

formulas for the fatigue which presents with the standard tongue and pulse signs of *qi* and blood vacuity. These are base formulas and I often combine these with *qi*/blood stagnation formulas in cases of chronic fatigue and overall recalcitrant chronic issues.

Yin Vacuity: The most common formulas I use for fatigue with significant underlying yin vacuity are: Liu Wei Di Huang Wan, Zuo Gui Wan. If the yin vacuity presents with vacuity heat, I use: Da Bu Yin Wan and Zhi Bai Di Huang Wan. My personal favorite formula to have on hand for combined yin and yang vacuity is Wu Zi Yan Zong Wan. These are basic formulas and if the yin vacuity is centered on specific organs such as the heart, lungs, or liver, then these can and should be modified as needed to target these specific issues.

Insomnia

In many ways, this is the most important symptom to address as chronic sleep disturbances will cause deep systemic vacuity of *qi*, blood, yin, yang, and eventually jing. Therefore, addressing chronic sleep issues of vital importance. The following are the most common patterns/formulas.

Heart Blood/Yin Vacuity: The most common formulas I use in these patterns are: Bai Zi Yang Xin Tang, Suan Zao Ren Tang, and Tian Wang Bu Xin Dan. I also use An Shen Bu Xin Wan and Bu Nao Wan, both considered "modern" patent formulas for many cases of hard to treat insomnia and it is not uncommon for me to combine two of these respective formulas in recalcitrant cases as well. Sleep quality is in many ways the ultimate "medicine" for the vague diagnosis of "adrenal fatigue" as in deep restorative sleep the body can regenerate and restore *qi*, blood, yin, and yang. Therefore, it is imperative for clinicians to focus on resolving this issue and educating patients on appropriate stress reduction and "sleep hygiene" protocols.

Digestive Disturbances

This is a complex category and could also be given the length of a book in a complete discussion. However, the most common TCM patterns I see in cases of supposed "adrenal fatigue" presenting with a complex array of digestive complaints are: liver/spleen disharmony, and food stagnation. This is most likely due to the large amount of food sensitivities/food allergies so common in today's clinical milieu, as well as the poor compliance of patients dealing with these issues.

Liver/Spleen Disharmony: The most common formulas in this presentation is: Xiao Yao Wan, and Jia Wei Xiao Yao Wan. I use these extensively with the formula Bu Zhong Yi Qi Tang in cases of significant spleen vacuity and depressive heat. **Food Stagnation:** The most common formulas I use are: Bao He Wan, Zi Sheng Wan, and Kang Ning Wan. I am often shocked at how little food stagnation formulas are used in the modern clinic as they are highly effective at resolving digestive issues, particularly when combined with formulas to harmonize the liver and the spleen. I use these much more often than simply resorting to using digestive enzymes as a "quick fix" solution to chronic digestive maladies.

This is a quick overview of the most basic categories which cover the most common issues seen when patients present with infamous "adrenal fatigue." Before resorting to using one-size-fits-all generic supplements, I encourage TCM practitioners to not abandon the use of TCM pattern differentiation! Not only is it effective but it is also important for TCM practitioners to stay within their legal scope of practice. The roots of TCM are strong and fertile and provide endless nourishment to patients, but only if the TCM practitioner provides these doorways. Rather than jumping on trendy standardized buzz-words marketed by supplement companies, remember your roots and treat the root. This is the true

secret of the effectiveness of traditional Chinese medicine.

AUGUST 2016

©2025 Acupuncture Today™ All Rights Reserved