Clinical Report (Europe)

Case Report (1) Arthritis – Yue Bi Decoction for Relieving Edema plus Atractylodes / Coix Seed Decoction

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Female Patient, 37 years, housewife

Diagnosis: Primary chronic polyarthritis (PCP), mainly wrist and finger joints (interphalangeal and intercarpal joints of both hands) affected; intermittent course during the last 10 years; both shoulder joints have also been affected for the last 2 months.

Clinical findings:
Morning stiffness of all the joints, spindle-shaped tumefaction of interphalangeal joints with restricted and painful movement on either side (inability to close the fist), painful bending of the wrist joints; muscular atrophy of both hands and forearms, restricted and painful movements of both shoulder joints.

Laboratory findings:
Blood sedimentation 28/56mm, C-reactive protein 3,6 mg/dl, no leucocytosis, dysproteinemia, rheumatoid factor negative.

Therapy (until present):
Physiotherapy for many years (active and passive kinesitherapy, local application of frigotherapy on the joints, kinotherapeutic baths etc.); several acupuncture treatments by different acupuncturists have been performed without improvement; a specialist in rheumatology initiated a basic therapy with Resochin some years ago, but the treatment had to be interrupted as serious side effects occurred. Since then she has taken non-steroid-anti-inflammatory-drugs regularly.

Kampo-Shô-determination:
Kampo specific questioning (monshin) reveals that the patient suffers from herpes zoster infections and subsequently intercostal neuralgias, chronic conjunctivitis and recurrent urinary tract infections; furthermore she complains of insomnia (difficulty in falling asleep or waking up with a heat sensation of the entire body), she doesn’t tolerate heat of any kind (sleeps mostly uncovered) and sweats frequently; she feels constantly thirsty and prefers cold drinks; her urine is mostly concentrated and of dark yellow colour with a pungent odor. She gave birth to a child 12 years ago by a natural delivery and shows absence of menstruation for about 5 consecutive years until present.

The examination reveals a strong stature with a clear tendency towards obesity and a red (flushed) face. The affected joints (hands and shoulders) show hyperthermia and some are of red colour. The tongue inspection (zesshin) reveals a dry tongue with a thin white fur. The pulse (myakushin) is slippery.

Abdominal examination (fukushin): no specific signs besides an obese abdomen with a slight tendency to fullness

Kampo-Therapy and proceedings:
The patient’s Kampo-shô is one of yang-heat (yônetsu) in the exterior (hyôbyô). According to the Shang Han Lun her state reflects the first stadium called daiyôbyô or Greater Yang Disease.

I prescribed her the famous Kampo prescription “Maid servant from Yue Decoction with Atractyloides” Yin Nourishing Real Treasure Decoction for 7 days (starting quantity).
On the sixth day of the treatment she phoned and informed me that she tolerated the decoction without negative reactions and that her sleep was improving as the nightly heat sensations had disappeared. I therefore repeated the prescription for another two weeks.

On the following visit to my clinic the patient reported an improvement in her painful joints in general and that she hadn't had to take anti-inflammatory drugs for the last 2 weeks. No more signs of feeling thirsty, the urine had become clearer, but the tongue fur had changed and became thick white and slightly greasy.

I therefore decided to adapt the prescription to the new situation and changed to Coix Seed Decoction which I gave her for two weeks.

The follow-up consultation revealed further improvement. There was no morning stiffness any more and the mobility of the joints was considerably better. I repeated this prescription for another 4 weeks. The patient reported a general improvement, especially of the joints. There was no more signs of swelling or heat. Besides that she hasn't suffered from urinary tract infection ever since (which had not been the case for a long time...).