

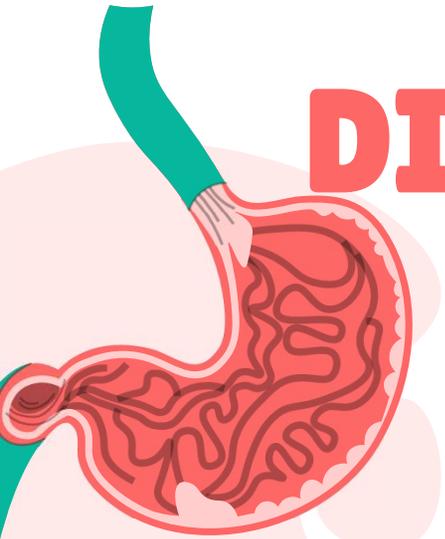
# ANXIETY

# &

# DIGESTIVE SYMPTOMS

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CS540

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June 2023



# Summary [Real Case]

A 32-year-old male came into the clinic complaining of anxiety with accompanying symptoms of epigastric and intestinal pain for three years.

**History:** The patient is experiencing anxiety as a rumination and overthinking his interaction with others. This affects his daily life and interferes with the way he sleeps. It is also affecting his digestion and is getting severe epigastric and intestinal pain that is worse with stress.

**PE:** Tenderness on palpation

**Impression:** Anxiety for three years (ICD-10: F41.9); Intestinal pain for three years (ICD-10: R10.9)

**TCM Diagnosis:** Phlegm Heat Accumulation disturbing the Shen; Heart and Kidney Disharmony

**Acupuncture Treatment:** DU20, Yin Tang, CV17, CV14, CV4, CV6, CV12, ST25, PC6, PC8, LR3, LI4, GB34, SP9, ST40, LI11, ST44

**Herbal Treatment:** Wen Dan Tang + Tian Wang Bu Xin Dan Modified

**Treatment Principle:** Clear the Heat; Resolve the Phlegm; Calm the Shen; Harmonize the Kidney and the Heart

**Result:** Each week, the patient was getting progressively better. He became more talkative and open with us as we discussed his condition. His anxiety was becoming less severe with each treatment, and his epigastric/intestinal pain was dissipating.

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Date of Visit: May 2023

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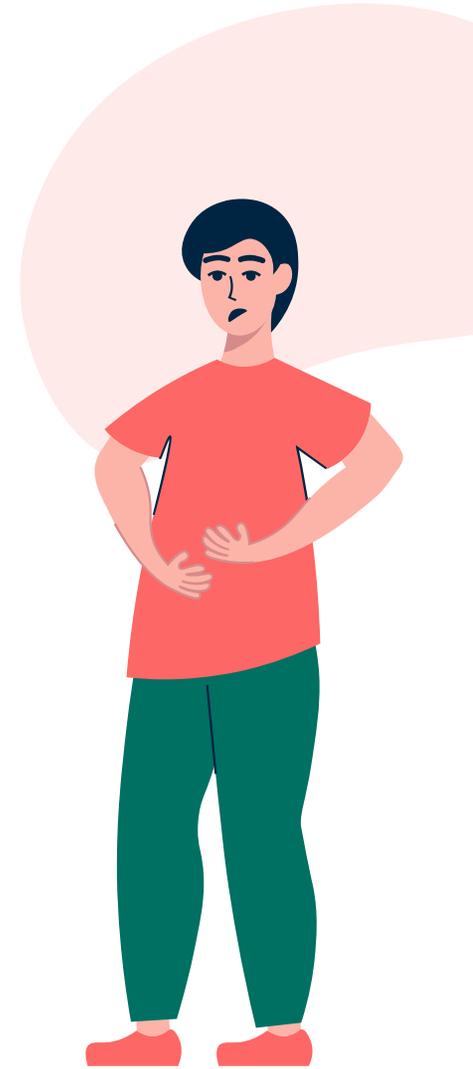
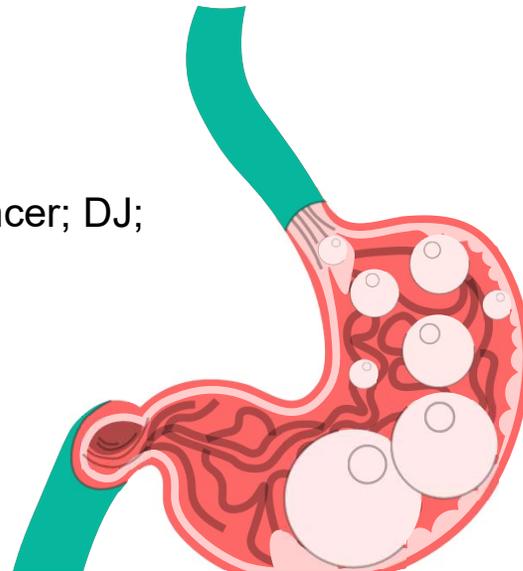
Gender: Male

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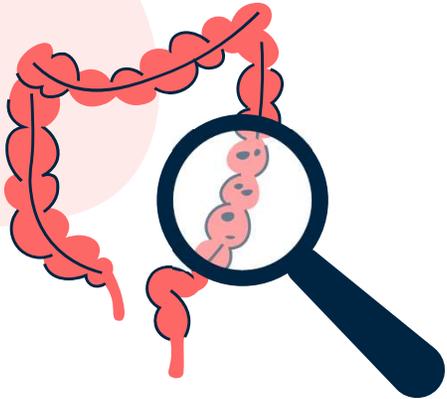
Age/Marital Status: 32 years old;  
Single with no children

4

Occupation: Professional Fire Dancer; DJ;  
Volunteer at a Non-Profit



# VITAL SIGNS



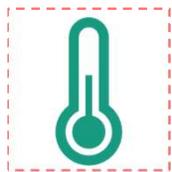
## **BLOOD PRESSURE**

127/80 mm/Hg



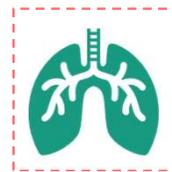
## **HEART RATE**

67 bpm



## **BODY TEMPERATURE**

98.7 degrees F



## **RESPIRATORY RATE**

17 breaths per minute



# CHIEF COMPLAINT

**Anxiety  
and  
digestive symptoms  
for  
three years**



# HISTORY OF PRESENT ILLNESS

- He describes his anxiety as rethinking or overthinking events that have happened in the past or second-guessing himself involving his past and present actions. He occasionally experiences panic attacks where he feels as if the walls are closing in on him. During the attacks, he feels stuck in thought loops, increases his breathing rate to the point where it feels hard to catch his breath, and has a sense of everything slowing down except his mind. This occurs when he is feeling an enormous amount of pressure on him, and he feels that he is not allowed to let anyone down. This pressure stems from his volunteer job, which is a nonprofit organization responsible for curating many events throughout the year.
- He feels severe intermittent epigastric pain that occurs after he eats or when he is feeling anxious. He feels pressure at the diaphragm, and it can radiate to the back. He feels as if something will erupt into his chest. He says that the pain is usually food related but he has had a hard time narrowing down the source because it is inconsistent. At one moment, food will digest normally, then the next, the same food will trigger pain. The discomfort travels throughout the gastrointestinal tract, and he is also experiencing intestinal pain. He describes it as if the intestinal lining is inflamed and he can feel food travel along the intestines. The pain usually disappears after defecation. He has a bowel movement once a day and is normally solid but can pass as smaller pieces. Flatulence alleviates pain. He also experiences bloating and distention in the abdomen.



# PAST MEDICAL HISTORY

The patient does not have a history of any chronic diseases.

**Surgery history:** The patient denies having surgery.

**Allergies:** The patient has seasonal allergies with nasal congestion and sneezing as symptoms.

**Supplements/Herbal Medicine:** The patient denies taking supplements.

**Medication:** The patient is taking medication for ADHD but is not taking it as frequently as prescribed because he is feeling a pulsating sensation in his head after use.

# **FAMILY HISTORY**

The patient has a family history of diabetes on the mother's side; cancer on the father's side.

# LIFESTYLE

## SOCIAL



He is around people all the time; barely gets any alone time.  
Always puts others before himself

## HABITS



Drinks alcohol socially 2-3 times a week;  
Drinks nettle tea for allergies

## EXERCISE



Does not take the time to exercise

# PHYSICAL EXAM

## Abdominal palpation:

tenderness on →

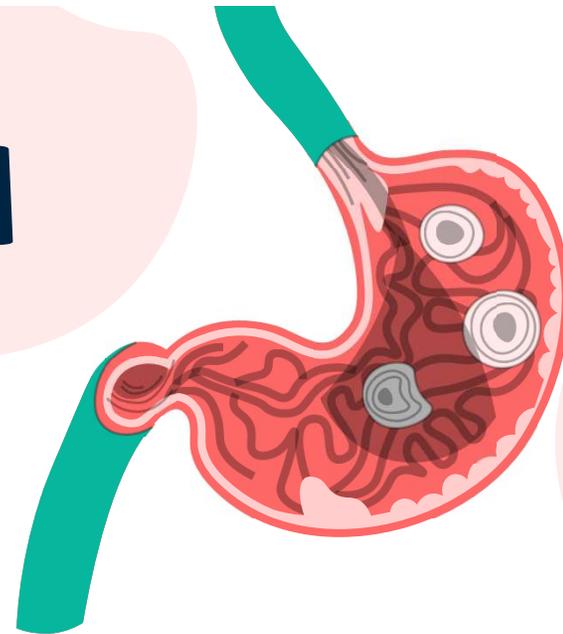
CV12

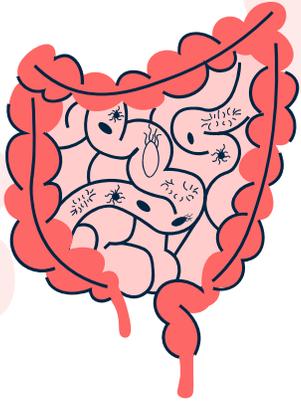
CV9

CV6

ST25 (left)

ST27 (bilateral)

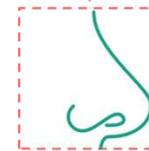




# TCM DIAGNOSTIC METHODS



## OBSERVATION



### **APPEARANCE/SHEN/COLOR**

Makes eye contact;  
greasy hair;  
dry/cracked/bleeding lower  
lip;  
pale complexion

### **LISTENING**

Soft spoken

### **SMELLING**

Unremarkable

# TCM INQUIRY

**Appetite:** Eats throughout the day; goes for readily available foods like take-out and easily prepared meals at home

**Diet:** Eats out a lot – likes Tropical Smoothie and sushi, eats chicken occasionally; rarely eats red meat (tries to avoid it)

**Taste:** Unremarkable

**Stools:** Notated in HPI

**Thirst:** He drinks 1-2 cups of cold water a day; enjoys drinking Gatorade and Coke (1-2 a day/each); does not feel thirsty

**Urination:** Yellow, scanty urination

**Sleep:** He does not sleep well; he gets up every 1-2 hours; sleeps six hours a night; tries to take a nap during the day to compensate for the lack of sleep, but sometimes, he has a hard time because of his anxiety. He finds it hard to sleep due to his ruminating and overthinking throughout the night.

# TCM INQUIRY

**Body temperature:** Sometimes he feels cold and sometimes he feels hot; it depends

**Perspiration:** He feels sweaty at random times; it is not consistent

**Headaches:** He experiences headaches during anxious moments; it feels like a band is wrapped around his head and can go into his sinuses; this occurs 1-2 times a month

**Eyes:** Wears glasses and contacts

**Nose:** Unremarkable

**Throat:** Unremarkable

**Ears:** Experiencing tinnitus, especially at night when it is louder and adds to the issue of falling asleep; he hears it every day, especially in his right ear; the sound is high pitched and can range from a low to a loud ring.

# TONGUE PULSE

## I.

### TONGUE

Puffy body with teeth marks; thick/dry/yellow coat; deep crack in the middle; red tip; swollen sublingual with nodules at the base of the frenulum

## II.

### PULSE

Left: wiry/ superficial overall; deep cun

Right: wiry/superficial

reverse hook – more superficial on the chi than the cun position

# ASSESSMENT

## IMPRESSION:

Anxiety (ICD-10: F41.9)

Intestinal pain (ICD-10: R10.9)

## TCM DIFFERENTIATION:

Phlegm Heat Accumulation disturbing the Shen

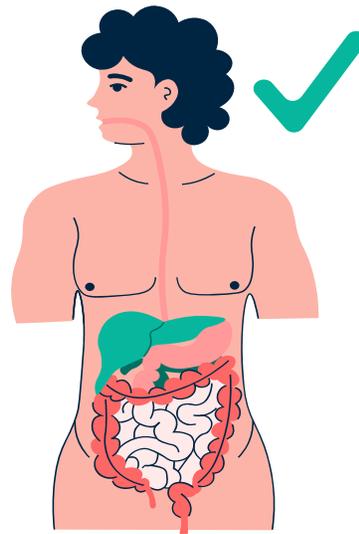
Heart and Kidney Disharmony



# WESTERN DIFFERENTIAL DIAGNOSIS

## ANXIETY

The patient is constantly ruminating with occasional panic attacks indicating an anxiety disorder



## IRRITABLE BOWEL SYNDROME

The patient has abdominal cramping and bloating occurring with his symptoms; colonoscopy was performed - unremarkable

## \*GUT-BRAIN IMBALANCE

The patient's emotions are directly affecting the digestion issues which happened to occur around the same time. These are physical manifestations stemming from emotional disturbances & dietary choices; stool sample to evaluate microbiome

# TCM ANALYSIS

The patient has a diagnosis of Phlegm Heat disturbing the Shen. The phlegm heat is reflected in the tongue, and it is displayed with a thick yellow tongue with a swollen body suggesting phlegm accumulation. Phlegm tends to move upward towards the head which is affecting the patient's mind and manifesting as anxiety symptoms.

The Heart and Kidneys are affected as well. There is a very prominent Heart crack displayed on the tongue. The pulses also reflect a deficiency in the Heart with a strong Kidney pulse, specifically on the right side. This suggests that there is Heart and Kidney Disharmony, and the fire and water elements need to be balanced to assure a stable axis within the body. The pulses are known as a reflection of past traumatic events occurring in one's life. Additionally, traumatic events in one's life could lead to excess adrenaline even in low-stress situations which could therefore cause miscommunication between the Heart and the Kidney.



# TREATMENT PLAN

## Principle of treatment:

Clear the Heat; Resolve the Phlegm; Calm the Shen; Harmonize the Kidney and the Heart

## Acupuncture Treatment:

DU20: Calm the Shen (tonify)

CV17: Open the Chest (needled inferiorly)

Yin Tang: Calm the Shen (needled inferiorly)

CV14: Harmonize the Heart (tonify)

CV4: Harmonize the Kidney (tonify)

CV6: 4 Doors for Digestion (even)

CV12: 4 Doors for Digestion (even)

ST25: 4 Doors for Digestion – Bilateral (even)

PC6: Open the Chest; Calm the Shen (needled obl prox)

PC8: Clear the heat from the PC (sedate)

LR3: Move the Qi (even)

LI4: Move the Qi (even)

GB34: Move the Qi (even)

SP9: Resolve Dampness (sedate)

ST40: Resolve Phlegm (sedate)

LI11: Clear the Heat (sedate)

ST44: Clear the Heat (sedate)



## TREATMENT PLAN

### **Needle technique:**

even and sedate – bilateral needling

### **Duration:**

20 minutes

### **Position:**

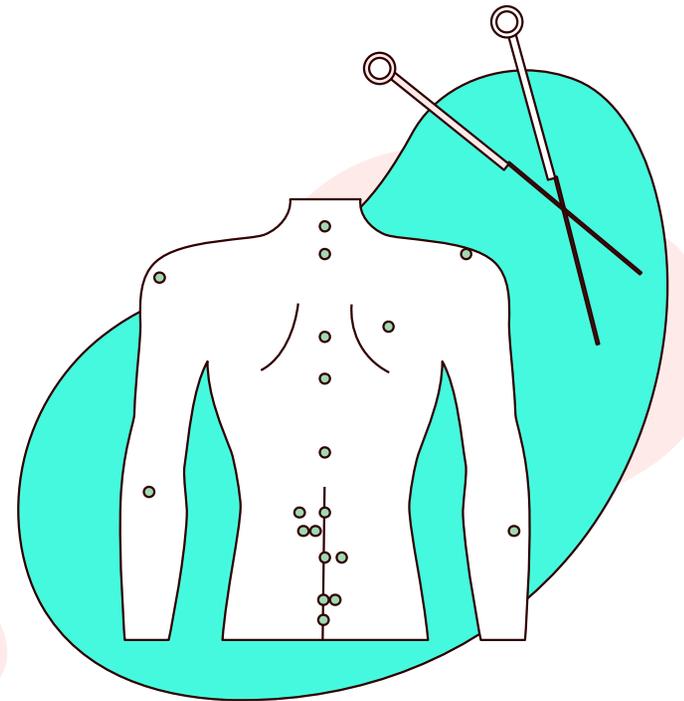
Supine

### **External:**

N/A

### **Treatment Plan:**

Once a week for four weeks; after four weeks, reevaluate.



## TREATMENT PLAN

### Wen Dan Tang + Tian Wang Bu Xin Dan (modified)

Ban Xia 10g: resolve phlegm

Zhu Ru 15g: clear heat

Zhi Shi 10g: regulate Qi

Chen Pi 10g: regulate Qi

Fu Ling 15g: drain dampness

Zhi Gan Cao 5g: harmonize formula

Sheng Jiang 5g: harmonize the formula

Da Zao 5g: harmonize formula

+

Bai Zi Ren 10g: nourish the Heart and Calm the Shen

Yuan Zhi 10g: open the Brain orifice; calm the Shen

Dan Shen 5g: regulate the Heart; move the Blood

Wu Wei Zi 5g: pacify the Heart and Calm the Shen

#### **Granules:**

Mix with hot water two times a day for six days; let the granules dissolve in the hot water and drink before meals; after six days – reevaluate.



# EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE



## Supporting Evidence:

1. According to a randomized control trial, it was reported by Berger et al. in 2021, acupuncture was beneficial to patients suffering from various digestive disorders in comparison to sham acupuncture and Western Medicine. The studies show that acupuncture had significantly improved their digestive symptoms and their overall quality of life.
2. Errington-Evans discussed different studies and suggested after reviewing many randomized control trials that DU points have better results in treatment in patients with anxiety.

## [Citations:

Berger, A. A., Liu, Y., Jin, K., Kaneb, A., Welschmeyer, A., Cornett, E. M., Kaye, A. D., Imani, F., Khademi, S. H., Varrassi, G., Viswanath, O., & Urits, I. (2021). Efficacy of Acupuncture in the Treatment of Chronic Abdominal Pain. *Anesthesiology and pain medicine*, 11(2), e113027. <https://doi.org/10.5812/aapm.113027>.

Errington-Evans, N. (2011). Acupuncture for Anxiety. *CNS Neuroscience and Therapeutics*, 18(4), 277-284. Retrieved from <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1755-5949.2011.00254.1>

# REFERRALS **ADVICE**

## **Possible Referrals:**

Psychotherapy\* to get to the root of the issue and learn how to cope with the underlying emotional aspect

Nutritionist: to evaluate a diet that works best for your specific needs

Diagnostic Test: stool/blood sample to analyze the microbiome

## **Health Advice:**

Practice deep breathing every day to prevent the emotional build-up

Take time for yourself – life has room for imperfections

Abdominal massage along the LI to induce flatulence

Decrease soda intake; eat home-cooked meals and avoid cold/raw food



# PROGRESS

This was the patient's fourth visit to the clinic where we did a reevaluation of the overall improvement of the patient since he has been receiving treatment. Since then, he has been taking the herbal formula we have prescribed him. He said the first time he took the herbs, he was experiencing diarrhea. However, after the second or third day, the diarrhea was alleviated, and the stool became more solid.

He is still experiencing some epigastric pain, but it is only a 2/10. He also noticed that he was only experiencing intestinal pain when he was not drinking enough water throughout the day. This was a reminder that he needs to drink more room-temperature water.

He is also experiencing relatively low levels of anxiety, and he is no longer anxious about small things. He is even beginning to eliminate toxic friendships that no longer suit him well. He is still having some issues falling asleep. However, once he is asleep, he stays asleep (only two hours of sleep a night).

# PROGRESS

Palpation: slight tenderness on CV12 and ST25

Tongue: Puffy with teeth marks; deep crack in the middle but not as deep as the initial visit; thick coating; red tip

Pulse: Left: wiry/ superficial overall; deep cun

Right: wiry/superficial; reverse hook – more superficial on the chi than the cun position

Assessment:

Impression:

Anxiety for three years (ICD-10: F41.9)

Intestinal pain for three years (ICD-10: R10.9)

TCM Differentiation:

Phlegm Heat Accumulation disturbing the Shen; Heart and Kidney Disharmony

Plan of Treatment:

Principle of treatment:

Clear the Heat; Resolve the Phlegm; Calm the Shen; Harmonize the Kidney and the Heart

# PROGRESS

## **Acupuncture Treatment:**

DU20: Calm the Shen (tonify)  
DU24: Calm the Shen (needled posteriorly)  
Yin Tang: Calm the Shen (needled inferiorly)  
CV6: 4 Doors for Digestion (even)  
CV12: 4 Doors for Digestion (even)  
ST25: 4 Doors for Digestion – Bilateral (even)  
PC6: Open the Chest; Calm the Shen (needled obl prox)  
PC8: Clear heat from the PC channel (sedate)  
HT7: Nourish the HT (even)  
SP9: Resolve Dampness (sedate)  
ST40: Resolve Phlegm (sedate)  
KD1: Drains excess; Nourishes the Yin; Calm the Shen

**Needle technique:** even and sedate – bilateral needling

**Treatment duration:** 20 minutes

**Treatment position:** Supine

**External:** Heat lamp on the feet

**Treatment Plan:** This was his reevaluation; we suggested the patient come in for four more treatments once a week. After four treatments, reevaluate.

## TREATMENT PLAN

### Wen Dan Tang + Tian Wang Bu Xin Dan (modified)

Ban Xia 10g: resolve phlegm

Zhu Ru 15g: clear heat

Zhi Shi 10g: regulate Qi

Chen Pi 10g: regulate Qi

Fu Ling 15g: drain dampness

Zhi Gan Cao 5g: harmonize formula

Sheng Jiang 5g: harmonize the formula

Da Zao 5g: harmonize formula

+

Bai Zi Ren 10g: nourish the Heart and Calm the Shen

Yuan Zhi 10g: open the Brain orifice; calm the Shen

Dan Shen 5g: regulate the Heart; move the Blood

Wu Wei Zi 5g: pacify the Heart and Calm the Shen

+

Huang Lian 5g: clear heat from the HT

### Granules:

Mix with hot water two times a day for six days; let the granules dissolve in the hot water and drink before meals; after six days – reevaluate.



THANK YOU!!

Q & A

