



SUN HERBAL
PROFESSIONAL
SEMINAR NOTES

**The Treatment of
Stubborn Skin Conditions
with Chinese Herbal Medicines
- Eczema, Psoriasis, Acne**



PATHOGENS IN SKIN DISORDERS

- **Wind:** Sudden onset, severe itching, lesions that come and go in different locations, lesions confined to the upper body.
- **Damp:** Skin lesions that are puffy or swollen, fluid filled vesicles, lesions with serous exudation, erosions, enlarged sebaceous glands, lesions that are confined to the lower body.
- **Cold:** Wheals or rashes that are pale, pink or dark purple, smooth skin that lacks elasticity, prolonged course of the disease.
- **Heat:** Sudden onset, red lesions that feel hot, lesions confined to the upper body, swelling, pain and pus formation. Often with systemic signs & symptoms



PATHOGENS IN SKIN DISORDERS

- **Dryness:** Dry skin lesions with desquamation, rhagades (linear fissures) and lichenification (thickening and hardening of the skin).
- **Toxin:** (drugs or medications, contaminated food, insect bites, poison ivy etc.). Intense signs and symptoms with a sudden onset, general malaise, and tissue damage, history of contact
s/s: redness, swelling, purple maculae, papules, vesicles, wheals, erosions, ulcers, epidermal tissue damage and exfoliation, accompanied by local sensation of heat, itching or pain.
- **Blood Stasis:** Increase of pigmentation, pigmented spots, petechiae, ecchymoses, red or purple spots, dark red nodules, subcutaneous nodules, thickened or hardened skin, distention of the capillaries, varicosities, veruccae, scar tissue.



ECZEMA

- Intense itching and burning sensation
- Diffuse erythema of discrete areas, with flaky or scaly dry skin →
- May develop clusters of **papules** → **Vesicles** (i.e. blister-like lesions) →
- Exudation and crust formation
- Recovery: fine scaly desquamation and pigmentation
- **Eczema:** lesions occur in the same places each time; also occur symmetrically (unknown cause)
- **Dermatitis:** contact or ingestion (= allergic) – clear edges initially



ECZEMA & DERMATITIS

ACUTE



Dermatitis



ECZEMA & DERMATITIS





DERMATITIS

- Contact with an irritant → clear edge initially
- Ingested drugs or toxic substance → diffuse lesions
- Incubation period of 5 to 20 days (first time)
- Subsequent exposure → several hours to one day



ECZEMA & DERMATITIS

- Untreated eczema or dermatitis tends to progress to a subacute stage after about three weeks
- The degree of inflammation is reduced and the itching is less intense than in the acute stage
- The lesions now consist of papules, scabs and scales, with only a few vesicles and mild erosions.



ECZEMA & DERMATITIS

SUBACUTE & CHRONIC STAGES

Subacute:

- Inflammation is reduced and the itching is less intense
- The lesions: papules, scabs and scales, with only a few vesicles and mild erosions.

Chronic:

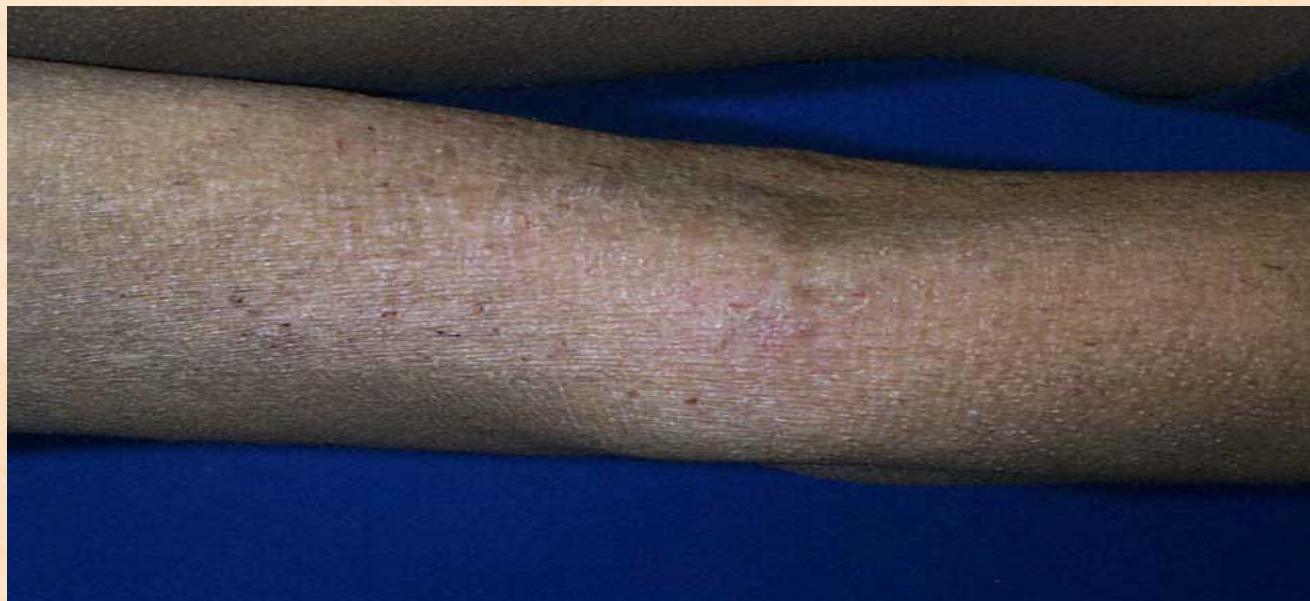
- Confined to a few discrete areas, clearly demarcated
- Skin becomes thick, rough, pigmented and feels hardened to the touch
→
- Patchy, scaly desquamations or lichenoid skin lesions
- Mild itching



SUBACUTE & CHRONIC STAGES



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ECZEMA & DERMATITIS

Main causes

- Weak resistance (= deficiency of the defensive Qi and the Qi in general)
- Invasion of exogenous pathogens (Wind, Damp, Heat)
- Interior Heat or Damp-Heat
- Injury to the Yin, Blood and Body Fluids (subacute and chronic conditions)
- Blood stasis (chronic conditions)



ECZEMA & DERMATITIS

Acute stage

- Sudden onset; severe inflammation; red skin; ± papules and vesicles; erosion; exudation; severe itching and burning sensation.

P/T: Clear Heat-Toxin and clear Damp-Heat, dispel Wind and alleviate itching

Formula

Smilax & Lonicera **ACUTE ECZEMA FORMULA**

Pi Fu Bing Jie Du Fang (CM121)



ECZEMA & DERMATITIS

ADDITIONAL FORMULAS

- **Scrotal eczema:** + Anti-Inflamm Formula CM119 or (Gentiana Formula BP016)
- **Drug rash:** + Sophora & Dictamnus Formula BP076
- **With Fire Toxin** (*severely inflamed skin lesions, deep red tongue with a dry yellow coat*):
 - + Coptis & Scute Formula BP049
 - + Lonicera & Wild Chrysanthemum Formula BP027
- **With pus:** + Lonicera & Scrophularia Formula BP059
- **Subacute stage** (w. signs of Dryness and Blood deficiency):
 - + Danggui & Arctium Formula BP030



ECZEMA & DERMATITIS CHRONIC STAGE

- Repeated attacks
- Thickened skin in the affected areas
- Pigmentation or lichenoid lesions
- Some papules, vesicles and exudations

P/T: Nourish the Blood to dispel Wind, activate the Blood and dispel stasis, clear Heat-Toxin, clear Damp-Heat

Formula:

Dang Gui & Arctium

CHRONIC ECZEMA FORMULA (CM116)



ECZEMA & DERMATITIS CHRONIC STAGE

ADDITIONAL FORMULAS

- **Dryness:** + Danggui & Arctium Formula BP030
- **Dark & thickened skin:** + Salvia & Boswellia Formula BP042
- **Patient not responding:** + Lonicera & Scrophularia Formula BP059



PSORIASIS





PSORIASIS

- Areas of dry red skin (erythema) covered with silvery scales
- Localised inflammation
- Localised itching that may be severe
- Affected areas are usually on the arms, legs, trunk, or scalp
- Most commonly found on the skin over the knees and elbows
- Tongue is red or normal with a greasy coat that is usually yellow in the acute stage



PSORIASIS

- **Plaques:** Psoriasis manifests as elevated lesions that vary in size from one to several centimeters.
- **Well-circumscribed margins:** Psoriatic plaques are well defined and have sharply demarcated boundaries.
- **Red color:** The color of psoriatic lesions is a very distinctive rich, full, red color. When present on the legs, lesions sometimes carry a blue or violet tint.
- **Scale:** Psoriatic plaques typically have a dry, thin, silvery-white or micaceous scale; however, the amount and thickness of this scale is quite variable. Removing the scale reveals a smooth, red, glossy membrane with tiny punctate bleeding points. These points represent bleeding from enlarged dermal capillaries after removal of the overlying epithelium. This phenomenon is known as the Auspitz sign.
- **Symmetry:** Psoriatic plaques tend to be symmetrically distributed over the body. Lesions typically have a high degree of uniformity with few morphologic differences between the 2 sides.



PSORIASIS

SYMPTOM ANALYSIS – ACUTE/ACTIVE STAGE

- **Itching** = Wind
- **Redness** = Heat, Fire Toxin
- **Dry skin** = Blood Dryness, Blood deficiency
- **Intense, severe condition** = Heat Toxin
- **Swollen lesions with pus** = Damp-Heat and Heat Toxin

PATHOGENESIS

- Invasion of exogenous Wind → cannot be expelled →
→ Wind stagnates in the skin → Heat → Blood Heat → Blood Dryness
- Liver-Yin and Kidney Yin deficiency → deficiency Heat → Blood Heat → Blood Dryness



PSORIASIS

PATHOGENS

- Wind
- Damp
- Heat
- Blood stasis
- Heat Toxin / Fire Toxin

These factors tend to deplete the Blood and the Yin-Fluids over time.



PSORIASIS

TREATMENT PRINCIPLES

(relative emphasis depends on individual presentation)

- Dispel Wind from the skin
- Clear Damp-Heat from the skin
- Clear Heat Toxin or Fire Toxin from the skin
- Clear Heat and cool the Blood
- Activate the Blood and dispel stasis
- Nourish the Yin and regenerate the Body Fluids

FORMULA

Smilax & Gleditsia **PSORIASIS FORMULA** CM120



PSORIASIS

TREATMENT PRINCIPLES

– ACUTE PROLIFERATIVE STAGE

- Dispel Wind from the skin
- Clear Heat Toxin or Fire Toxin from the skin
- Clear Heat and cool the Blood
- (Clear Damp-Heat from the skin – pustular type)

FORMULA:

Smilax & Gleditsia **PSORIASIS FORMULA** CM120



PSORIASIS

ADDITIONAL FORMULAS

- **Heat Toxin** (*severe, intense condition*):
Sophora & Dictamnus Formula BP076
- **Damp-Heat** (*pustular type*):
Anti-inflamm Formula CM119
or Gentiana Formula BP016
- **Patient slow to respond:**
Lonicera & Scrophularia Formula BP059



PSORIASIS – RESTING STAGE

MAIN TREATMENT PRINCIPLES

- Activate the Blood and dispel stasis
- Nourish the Yin and regenerate the Body Fluids

FORMULA

Smilax & Gleditsia **PSORIASIS FORMULA** CM120

- + Rehmannia & Asparagus Formula BP052 (for Blood Dryness – dry skin, eyes, mouth and lips)
- + Persica, Carthamus & Dang-gui Combination BP061 (for Blood stasis – darkened skin, slow to change)

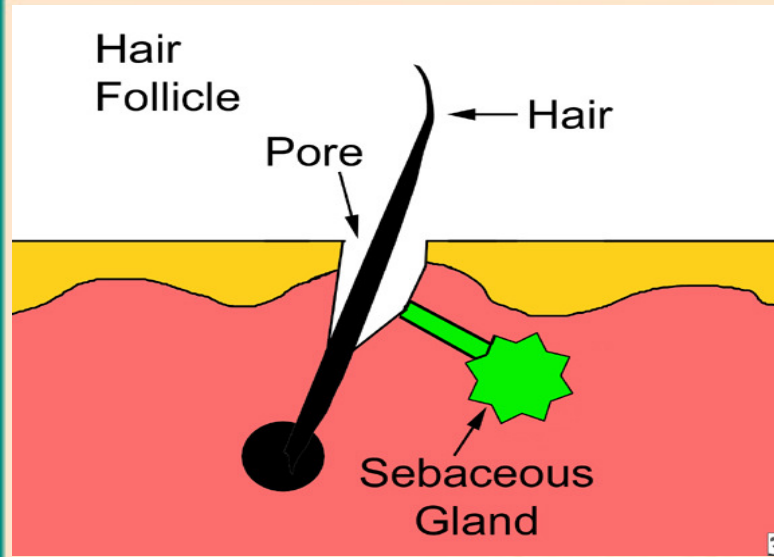


ACNE VULGARIS

- **Red, irritating skin rash** – mostly teenagers and young adults
- **Occurring mainly on oil-producing areas:** the face, chest, back (more sebaceous glands)
- **Abnormal flaking of cells inside the hair follicle** → formation of a plug → enlargement or rupture of the hair follicle → oil and cellular debris spills into the skin → inflammation
- **Non-inflammatory:** blackheads and whiteheads (= open and closed comedones)
- **Inflammatory:** comedones + papules and pustules (= Papulopustular acne) Nodulocystic acne is the most severe



ACNE VULGARIS



Papules & Pustules

Nodules





ACNE VULGARIS

CYSTIC ACNE





ACNE VULGARIS

DIFFERENTIATION OF PATHOGENS

- Red lesions = **Heat**
- Swollen lesions = **Damp**
- Chronic, persistent condition = **Damp**
- Pus formation = **Damp-Heat and Heat-Toxin → Phlegm**
- Scarring = **Blood stasis**
- Lesions come and go and change locations = **Wind**
- Severe itching = **Wind**
- Location:
 - Face/ upper chest = **Stomach, Lung and Colon**
 - Lower chest, back flanks = **Liver, Gallbladder**



ACNE VULGARIS

TCM PATHOGENESIS

- **Damp-Heat in the Stomach** → rises to face
- **Damp-Heat in the Lung** → rises to face
- **Localised Blood Heat** → Heat-Toxin
- **Exogenous Wind** → stagnated in the skin → Heat

- **Constitutional predisposition**
- **Poor diet** → Damp-Heat in St.& Sp. → Lung
- **Low resistance** → Exogenous Wind → skin
- **Complicating factors:** Phlegm (→ nodules & cysts)
Blood stasis (→ scarring)



ACNE VULGARIS

TREATMENT PRINCIPLES

- Clear Damp-Heat from the Lung & Stomach
- Clear Heat, cool the Blood & clear Heat-Toxin
- Clear Heat & resolve Phlegm
- Quicken the Blood & dispel Blood stasis



ACNE VULGARIS

FORMULAS

CM100 Salvia & Scute ACNE FORMULA

Plus one or more of the following:

- Anti-inflamm Formula CM119 (or BP016 Gentiana Formula)
 - Clears Damp-Heat (severe inflammation, lesions on chest and back)
- BP059 Lonicera & Scrophularia Formula
 - Clears Heat, cools the Blood, activates the Blood and dispels stasis (darkened skin, large lesions, risk of scarring)
- BP048 Siler & Platycodon Formula
 - Clears Heat from the Exterior and the Interior of the body (robust constitution, constipation, big appetite)
- BP043 Prunella & Scrophularia Formula
 - Resolves Phlegm & clears Heat (for nodulocystic acne)



Salvia & Scute ACNE FORMULA CM100

- Traditionally used herbs, specific for acne
- Addresses all the TCM patho-mechanisms
- Effective for all types of acne

Dosage adjustments

- **Acne vulgaris** (mild to moderate)
2-3 capsules, 2-3 times daily
- **Papuloustular type**
3-4 capsules, 3 times daily
- **Nodulocystic type**
5 capsules, 3 times daily



ACNE VULGARIS

COMPLICATIONS

➤ **Constipation**

+ Linum & Rhubarb Formula BP019

➤ **Stomach Fire, or Phlegm-Heat in the Stomach**

(Nausea or vomiting, halitosis, yellow greasy tongue coat)

+ Bamboo & Hoelen Formula BP050

➤ **Acne occurs with or worsened by menstruation**

+ Bupleurum & Peony STRESS RELIEF FORMULA CM130

➤ **Located on lower chest, flanks or back**

+ Gardenia & Gentiana ANTI-INFLAMM FORMULA CM119



OTHER TREATMENT OPTIONS

DAMP-HEAT → FROM GIT → TREAT THE GUT

- 1. Herbal therapy if there are gut related S/S.**
- 2. Diet**
- 3. Supplements: Fiber, Probiotics, Omega-3 oils, folic acid, selenium, zinc, B-complex, vit. C, vit. E, multivitamin-mineral complex**



OTHER TREATMENT OPTIONS

ECZEMA

- Vitamin B complex
- Zinc (30 mg per day)
- Omega 3 EFA's

PSORIASIS

- Folic acid
- Omega 3 EFA's
- Selenium, Zinc, Calcium
- Vitamin E

ACNE

- Vitamin A
- Vitamin B6
- Omega 3 EFA's
- Zinc
- Vitamin E



CASE STUDY

- O.E. Female, age 30, acne, which comes on premenstrually and recedes by mid cycle

S/S:

- Acne lesions on face, shoulders and upper back, small red papules and pustules (appeared v. small and not very red on first visit at mid-cycle), PMT (nausea & headaches), feels hot at night, light sleeper, bloating, flatulence and loose stools

Tongue:

- red tip and edges, greasy coat

Pulse:

- wiry and thready



CASE STUDY

ANALYSIS

- Comes on premenstrually
- Lesions on face, shoulders and upper back
- Red papules and pustules
- PMT (nausea & headaches)
- Feels hot at night, light sleeper
- Bloating, flatulence and loose stools

LIVER QI CONSTRAINT
STOMACH, LUNG, LIVER
HEAT, DAMP, TOXIN
LIVER QI CONSTRAINT
HEAT
SPLEEN DEFIC., DAMP

DIAGNOSIS

- Liver Qi constraint with Heat
- Damp-Heat in the Lung & Stomach, localised Heat-Toxin, Blood stasis

TREATMENT

Salvia & Scute ACNE FORMULA CM100

+ Bupleurum & Peony STRESS RELIEF Formula (CM113)

Acne improved after 3 months and all S/S resolved after 6 months, then pregnant