

Thoughts on Supporting Patients with Prepared Formulas (Patents)

By Robert Hayden, AP

These are some of my thoughts on how to support patients' health during the outbreak, specifically with regard to Chinese herbal medicine. Right up front I will mention that I switched to patents when I started doing community acupuncture, so that's where my focus lies.

One preventive approach I have seen comes from the SARS-1 epidemic; I think I read this from John Chen. Combine Yu Ping Feng San with Sang Ju Yin. Luckily, I have at least a little of each. It's certainly hard to find Jade Windscreen right now.

What happens if the patient begins to exhibit symptoms? Well, of course, follow the signs and symptoms through tongue diagnosis and questioning, and treat the pattern. But how do you prepare?

The temptation is there to reflexively just employ whatever antiviral formulas you can find - Gan Mao Ling, Chuan Xin Lian, Zhong Gan Ling - or wei-level wind heat formulas like Yin Qiao San.

I heard an interesting discussion on the Qiological podcast the other day. It was a conversation with Jin Zhao, a TCM doctor from China, regarding treatment of COVID-19. The TL;DR is that what he (and others) were seeing was an epidemic of cold damp toxin. Their primary treatment strategy involved herbs from the drain damp category, but of primary importance was the category of aromatic herbs that transform dampness. In other words, herbs like huo xiang, hou po, ban xia, fu ling, and so forth. To these they added small amounts of anti-viral herbs like ban lan gen or jin yin hua, as well as cough-stopping herbs like xing ren. But, Jin Zhao was adamant, the main strategy was treating the dampness.

This made a lot of sense to me; even more so when I looked at a case study written by Jin Zhao:

<https://botanicalbiohacking.com/blog/2020/2/25/from-critical-condition-to-a-clear-ct-scan-integrative-medicine-vs-covid-19-coronavirus>

As much as initial reports focused on the dry cough and high fever - giving the impression that the epidemic should be treated as a Lung fire pattern - many recent reports of symptoms do seem to support the presence of a damp pathogen. Initial loss of taste and smell, feelings of heaviness and fatigue, nausea and possible GI symptoms, all these can be seen as turbid dampness affecting earth and impaired ability of the Spleen to raise the clear qi and fluids to the upper burner. With the middle jiao blocked by turbidity, the Lung loses its depurative downbearing function and turbid fluid begins to accumulate in the upper jiao. The qi dynamic is blocked and heat begins to build up, consuming what clear fluids are left in the upper, producing dry cough and fever.

So, what can we do to support the patients? Pay close attention to signs of dampness during your consult. Immune tonics and mushrooms can help, but be prepared to address excess damp in the middle jiao.

With all the Yin Qiao and Gan Mao Ling gone from suppliers' shelves, what can you do? With prescription services backed up and dwindling stocks of anti-viral and cough-stopping herbs to

make custom formulas with - how can you get something to the patient quickly to bridge the gap between the online pharmacy's delivery time and having to decide on substitutes?

I'm making sure I have adequate stock (not hoarding!) of digestive formulas. Huo Xiang Zheng Qi Wan is in short supply now. But you know what still seems to be around?

Curing Pills, AKA Kang Ning Wan. A lot of manufacturers make them, and they are all loaded with many of the same aromatic herbs as Jin Zhao and his colleagues have been using.

Let's look at the first three prescriptions from the link above:

1. *Xing Ren 10g, Bai dou kou 10g, yi yi ren 15g, fa ban xia 10g, hou po 10g, shen qu 5g, huo xiang 15g, bing lang 3g, dan dou shi 10g, su ye 10g, cang zhu 15g, lai fu zi 5g, ban lan gen 5g, yin chen 5g, huang qin 3g*

2. *Ren shen 5g, chen pi 10g, ban xia 10g, fu ling 15g, guang huo xiang 15g, su ye 10g, cao guo 3g, bing lang 5g, hou po 10g, bai dou kou 10g, xing ren 10g, ban lan gen 5g, cang zhu 15g, shi chang pu 5g, dong guaren 20g, wei jing 20g*

3. *Fa ban xia 10g, fu ling 15g, guang huo xiang 15g, su ye 10g, cao guo 3g, bing lang 5g, hou po 10g, bai dou kou 12g, xing ren 10g, lian qiao 5g, wei jing 20g, dong guaren 30g, cao zhu 15g, bai mao gen 10g, gao ben 5g, pao jiao 5g*

Now let's look at Kang Ning Wan from Herbal Times:

Kang Ning Wan (Herbal Times)

Fu Ling (Kuai) Poria cocos; Sclerotium 15.5% X

Yi Yi Ren -sheng Coicis; Semen 9% X

Ju Hua Chrysanthemum morifolium; Flos 7.3%

Cang Zhu Atractylodes spp.; Rhizoma 7.2% X

Guang Huo Xiang Pogostemon cablin; Herba 7.2% X

Shen Qu Massa fermentata medicinalis 7.2% X

Hou Po Magnolia officinalis; Cortex 7.2% X

Ge Gen Pueraria Thomsonii; Radix 7.2%

Bai Zhi Angelica dahurica; Radix 7.2%

Mu Xiang Saussurea lappa; Radix 7.2%

Gu Ya -5:1 Extract Oryza Sativa L. 5.5%

Tian Hua Fen Trichosanthes kirilowii; Radix 5.5%

Ju Hong Pi Citrus reticulata; Exocarpium 3.6% X

Bo He Mentha spp.; Herba 3.2%

Herbs bolded and marked with an X appear in the case history formulas; most of the others are in the same or relevant categories such as cool acrid release exterior or transform food stagnation.

Let's look at another popular middle jiao damp formula:

Xiang Sha Yang Wei Wan (Herbal Times)

Bai Zhu *Atractylodes macrocephala*; Rhizoma 10%

Fu Ling (Kuai)*Poria cocos*; **Sclerotium 10% X**

Chen Pi *Citrus reticulata*; **Pericarpium 10% X**

Jiang Ban Xia *Pinellia ternata*; **Rhiz.cum Zingerber 10% X**

Mu Xiang *Saussurea lappa*; Radix 7%

Guang Huo Xiang *Pogostemon cablin*; **Herba 7% X**

Chao Zhi Shi *Citrus aurantium immaturus*; Fructus Praeparta 7%

Zhi Xiang Fu *Cyperus rotundus*; Rhizoma 7%

Sha Ren Ren (no shell) *Amomum spp.*; Fructus 7%

Bai Dou Kou *Amomum kravanh*; **Fructus 7% X**

Hou Po *Magnolia officinalis*; **Cortex 7% X**

Da Zao *Ziziphus jujuba*; Fructus 5%

Sheng Jiang -5:1 Extract *Zingiber officinale*; Rhizoma 3%

Ye Gan Cao *Glycyrrhiza Uralensis*; Radix 3%

Again, very similar - many herbs from the aromatic transform dampness category plus aromatic (xiang) qi stagnation herbs and some Spleen supplementation with bai zhu. Different manufacturers may have different formulations, so check the ingredients, and have your Bensky or Chen book handy if you need to look up something.

What's missing from these formulas? Well, if you have some Gan Mao Ling or Chuan Xin Lian, you can add that to the prescription in small amounts... 6 Curing pills and 1-2 Chuan Xin Lian, for example. If you have something for cough, you can add that too if needed. But if the tongue has a thick coat and there are signs of excess damp, aromatically drying damp in the middle jiao has to be the priority. Bombing the virus with a bunch of cold bitter herbs is only going to make the Spleen worse, and shut down the exterior.

As always, treat what you find through the four examinations. There may be cases that present differently, and for those you will need a different approach. But, as surely as Earth generates Metal, middle jiao function is crucial to the body's response to the epidemic.

Stay strong and be well.