

Supportive Care of Cancer Patients

Complimentary Integration of Chinese Medicine By Miki Shima, OMD, LAc

General Approach of New Medicine

The integrated clinical approach called “Xin Yi” or “Shin Igaku,” has been in practice in China and Japan for the past fifty years. Rather than fighting with each other, Chinese and Western doctors have worked side by side for the best interest of their cancer patients. For example, at Kitasato Hospital in Tokyo, medical services from Western and Chinese medicine are available to all cancer patients, all covered by the National Insurance System, which amounts to 6% of GNP. In America, medical expenditures amount to 14% of GNP and there are over 40,000,000 people without health insurance! On top of that, most Chinese medical services are not covered by insurance, and Western doctors and Chinese practitioners don't even talk to each other for the best interest of cancer patients.

In China and Japan, most cancer patients see Western doctors first for their initial diagnosis, then they consult Chinese doctors for acupuncture and herbs. After the doctors from both sides confer with each other, a treatment protocol is established and initiated. During the acute phase of treatment, the patient will stay in a hospital where surgery, chemotherapy, and/or radiation are given along with acupuncture and herbal therapy. Acupuncture may be given daily and herbs are usually given four times a day to a patient in bed. In America, acupuncture is done on an outpatient basis weekly and herbs are also prescribed weekly. This acute phase usually lasts for 3 months.

After the acute phase treatment is finished, the patient is usually seen at an outpatient clinic for follow-ups for 5 years. The frequency of visit depends on the kind of cancer, stages of the disease, type of treatment, etc. The first two years are especially critical because of

high possibility of recurrence. During those years, acupuncture should be done weekly and herbs should be reviewed every two weeks along with all pertinent tests by oncologists. During the next 3 years, acupuncture is usually done every two weeks and herbs are reviewed monthly.

If the patient is free from any recurrence in the first 5 years, acupuncture can be done monthly to keep all the channels balanced. Herbs are also given to keep the Zang-Fu system balanced in order not to allow cancer to come back.

The major issue with cancer patients after the first acute phase is compliance.

Herbs should be given in an easy-to-take form, preferably once a day in concentrated granules. Acupuncture should be done in regular intervals so that the patient can remember to come to your clinic at the same time every week or month. It is extremely difficult to obtain good adherence to treatment if you don't give clear, easy guidelines to your patients as to how long and how often they need to come see you and what herbs to take when, etc.

Chinese medicine regards cancers as the ultimate manifestation of extreme heat toxin due to:

- 1) fetal toxin (tai du, tai doku)
- 2) over-consumption of heat-producing foods leading to blood heat, damp heat in the Middle Jiao, and toxic heat in the Liver, etc.
- 3) over-consumption of alcohol, tobacco, coffee, fats, red meats, etc.
- 4) exposure to bacteria, viruses, fungi and parasites, X-ray radiation, hormones, nuclear radiation, toxic materials, etc.

In order to treat cancers, Western medicine and Chinese medicine utilize extremely cold drugs, which tends to demolish the balance of the whole system of the vital organs.

By the time most American patients see a practitioner of Chinese medicine,

they have already gone through surgery, chemotherapy and radiation and their vital system is extremely damaged. Therefore, the first job to do is to “rebuild” the wasted Zang-Fu, Qi, Blood, Channels and Collaterals. This period usually coincides with the “acute” phase before the patient moves into the chronic phase. Since during the early phase, the patient tends to be extremely deficient, acupuncture and moxibustion should be used to tonify the system and herbs should also be carefully prescribed to balance the Zang-Fu system. Diet needs to be individually prescribed so that the deficiencies can be corrected without making the system too heated. During this phase, anti-cancer herbs are not often prescribed due to their cold, toxic nature. Vitamins are not usually used much, either, because they tend to cause excess heat in the system. It is most important for the patient during this stage to:

- 1) rest
- 2) meditate
- 3) exercise moderately
- 4) eat well in order to recover from damages of aggressive therapies.

When the patient has recovered during the acute phase, anti-cancer herbs should be initiated to prevent any recurrence. First, the physician should choose a few most appropriate anti-cancer herbs and formulas, combined with another tonic formula.

If you are not well trained in Chinese cancer therapy, you should use well-established formulas ONLY. Since anti-cancer herbs are usually cold and toxic, they should be taken for 3 month at a time, and then re-evaluated. It is very good idea to take a month off between formulas so that the body can detoxify any toxins from herbs.

When the patient is free from recurrence for longer than two years, dosages of anti-cancer herbs can be reduced, but they should be continued for 3 months

on and 1 month off for another three years along with monthly acupuncture treatments.

Acupuncture- The ultimate goal of acupuncture treatment in supportive care of cancer patients is to keep all the meridians in harmony at all the four levels of Qi circulation, i.e. the Major, Muscle, Extra-, and Divergent meridian systems. Do not get preoccupied with cancer treatment only.

Major Meridian Points- Sesshokushin can be applied right after examination of the pulse, tongue, nails, and abdomen. First apply this needling method on tender Back-Shu points by deep pressure, preferably with a gold needle. Then, it can be used on tender Front-Mu points.

Traditional Points- Based on clinical experience, traditional points are selected and they can be gently needled. Cancer patients do NOT tolerate strong needling at all. Therefore, gentle, shallow needling is the best method for most cancer patients.

Extra-Meridian Points- The purpose of this level of Qi manipulation is to mobilize the Yuan Qi. Extra-meridians will also help cancer patients emotionally. One or two pairs are selected based on diagnosis and complaints. The Gold-Silver Techniques (GST) is the treatment of choice for cancer patients. Avoid over-sedation by Electro-stimulation, especially in pain treatment. The traditional and new Extra-Meridian pairs are as follows:

SI 3 (Dumai) - UB 62 (Yangqiaomai) - Brain tumors.

SJ 5 (Yangweimai) - GB 41 (Daimai) - Liver cancer, Prostate cancer, Ovarian cancer.

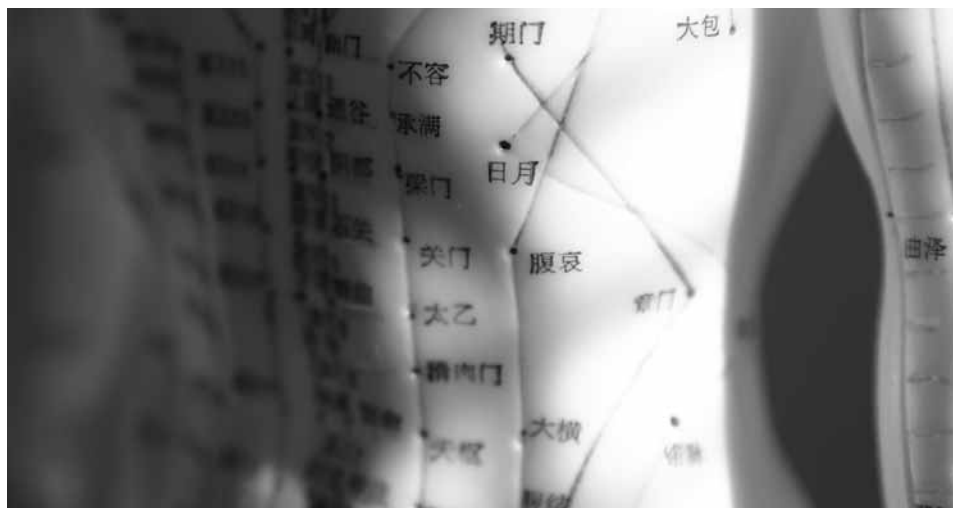
LI 5 (Dachangmai) - St 40 (Weimai) - Stomach cancer, Colon cancer.

P 6 (Yangweimai) - Sp 4 (Chongmai) - Lung cancer, Uterine cancer, Lymphomas.

Lu 7 (Renmai) - K 6 (Yinqiaomai) - Lung cancer, Kidney cancer.

H 5 (Xinmai) - K 6 (Yinqiaomai) - "Heart - Kidney" disharmony.

P 6 (Yinweimai) - Liv 4 (Ganmai) - Liver cancer, Breast cancer, Ovarian cancer, Prostate cancer.



Divergent Meridian Points- The purpose of this level is to balance Zang-Fu. Usually one Yang divergence on one side and one Yin divergence on the other side are used with GST. Do not cross-connect divergences. The traditional connections are as follows:

The First Confluence (K/UB) - UB 1 (+) or UB 11 (+) with K 10 (-) or UB 40 (-).

The Second Confluence (Liv/GB) - GB 1 (+) with Liv 8 (-) or GB 34 (-).

The Third Confluence (Sp/St) - St 1(+) with Sp 9 (-) or St 36 (-).

The Fourth Confluence (H/SI) - UB 1 (-) with H 3 (+) or SI 8 (+).

The Fifth Confluence (P/SJ) - GB 12 (-) with P 3 (+) or SJ 10 (+).

The Sixth Confluence (Lu/LI) - St 12 (-) with Lu 5 (+) or LI 11 (+).

Tai Kyoku Moxibustion Treatment for The Immune System

Twice a week with large soft moxa cones, usually two to three cones on each point.

UB 11 (Bone marrow), UB 13 (Lung Qi), UB 18 (Liver detoxification), UB 20 (Spleen),

UB 21 (Digestion), UB 23 (Kidney support), Du 4 (Kidney support), Liv 3 (Blood),

Sp 6 (Immune system), St 36 (General tonification), Ren 4 (Kidney), St 25 (LI),

Ren 12 (Appetite), LI 4 (LI), Lu 7 (Lung Qi).

Instruct the patient's family in moxibustion in the first visit.

Akabane Stimulation

Very effective to stimulate Qi circulation in the entire meridian system. This can be administered by the acupuncturist and/or patient. In the case of self-treatment, instruct the patient in this method during the first visit. It should be done twice a day until all Jing points are less than 10 strokes.

TENS for Pain Management

Ideal for chronic cancer pain. A TENS machine can be prescribed by MD and it is usually covered for "intractable pains" by insurance companies. Instruct the patient in TENS stimulation, depending on the nature of pain.

Dr. Omura's Thymus Stimulation

Developed by Yoshiaki Omura, M.D. of New York City. The patient applies 5-minute vibrating stimulation on Ren 21 and subclavian thymus areas of Omura every 6 hours a day for a year.

Herbal Medicine

There are various kinds of herbal formulas used in supportive care of cancer patients. First, there are many formulas used for general stimulation for the immune system and they can be used for 3 to 6 months. There are also numerous formulas to affect cancer growth, directly and indirectly. However, they can be toxic to the system if used for longer than 3 months.

Therefore, many cancer herbal masters balance their formulas with other herbs to "detoxify" them as described.