

ADHD

A TCM VIEW

Understanding the Patterns, Symptoms & Natural Balance

ADHD is a neurodevelopmental condition affecting attention, impulse control, activity levels and emotional regulation.

Western medicine explains it in terms of brain chemistry and behaviour.

TCM understands it as a disturbance of Shen (Spirit) and imbalance of internal organs and energy.



WESTERN VIEW: CORE SYMPTOMS



INATTENTION

- Easily distracted
- Difficulty focusing
- Forgetfulness
- Disorganisation
- Avoids mentally demanding tasks



HYPERACTIVITY

- Restlessness
- Fidgeting
- Excessive talking
- Difficulty sitting still
- Internal feeling of being "driven"



IMPULSIVITY

- Acts without thinking
- Interrupts others
- Impatient
- Emotional outbursts
- Risk-taking behaviour

COMMON PRESENTATIONS



PREDOMINANTLY INATTENTIVE

Daydreaming, poor focus, mental fog, quieter, often underdiagnosed.



PREDOMINANTLY HYPERACTIVE-IMPULSIVE

Constant motion, excessive talking, acting quickly, poor inhibition.



COMBINED TYPE

A combination of inattention, hyperactivity and impulsivity. Most common presentation.

TCM PERSPECTIVE

ADHD is viewed as a disturbance of Shen (Spirit) and imbalance in the functional network of internal organs, affecting the mind, emotions and behaviour.



When these organs are imbalanced, Shen becomes unsettled and the mind loses clarity, focus and stability.

COMMON TCM PATTERNS IN ADHD



LIVER YANG RISING / LIVER WIND

Irritability, restlessness, impulsivity, rapid speech, hyperactivity, tension, sudden emotional reactions.

Focus: Soothe Liver, calm Wind, anchor Yang.



HEART FIRE OR PHLEGM-FIRE

Racing thoughts, emotional explosiveness, insomnia, excess talking, anxiety, mental overstimulation.

Focus: Clear Heat, calm Shen, resolve Phlegm.



SPLEEN QI DEFICIENCY

Poor focus, mental fatigue, brain fog, weak memory, difficulty processing information.

Focus: Strengthen Spleen, boost Qi, support thought.



KIDNEY JING DEFICIENCY

Developmental weakness, poor concentration, forgetfulness, slow maturation, low stamina.

Focus: Tonify Kidney Essence, nourish brain marrow.



COMBINED PATTERN

Upper excess with lower deficiency. Hyperactivity above, weakness below.

Focus: Harmonise, calm excess, tonify deficiency.

HOLISTIC BALANCE: TCM APPROACH



CALM SHEN
Peace the mind and emotions



SOOTHE LIVER
Regulate Qi flow and emotions



TONIFY KIDNEY
Nourish Essence and the brain



STRENGTHEN SPLEEN
Support concentration and mental clarity



RESOLVE PHLEGM
Clear mental clouding, improve focus



IMPROVE SLEEP
Restore deep, restful sleep



RESTORE BALANCE
Mind, body and spirit

WESTERN MANAGEMENT



Medications: Stimulants (Methylphenidate, Amphetamines) & Non-stimulants (Atomoxetine) to improve attention & impulse control.



Non-Medication: Behavioural therapy, CBT, structured routines, exercise, nutrition, sleep regulation, mindfulness, executive function training.



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INTEGRATIVE INSIGHT



ADHD is not simply a behaviour problem. It is a systemic regulation disorder involving attention, emotion, nervous system modulation and internal balance.



Western medicine describes it neurochemically and behaviourally. TCM describes it energetically and constitutionally.