

CHINESE MEDICINE, Solving Womens' Problems

by: Christopher Trahan, O.M.D., L.Ac.

In Chinese medicine, liver energy corresponds to the organ itself as well as to the combination of physiological functions. These have been empirically observed over centuries to be affected by treating acupuncture points along the liver median. Liver qi [vital energy] involves muscles and tendons, reproductive organs, the menstrual cycle, eyesight and emotions of stress such as irritability, frustration and anger. Muscular strength and flexibility inherently relate to a woman's menstrual cycle. Bulking up, losing weight and balancing hormonal cycles can be addressed simultaneously with acupuncture and herbal medicine.

Irregularities in the liver's bile-producing action can disrupt the digestion of fats and lead to constipation. Constipation can be treated with herbs, such as yellow dock and iris root, that stimulate the biliary aspect. It is hereby possible to avoid more drastic [and sometimes addictive] laxatives and purgatives. Skin problems can also relate to biliary imbalances.

By affecting the liver's complex biochemical activities, acupuncture and herbal medicine directly treats P.M.S., menstrual cramps, ovarian cysts, uterine fibroids, cystic breasts, menopausal symptoms, sexual dysfunctions, infertility and ill-effects of oral contraceptives.

Chinese medicine views P.M.S. and menstrual cramps as obstructed liver qi. Treatments of acupuncture and massage one week before a period provides a tremendous

release of tension while promoting optimal circulation, muscular relaxation, and hormonal balance.

The avoidance of sweets, salt, coffee and refined flour products at this time is also recommended. Focus the diet on vegetable, whole-grains and quality protein.

While herbs do not contain hormones per se, they do have nutrients which can help the body in its cycles of production and utilization of hormones.

In treating cramps, there are herbs for pain and spasms. However, it is more important to deal with the month-long casual factors which lead up to the cramps. Craving, bloating, emotional difficulties and breast tenderness yield to a well formulated herbal treatment.

An over the counter herbal formula will rarely provide satisfactory results. The energies of the liver and hormonal cycles must be coordinated with other systems of the body. From among the dozens of female herbs, which include helonias, damiana, tang shen, and skullcap, a combination must be skillfully formulated, adjusted to the individual needs and administered consistently to rebalance the body and achieve maximum results.

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