How to manage Rheumatoid Arthritis using Chinese medicine, acupuncture and so much more is what I'm going to share with you today. I'm going to talk about the Western definition and treatment, the TCM views, patterns, acupuncture points, treatment using herbal medicine, ear acupuncture, and food recommendations. Stay till the end because I'm going to share the three items I recommend to all my patients with RA to do at home in order to manage their arthritis better.

Welcome to AccuPro, a show dedicated to making Chinese medicine and acupuncture easy to grasp and fun to learn. Hi, I'm your host, Clara Cohen. I support practitioners and students, like you, in changing the world one patient at a time. My goal is to share my passion for TCM and empower you to achieve superior patient care.

I love to showcase the amazing benefits of acupuncture because after all, acupuncture rocks!

We're going to start with the Western definition and treatment options that patients have when it comes to RA. Rheumatoid Arthritis is a chronic autoimmune condition that creates inflammation of the joints. It is most common in women and starts to develop between the ages of 40 and 60.

Western medicine treatment for RA requires ongoing management. Often they will recommend medication, physical therapy, and sometimes in bad cases even surgery. Now let's look at the risk factors when it comes to Rheumatoid Arthritis. Age is a big one. As we age, as we get older, we have more chance to develop it.

Gender, unfortunately, women are more prone to developing RA. Obesity is a big one because carrying extra weight in the joints creates more inflammation and therefore can contribute to RA development. Occupation or jobs can also contribute to Rheumatoid Arthritis symptoms developing earlier, specifically when there's repetitive, ongoing weight-bearing exercise.

I have a patient who came to see me years ago because he was on his knees all the time in his job and was developing more and more pain and started developing Rheumatoid Arthritis symptoms. So we are managing it. because obviously eight hours a day he's still on his knees in his job. We can't take the root cause away because unless he stops his job that is still there. So we are going to manage it and allow him to be able to continue to work.

Smoking also has been linked to contributing to Rheumatoid Arthritis symptoms. Diet, which is a big one, for those eating a lot of processed food, drinking alcohol, having a lot of acidic food like coffee, and eating a lot of sugar can contribute to creating more inflammation in the body and therefore increase the chance of having symptoms of Rheumatoid Arthritis.

RA is categorized in Chinese medicine as Bi Syndrome, which is basically any disorder that causes pain, tingling, numbness, or heaviness of any of the four limbs. And is due to external pathogen invasion and Qi stagnation. So RA is categorized as a Bi syndrome and we're going to look at it when we look at the TCM pattern of diagnosis according to Chinese medicine.

When it comes to causes according to Chinese medicine, it is very similar to the risk factors. Smoking, diet, lifestyle, jobs, but also genetics, so weak essence. There's a lot of research that shows that Chinese medicine and acupuncture are very beneficial to manage Rheumatoid Arthritis. I put the links in the show notes.

Let's look at the TCM pattern of diagnosis when it comes to RA. Let's look at the first stages, and you can see it's all about external pathogen invasion. The first one is wind, damp, cold. And the swelling is the dampness, that makes sense. The heaviness is the dampness. But the cold is the cool, painful joint, right?

Because cool has a tendency, or cold has tendency to stop circulation, create pain, and create blood stasis in the end, right? So we're gonna be stiff upon rising in the morning. The joints are really stiff. We need to loosen up. We need to move blood, we need to have circulation, and then we feel a bit better.

So there's a restriction of movement because cold again creates blood stagnation or cheese stagnation to start with. The pain is better with heat, of course, because there's a lot of cold, and it is affected by weather, which means when it's cold and damp weather, like in Vancouver in the winter, it is much worse.

This is why a lot of people who have arthritis feel so much better when they move to a dry, hot place like Arizona or Nevada. That's why there are a lot of retiree people moving to those places because they feel so much better when it comes to their arthritic pain, right?

The loose stools is the damp as well. Pale tongue with a white coat. The white coat is the cold. It could also have a greasy coat if there's a lot of dampness and a lot of swelling. And the pulse is wiry, which means Liver Qi Stagnation, and slippery. So just like I said, it's a really typical Bi syndrome when it comes to the early stage of arthritis.

The formula for this is Wenjing Zhong Bi Tong, which is really warming as well. And we can do also Moxa on the joints and add Bladder 17 to move blood, and Bladder 23 because usually this happens in older people so it's good to really nourish the kidneys.

REN 4 and of course local point, A-Shi points, which can be wherever it is. On the hand, the elbow, the knee, wherever the pain is going to be. You can add up more points like Gallbladder 34. You can add up other points to try to really mitigate the pain. You can add up LI 4 if it's not too strong if the person is not too old. Does that make Sense? So I'm giving you the basics.

Then we look at the second pattern, which is a bit middle stage, but it's more wind-damp heat. So there's still the dampness, which is swelling of the joints and heavy pain. However, in this instance, the pain is going to feel hot and it's going to look red when you look at it and the person's going to sweat easily.

There may be fever sometimes, so feeling hot all the time, thirst for cold drink, and dark urine. The tongue is red, which is the heat with a thin yellow coat, which is still the heat. It could have a greasy coat if the dampness was very prominent. On the pulse, it's slippery and rapid.

Slippery is damp and rapid is heat, right? So we might not see all those symptoms. It's always a reminder that this is a basic and not everybody's going to have all the symptoms, right? The formula that is best for this is Bai Hu Jia Gui Zhe Tong which is not very cold.

It's just a bit cooling and moving and relieving pain for the joints. DU 14 is going to clear the heat with Large Intestine 11. LI 4 is going to expel the pathogen. Spleen 9, which you could also put in the previous pattern as well, because it clears the dampness. San Jiao 5 is also good for clearing the dampness and relieving the pain in the joints.

Of course we want to do the A-Shi or the local point, right? Again, this depends on where the pain is mostly prominent.

If you still struggle to come up with the right treatment protocol for your patients, you are going to love my third book. By popular demand, I have created a guide for TCM treatments for over 160 common syndromes with acupuncture points, herbal formula, ear points, diet, and so much more, including many, many of my clinical pearls.

It is a game changer for acupuncture students and specifically for practitioners. You can download the digital version on any device and it comes with many video links to complement it. If you're like me and you'd rather have a hard copy version, the publisher ships it all over the world. But before you invest in my Chinese Medicine Treatments Made Easy, I want to make sure it's everything you were looking for, so you can download a sample of it.

Listen to what people who invest in this book had to say. Thank you, Clara. This is exactly what I needed. I love how you organized this book. It's truly helping me in my first year in practice. Yay! So excited! Bought it immediately. It will be a great resource for studying for boards. That's awesome! Oh my god, I immediately purchased this and it is such a bargain price that I almost feel ashamed for paying what I believe is worth of much, much more.

Even as an experienced practitioner for over 10 years, I like your stuff just as much and benefit from it. All this is just so rewarding for me. So I hope you get your copy if you don't have one. The link is in the show notes below. Or you can go to my website acuproacademy.com and click the shop tab on the menu bar.

You won't regret it. I put so much heart and soul in it. I hope you enjoy and benefit from it and in turn your patients do as well.

Now, let's look at the next patterns which are more the later stage meaning that the person has had this issue for quite a while now and it's developing further and further. So the first one is Qi and blood deficiency plus phlegm. When it comes to phlegm, it is more Thicker than dampness.

Joints are going to be very rigid and even deformed. There's going to be deformity of the joint because phlegm is harder than dampness, so it becomes worse. There's obviously a lot of pain, distended, swollen joints. There's going to be maybe palpitation. That's Qi deficiency and blood deficiency of the heart.

There's going to be fatigue. That is quite often. The person's going to be pale face, pale lips, poor memory, fatigue, of course, but also poor focus, poor concentration, a pale tongue with a greasy coat. The greasy coat is a phlegm, and a slippery, weak pulse. The weak pulse comes from the Qi and blood deficiency, and the phlegm, of course, is slippery.

So one of the formulas that's used for this is Huang Qi Wu Wu Gui Zhi Tang. Huang Qi is astragalus, which is really good to tonify blood and qi. And then Gui Zhi is cinnamon. Cinnamon is really good for relieving pain and it's really good for improving blood circulation and it's warming because when there's qi and blood deficiency the person may start to feel a bit more on the cool side.

When it comes to points, again, you can do MOXA on the A-Shi point or the local point where the pain is. You want to use Stomach 40 to clear the phlegm. To tonify Qi and blood, the best point is Stomach 36, and the second best point is Spleen 6. Those three points together are probably one of my favorite points.

You can also add up Gallbladder 34, which is the influential point of all sinews, which means joints, ligaments, and tendons, which is really useful in this case.

The last pattern that is very basic and often seen in clinical practice is Kidney Yin and Kidney Yang Deficiency with phlegm. Because most of late-stage people who have RA are going to be more older.

So as we age, our Kidney Yin and Kidney Yang will slowly deplete. There may be muscular atrophy. Because the person is so stiff and in pain they don't move as much and they lose muscle mass with nodules. Which means deformity of the joints plus stiffness and that's the phlegm again, just like in the case before.

The pain gets worse with cold, so there's a bit more Yang deficiency and it's worse with cold. Again, this is why a lot of people move to places where it's warmer and they can enjoy a better life without having to deal with cold weather. There's also dizziness. That's more of a Yin deficiency, but it could also be due to phlegm.

Tinnitus, which is low pitch and constant. That's a kidney Yin Deficiency. Low back pain or knee pain that is chronic. And that's a kidney deficiency in general. The tongue's going to be pale. If there's more Yang deficiency, it would be swollen, but it could be cracked and dry if there is also Yin deficiency showing on the tongue.

Sometimes it's hard, it doesn't always show both Yin and Yang deficiency on the tongue, so it's not always easy. The pulse is going to be deep for sure, and if there's more Yin deficiency, it might be thin. If there's more Yang deficiency, it might be slow and very, very weak.

The formula is a basic formula, which is Sen Qi Wan, which means kidney qi formula. That is a very basic formula. It does not address the phlegm at all. It's just tonifying kidney. We could use another formula for this is Shen Qi Wan, which means Kidney Qi Formula, and it is going to address the kidney deficiency, but not necessarily the phlegm. When it comes to points, Stomach 40, again, great for phlegm, and then the A-Shi, or the local point, plus doing DU 4, Ren 4, Bladder 23. We could do Kidney 3, Kidney 6, trying to really tonify and nourish Kidney Yin and Kidney Yang as much as we can.

However, if the person is really old, like past 80, or 85, they're frail. They've atrophy, they're very weak. We don't want to overwhelm them with a lot of points. I'm from the school of thought that the least amount of points, but the right points is the best treatment. Then having a lot more needles on the patient, which takes a lot and can make them very tired.

We don't want to increase the fatigue because they're already depleted.

Let's talk about the treatment option that we can add to help our patients manage Rheumatoid Arthritis. Number one is ear acupuncture or auricular acupuncture.

These are going to be so helpful. You can put ear seeds and patients can press them, or of course, you can needle them. We're going to do Liver, Spleen, and Kidney. Then we're going to add up sympathetic, and then we can add up areas that are affected. If it's the wrist, if it's the knee, if it's the shoulder, if it's the hip, that's what we're going to add up on the ear.

Number two would be MOXA because we want to bring blood circulation to the area to relieve the stiffness and the pain. Specifically for those that have the pattern of wind damp, cold or Yang deficiency. MOXA is going to help the symptoms of pain and stiffness because it brings blood circulation.

Number three is exercise. If we don't use it, we lose it. It's really important to tell patients that they need to go for walks, they can try yoga, tai chi, or qigong, but they need to move. For some patients, going swimming is really good. However, if there's a lot of dampness, swimming may make it worse. We want to really adapt to what the pattern is and recommend exercise that is gentle but effective in relieving all that stiffness.

Fourth, relaxation techniques. Stress can really increase the symptoms of RA, unfortunately, so it's really important to tell the patient that they need to find ways to manage stress. It could be meditation, deep breathing exercises, going for walks outside, fresh air, forest bathing, or anything that's going to help them relieve the stress.

Five, Chinese Herbal Therapy. Apart from the formulas, we can recommend patients drink teas that are really well known to decrease the pain, like turmeric, ginger, and rosemary, very good for all Rheumatoid Arthritis patients. Specifically rosemary and ginger for patients who feel cold or have wind-damp cold or Yang deficiency, because those are very warming. Turmeric is very good at bringing blood circulation, so it's really good for those patients as well.

The last one is diet because that's really the key to managing inflammation of the joints. It's really important to tell patients to avoid processed food, acidic food like coffee, alcohol for some people, and dairy because it creates more dampness and phlegm, gluten can also affect arthritic patients.

All this Inflammatory food needs to go and we need to replace it with really healthy, whole food. Specifically things like leafy green, cooked food, nuts, seeds, omega-3 fatty acids like salmon and sardines. We also need to be mindful of nightshade vegetables like tomatoes, potatoes, bell peppers, zucchini. Because they are often a little bit of an exacerbation for Rheumatoid Arthritis patients.

The key here is to look for what makes it worse and avoid it. Everybody's different because as you know in TCM, we treat the person as a whole, not the disorder. So we have to adapt to each patient.

Now here are the bonus tips we talked about at the beginning. The three tips to tell your patients to do at home to manage their Rheumatoid Arthritis.

Number one, as I said earlier, is exercise. Qi Gong is fantastic to relieve the stiffness, and to keep moving, but it's gentle. It doesn't put a lot of stress on the body.

Two, taking supplements like vitamin D, Chondroitin, Glucosamine, and Omega 3. Those are great too, as in addition, to help to manage arthritis.

The third tip is managing stress. It's really important that the patient has a life that is low in stress or is managing it to the best of their ability by journaling. doing meditation, deep breathing exercises, going out with friends, and enjoying life.

This is really important to help patients identify what can make them release the stress and bring it down.

Thank you so much for spending your time with me today. I truly hope you benefited from this episode, and I would love for you to share it with a friend who may benefit from it as well. Follow the show, leave a review, and if you want more. Go to my website, acuproacademy.com. I have tons of resources there with treatment protocols, case studies, free courses, and so much more.

And connect with me on all social media @acuproacademy. I'm on YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, X, Pinterest, and LinkedIn, and TikTok. And no matter what. Keep rocking it, using

DCM. Please listen to the disclaimer, because the Acupro Show podcast and materials shared through Acupro Academy, which is a subdivision of Natural Health Sense Incorporated, are designed solely for educational and entertainment purposes.

The utilization of information from this podcast or any associated material is at the user's discretion. and risk. This content is not meant to replace the guidance of an acupuncturist, Chinese medicine doctor, medical doctor, physician, or any qualified professional, nor is it a substitute for proper diagnosis or treatment.

Users are strongly advised not to ignore or postpone seeking medical advice for any existing medical condition with their healthcare professional regarding any health concerns.