

# The Yang and Yin of Facial Acupuncture, Part Three

## HORMONAL RESPONSE FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF ORIENTAL MEDICINE

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### THE EIGHT EXTRAORDINARY MERIDIANS: ANCIENT HORMONAL BALANCERS

According to Royston Low, a British acupuncturist, the Eight Extraordinary Meridians can "influence and control the various hormones of the body." Much of the significant research on hormonal balance is the result of the "marriage of Western and Eastern approaches," although little is documented in traditional Chinese medicine. Significant contributions have been made by adherents of the French acupuncture school - in particular, Jacques Lavier and his colleagues. Other studies have been conducted in Germany and Japan.

According to Low, the Eight Extra-ordinary Meridians can be divided into two categories: those that affect the hormones, and a paired channel that influences control via the nervous system:

Hormonal System	Nervous System
<i>yang qiao mai</i>	<i>du mai</i>
<i>yin qiao mai</i>	<i>ren mai</i>
<i>dai mai</i>	<i>yang wei mai</i>
<i>chong mai</i>	<i>yin wei mai</i>

### HORMONAL EFFECT OF *CHONG MAI/YIN WEI MAI* (ROYSTON LOW)

*Chong mai/yin wei mai*: hormonal effect:

This meridian pair is used to address hereditary imbalances. In Chinese medicine, ancestral *qi* is considered to be stored in the kidneys and *chong mai* has its point of origin in this organ. However, according to Low, due to its symptomatology, *chong mai* may, in fact, arise in the adrenal medulla. Low says that "the hormone concerned is adrenalin, which has sympathetico-mimetic action, and its use is therefore indicated in cases of organ insufficiency, especially in the Heart. *Yin wei mai* has two actions: hormonally, it affects the thyroid gland and the nervous system (vagus nerve connection) via CV 22. Other recommended points are Liv 14 and Sp 13, 15 and 16.

*Chong mai* (opening point = Sp 4):

In the *Ling Shu*, the *chong mai* is described as the "Sea of Blood." The points are UB 11, St 37 and St 38. Symptoms of these points embrace a subjective feeling of fullness in the body (excess blood) and a "smallness" in the body (deficient blood). *Chong mai* clearly relates to blood; it has a strong effect on the digestive system, as seen by the association with St 37 and 38. In the *Ling Shu*, there is an interesting discussion about *chong mai*'s blood and *qi* relationship, and the fact that the pathway

encircles the lips and mouth:

"If the *qi* and blood are sufficient, the skin becomes healthy and the flesh has heat. If only the blood is sufficient, the blood moistens the skin and makes the body hair. Prenatally, women have sufficient *qi*, but not enough blood. The *Ren Mai* and *chong mai* cannot nourish the mouth and lips sufficiently, which is why women do not have moustaches or beards. In the eunuch, having the *zang* muscles (penis and testicles) cut off damages the *chong mai*. The beard and moustache do not grow because the *chong mai* cannot nourish the mouth."

I have included this quote because it relates to the hormonal function, and shows a potential relationship of the *chong mai* and other extraordinary vessels to the endocrine systems.

The *Nan Jing* refers to tension or contraction of the lining of the abdomen involving rebellious *qi*. Wang Shu He goes on to say: "If the Kidney *qi* is deficient, this deficiency damages the *chong mai*. The *chong* makes rebellious *qi*, which does not rise up, making the lining tense with abdominal swelling and pain."

This relationship between Kidney *qi* and *chong mai* supports the connection between the *chong mai* and the moving *qi* between the kidneys.

Symptomatology of *chong mai* (Low):

- pain in heart, tightness and fullness in chest;
- abdominal swelling, with gas, pain after meals;
- abdominal rumbling;
- retention of placenta; and
- digestive troubles in general; anorexia, vomiting, myocarditis, palpitations.

*Chong mai* is the "Sea of Blood," in that it regulates the 12 Regular Channels, the "Sea of 12 Channels." It's produced in the Middle Heater from Kidney essence and is used a great deal for gynecological and digestive orders.

*Yin wei mai* (opening point = P 6):

*Wei* means "to connect, make a network, gather other channels together." The yin and yang *wei* channels connect all the yin and yang channels, respectively.

Symptomatology of *yin wei mai* (Low):

- affects emotions (easily angered, anguish, etc.);
- pain in heart, cardiac discomfort;
- pains in genitalia, weakness;
- diarrhea, rectal prolapse;
- hypothyroidism;
- failure to recall words, timidity, fear, nightmares, hypertension, mental depression; and
- achy waist area.

## HORMONAL EFFECTS OF *DU MAI*/*YANG QIAO MAI*

The *yang qiao* vessel acts on the production of ACTH, a hormone that impacts the adrenal cortex. The Chinese concept of the Kidney organ relating to the yin and yang of the entire body recognizes that this organ system also includes the adrenals. According to Low, the *yang qiao* also acts upon the

somatotrophic hormones.

*Du mai*, which controls the spinal cord and brain via Du 4, "Gate of Life" or "Mingmen Fire," strengthens the kidney adrenal function, benefits kidney yang and nourishes source *qi*. A prescription for stimulating cortisone production via acupuncture treatments is to tonify UB 1. This acts directly on pre-pituitary to stimulate the production of both gonadotrophic and somatotrophic hormones. Small Intestine 3 also is recommended (a pituitary point, according to Kiiko Matsumoto) and UB 62.

*Du mai* (opening point = SI 3):

"Sea of *Yang Qi*" governs all the yang channels. *Du* means "governing" or "dominating."

Symptomatology of *du mai* (Low):

- unites the *yang qi* of the body;
- excess = stiffening of the spine, headache, eye pain;
- deficiency = head and shoulders sag forward, head feels heavy and shakes;
- hemorrhoids;
- sterility, retention of urine;
- Parkinson's disease;
- general rheumatic conditions of the eye, spine, head and neck, and cerebrospinal system; and
- can cause irritability.

*Yang qiao mai* (opening point = UB 62):

This regulates the movement of and balances the *yang qi* of the left and right lateral sides of the lower extremities. It also regulates the opening function of the eyes and normalizes brain function.

Symptomatology of *yang qiao mai* (Low):

- "angry" eyes that cannot be closed;
- insomnia (yin low);
- lateral, lower legs tight;
- excess = rheumatoid arthritis; red, hot, swollen, painful joints;
- deficiency = abscess formation; and
- painful, swollen renal area; "like the blows of a hammer."

#### HORMONAL EFFECTS OF *REN MAI/YIN QIAO MAI*

Edema or fluid metabolism in women can be treated by the *yin qiao mai* via K 2, 6, and 8. The secretion of renin from the adrenal cortex can be affected by these points as well, which also impact the gonadotrophic center of the pituitary gland.

In menopause, an excess of gonadotrophic hormones is associated with waning sex hormones; the UB 1 point on the *yin qiao* meridian connects the anterior pituitary with the gonads and adrenal cortex.

Royston Low stipulates that the *ren mai* corresponds to "aspects of the pelvic parasympathetic ramifications." The use of CV 9, Lu 7 and K 6 can be especially effective in treating edema.

In summary, to stimulate waning sex hormones, use the following points:

- UB 1
- Lu 7

- CV 4 and 7

*Ren mai* (opening point = Lu 7):

*Ren* means "bearing, controlling or conceiving." The *ren* channel regulates all yin channels.

Symptomatology of *ren mai* (Low):

- emphysema, bronchitis, bronchial catarrh, asthma (of wet, sticky nature);
- sinusitis;
- dysmenorrhea, leukorrhea, climacteric disturbances, digestive problems;
- eczema, acne, furunculosis;
- CV 2, 3; urinary disturbances;
- CV 3, 4; genital conditions;
- CV 6; lack of energy (empty *qi*);
- CV 8; general weakness (moxa and salt);
- CV 9; fluid regulation, edema;
- CV 12; gastric disturbances;
- CV 17; lung conditions;
- CV 22; asthma; and
- pregnancy and female cycles.

*Yin qiao mai* (opening point = K 6):

It regulates the movement of and balances the *yin qi* of the left and right lateral sides of the lower extremities, as well as the closing function of the eyes; it also normalizes brain function.

Symptomatology of *yin qiao mai* (Low):

- always sleepy, low yang, can't keep eyes open;
- eye pain;
- blurred vision (lacrimation);
- medial lower leg tight;
- joints stiff and blocked (when whole pathway is affected);
- fluid metabolism in males and females;
- organic imbalance;
- transports *yuan qi*;
- pregnancy and birth problems; and
- icy cold lower limbs, phlebitis.

## HORMONAL EFFECTS OF *DAI MAI/YANG WEI MAI*

This pairing regulates migraines caused by syndromes such as dysmenorrhea. The *yang wei mai* affects the nervous system via the Gallbladder and Liver meridians, and the points on the cranium, while the *dai mai* affects the hormonal system. Liv 13, the front *mu* of the spleen, and influential point of *zang*, is important because "unemployed sex hormones are neutralized in the liver." Severe migraines often occur as a result of excess gonadotrophic hormones.

*Dai mai* (opening point = GB 41):

*Dai Mai* means "belt" or "girdle," and it binds all the channels that travel longitudinally. It's the only channel that circulates transversely and regulates the Gallbladder channel through its confluent point, GB 41, and the waist, GB 26, 27 and 28.

Symptomatology of *dai mai* (Low):

- bloated abdomen;
- "sagging waist;"
- female disturbances, dysmenorrhea, with white or bloody discharge;
- arthritic limbs;
- muscular problems;
- acute lumbar pain; and
- headaches, especially with congestion of the lower abdomen.

*Yang wei mai* (opening point = TH 5):

It regulates *wei* or protective *qi*, and connects and regulates all the yang channels, dominating the exterior.

Symptomatology of *yang wei mai* (Low):

- symptoms are superficial in nature, such as acne, skin trouble, nodules;
- sudden swelling of the lumbar region with pain radiating into the abdomen;
- yang-type arthritis; acute or chronic, but not as red and swollen as *yang qiao*;
- contraction of lateral leg or thigh;
- pain and stiffness of the shoulder when raising the arm;
- neck pain;
- torticollis; and
- vertigo (dizziness), migraine and headaches.

In addition to the above specific applications in the realm of hormonal response, the Eight Extraordinary Meridians are considered to encode fundamental hereditary aspects of the individual, what Oriental medicine terms the *jing*; thus, employing them in the context of a facial acupuncture treatment can have profound impact upon both the visible and implicit symptoms of the aging process, promoting healthy aging, greater quality of life and harmony.

In the next article in this series, we will explore conventional Western facial rejuvenation techniques, such as implants, fillers, Botox, resurfacing (both ablative and non-ablative, liposuction, etc.) in relation to the comparable effects of constitutional facial acupuncture renewal.

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