short temper, restless sleep, dreaming a lot, pain in the chest. Common for people >40 y or woman due to long time anger , worry or guilt.
- Pts: Pc6, UB17( geshu), Sp10, Ren14 (JU que), Ht5, Sp6, Liv3, Gb15(tou lin qi), Du20
- Formula: Xue fu zhu yu tang

# Qi stagnation with phlegm

- Depression, moodiness, uncomfortable feeling in the throat like a foreign body that cannot be coughed up or swallowed, difficulty in swallowing, sighing, oppression in the chest, hypochondrial pain.
- Pts: St40, Ren12, UB20 (9sp), Sp9,6, Pc5, SJ6, Pc6, Liv3, Ren15, 15(jiuwei), Du21 (qian ding), 20.
- Formula: Ban xia hou po tang



# Worry injuring the mind

- Symptoms: Depression, mental confusion, feeling absent, anxiety, no desire to do anything, insomnia, sadness, worry, crying, stretching and yawning. (lacking in drive)
- Pts: Lu9, 3(tianfu3), UB13, Du12(shenzhu3), Ren6, Ht5, St36, UB20(sp), 49(yishe), 47(hunmen), Du20
- Formula: Gan mai da zao tang

# Heart & Spleen deficiency

- Symptoms: Depression, brooding, always thinking, palpitations, timidity, difficulty in falling asleep, pale face, dizziness, poor appetite. Common in young woman due to sadness and grief.
- Pts: St36, Sp6, UB20, 21, Ren15, Pc6, UB15, Ht7, Du14,20
- Formula: : Gui pi tang

# Heart yang deficiency

- Symptoms: Depression, feeling cold with desire to curl up, not wanting to do anything, palpitations, tiredness, easily startled. Common in middle age or elder people.
- Pts: Ht5, Du14, UB15, Ren5, St36, Sp6, Du20
- Formula: Gui zhi gan cao long gu mu li tang

# Kidney & Heart-Yin Xu, Empty Heat blazing

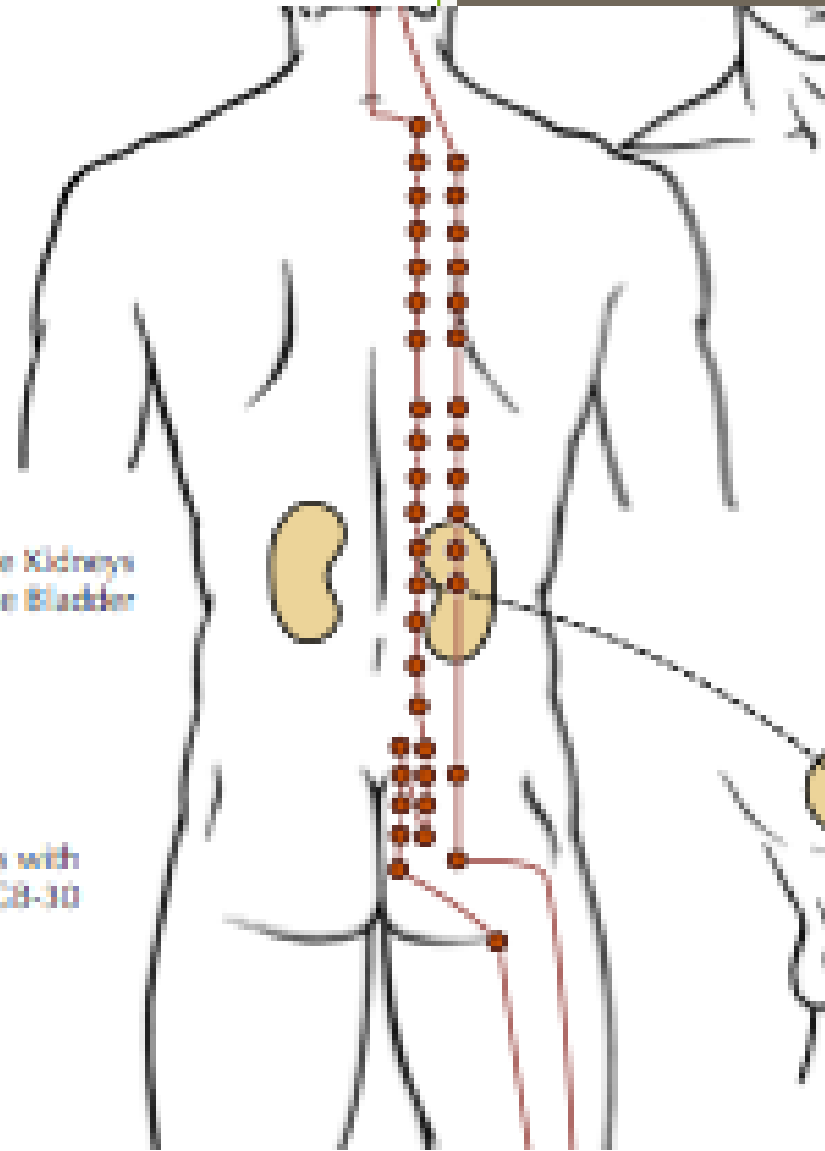
- Depression, anxiety in the evening, feeling hot, flush, dizziness, palpitations, waking up at night, five-palm heat, night sweating, mental restlessness. nocturnal emissions with dreams, sore back. Middle to elder aged people
- Pts: Kid3,6,2,9, UB52(zhishi), Ht6, Pc7
- Formula: Tian wang bu xin dan

# Kidney yang deficiency

- Symptoms: Depression. exhaustion, does not want to do anything or go out, weariness, chilliness with desire to curl up. sore back, frequent urination, pale urine, no will-power, no initiative, lack of drive and determination. Middle aged people
- Pts: Kid7,3, Ren4, DU4, UB23, 52, 47, Du20
- Formula: You gui wan , Jin gui shen qi wan

2 Kidneys  
1 Bladder

28-30



## Back-Shu pts 2<sup>nd</sup> line

- BL-42 Pohan (hu means "window"): "Window of Po"
- BL-44 Shentang (tang means "hall"): "Hall of Shen"
- BL-47 Hunmen (men means "door"): "Door of Hun"
- BL-49 Yishe (she means "abode"): "Abode of Yi"
- BL-52 Zhishi (shi means "room"): "Room of Zhi"

# Some common use herbs

- Rose bud
- Xiang yuan Fructus Citri medicae
- Fo shou Fructus Citri sarcodactylis
- Orange peel- Pericarpium Citri reticulatae viride,
- He huan hua & Pi Flos & cortex Albiziae
- yuan zhi Radix Polyga/ae
- Yu jin Tuber Curcumae