

if my patient has TCM blood deficiency, are they anemic? And when I see anemic patients, do they automatically have TCM blood deficiency? That is a common question that I get from my students, and today I am going to answer it. Plus, we're gonna look specifically at one of the most common patterns seen in clinics, specifically in women.

Blood deficiency. We're gonna look at the causes, the consequences if it's not treated, the symptoms and the treatment, including acupuncture points, herbal formulas, and TCM nutrition, and still till the end, because I have a little hack that I use in clinic to make sure that we really tap into nourishing blood and helping the patients when they are affected by this common pattern.

Let's go.

Welcome to Acupro, A show dedicated to making Chinese medicine and acupuncture. Easy to grasp and fun to learn. Hi, I am your host, Clara Cohen. I support practitioners and students and 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.

So before we start looking at blood deficiency, I'd like for us to go back to foundation because if we don't understand or we have a hard time with our diagnosis or a treatment plan, we need to go back to foundation to be able to really grasp the concept of blood deficiency according to TCM. So let's review blood in Chinese medicine theory.

How do we get blood? Our postnatal blood in TCM is produced by the spleen and the stomach transforming food into nutrients. For example, taking an iron and other minerals through the food in order to produce blood. Our prenatal blood comes from our parents, which is our blood type, like type A, type O, type B type ab.

Basically in TCM, it comes from kidney essence, which produces marrow, then in turns, contributes to blood formation and finally. Blood is formed in the heart. This is the TCM picture about blood formation. Blood function according to Chinese medicine is to nourish tissues, muscles, skin, hair, and nails.

Anchors the spirit or calms the mind. Because blood is said to be the material basis of the mind for all mental activities. So if there's issue with mental health, we have to look at blood.

Now there's a relationship between she and blood and TCM blood is said to be the mother of chief. And she's in charge of moving blood because blood is a substance. It's part of the four vital substance, it's matter while chi is energy, and of course blood supports menstruation and fertility.

Now when we look at the yin organ, they're all involve in blood. Heart moves, blood spleen produces blood with the stomach transforming nutrients, liver stores, blood for menstruation, lung disperses and distributes it all over the body. And kidney, of course assist its production through bone marrow. Having said that the organs that can be affected by blood deficiency are going to be spleen, liver, and heart.

What are the causes of blood deficiency? Think about it. If spleen is not nourished properly, so diet can be a cause, then it can become spleen. She deficient. If spleen, she is deficient, it's fatigue, it's weak, it cannot produce blood because it doesn't have enough nutrients, for example. So diet is number one in having blood deficiency.

Number two is blood loss. If a woman bleeds every month really heavily for let's say five to seven days, she will become TCM blood deficient, and in the western world, she might also become anemic.

We're gonna answer that question in a minute, but first, let's finish with the causes. Overworked or mental activity that's training the body.

For example, years of anxiety, overthinking, worrying over studying. If you're a student and you're in school for three years, four, five. I did a doctorate in TCM. I was in there for five years full time.

Let me tell you that yes, it is very, very straining on the mental health and it's exhausting. And yes, blood can become deficient because remember, blood is the material basis of the mind. So mental activity or overworked with mental work can definitely deplete blood in TCM.

Certain chronic illness can also create blood deficiency and trauma. If someone has had a car accident and they bled a lot, obviously, or post-birth, there could be hemorrhage as well, which cause blood deficiency. Those are the main causes. Not exclusive, but those are the one we see most common in clinic.

Before we start looking at the symptoms, the consequences, and the treatment for blood deficiency, I'd like to share a story with you that illustrate my point.

At one point in my forties, I burned out. I had just finished five years in school while working full time, I started a practice. Then a few years later, I opened my own multidisciplinary clinic, which I had to manage and run while having a full-time practice while teaching at two Colleges in Vancouver.

, I literally was working 60 plus hours a week teaching at two colleges.

I was burned out. I thought I could do it all. I was superwoman like a lot of us think, and eventually one day I went to work and there's a few steps to get to my clinic and I could barely take those few steps. I was like, I couldn't breathe.

Hiking is one of my favorite thing to do. And we went hiking one day and my husband's like, what's going on? You're so slow. And I'm like, I can't breathe. It is too hard. I don't feel good. I feel dizzy. I had to sit down. And he's like, what's going on with you?

So we went to do a blood test, and guess what? My ferritin levels were four, four. So if you're not familiar with ferritin levels, anything under nine is life threatening. I could have dropped dead of a heart attack because I didn't have enough ferritin pumping through my blood, anything above nine up to like 20, 25 is definitely not good. It's very low, but underneath nine, mine was four, so I did not take any iron supplement. I was sent right away. To get iron infusion.

I had to, and I had a bag of infusion for two hours and when we tested three weeks later, my number went up to 1 22. I literally felt a change and a shift in my energy within a few days. It was like a miracle. How did I get so low? This is what we just talked about, the mental activity, the overworked, the over worry, the overthinking.

I work so much. Mentally that my body broke down from the burnout.

We see this a lot in practice, so I wanted to make sure you can educate your patients and tell them that, yes, from overworking we can run our body to the ground, which in Western world, they would say your cortisol level, your adrenals have been depleted, right? So that in our mind we think, oh, that's a kidney deficiency.

Well actually. Adrenal that is low or adrenal fatigue is actually a spleen sheet deficiency in TCM, which makes sense because if we overthink overwork mentally, we utilize our spleen sheet and it gets depleted and then it can't produce blood, and so then we get blood deficiency. Does that all makes sense?

Now let's look at blood deficiency symptoms. It is always p and p, pale and poor. Pale lips, pale tongue, pale nails, pale face, poor sleep, meaning cannot fall asleep easily.

Poor energy, meaning fatigue. Poor digestion, poor memory, poor focus, poor concentration, poor vision.

Remember, the only organs that can be blood deficient in TCM are the heart, the liver, and the spleen. So let's differentiate the symptoms for all three.

spleen. Blood deficiency comes from spleen. She deficiency with pale lips.

Weight loss or very skinny, poor appetite or no appetite. Bruise is easily fatigue and a pale tongue.

For liver blood deficiency. Remember, liver in TCM theory opens into the eyes and manifest on the nails. So we're gonna have pale nails, blurred vision, floaters spots, dizziness, and then we're gonna have scant menstruation, and numbness and tingling of the extremities because not enough blood reaches the extremities

with hard blood deficiency. Remember blood in trans medicine theory. Opens into the tongue and manifest on the face.

So we have a pale face, A pale tongue. Of course, poor sleep. Cannot fall asleep easily. Poor memory, poor focus, poor concentration, and since the heart is in charge of blood circulation, we're gonna have poor blood circulation.

That's how we differentiate all three. Now let me show you what happens when we don't address the blood deficiency, the consequences. This is really key because if you see someone in clinic.

With yin deficiency, it might come from a blood deficiency, remember, blood is Yana nature, and when there's not enough blood.

There is not enough yin, there is not enough liquid, so things starts to dry, so we get yin deficiency as the next pattern. This is very common for liver blood deficiency leading to yin deficiency.

The next one is. Blood stasis what's the connection between blood deficiency and blood stasis when there is not enough blood? Think of a river going down a mountain when the river starts to dry. What's left is pools of water along the river on the way down the

mountain. That's blood stasis and that water just stays there and it's not moving. That is the blood stasis. So when there's blood deficiency, there's not enough blood, so it's kind of gonna pool.

And so often we're gonna have blood stasis as the next pattern, and that could happen with liver blood deficiency, with scanty menstruation, and now we're gonna have clots in the blood and maybe cramps. Does that make sense? Okay.

I know life can be busy. Busy is probably my middle name. This is why I offer quick, Powerful 90 minutes online master classes to help you sharpen your TCM skills in a quick, easy way. These classes were all on Zoom Live originally, but I added them for all the people that could not attend the live and still wanna benefit from all the content I create.

This is why you love those master classes. They're just 90 minutes, which is perfect for US busy people, you still earn cu continuing education hours. You have lifetime access so you can wash them over and over. If you need to refresh your skills, you can access them all by clicking the link in the show notes so you can dive in in TCM treatments for headaches and migraine.

Or get a great grasp on TCM Diagnosis made easy. If you need to prepare for boards and you're a student, check out AcuExam Made easy masterclass. It is a fantastic, and many students have told me that it has helped them pass the board. Yay. If you need help growing a successful practice, I also have a masterclass for that too.

And I'm adding new masterclasses regularly to give you more tools to change your patients' lives. And because, well, let's face it, I love to connect with TCM Rockstars all around the world on Live Zoom classes. So this is my opportunity to connect with people, and then everybody can benefit from the recording.

Check them out by clicking the link in the show notes.

The third consequences of blood deficiency is wind, liver, wind. We're not talking about external pathogen wind. We're talking about internal liver wind. How do we get liver wind, either from liver blood deficiency, liver yin deficiency, liver, young rising liver fire. So remember, wind in theory is related to the spring, to the liver and the gallbladder and the wood element.

Yes. Okay. Therefore, internal wind always comes from a liver pattern.

Internal wind is all about movement, like twitches and ticks and spasm, right? So liver blood deficiency. Usually we're gonna have this eye twitch that feels like, oh, it's so annoying.

I have this eye twitch that's usually a blood deficiency. Also tingling pins and needles, that is also a blood deficiency leading to internal liver wind.

If you're still struggling with TCM diagnosis or the theory like we just depicted here with blood deficiency, my book Chinese Medicine Made Easy. My green book is perfect for you. If you don't have your copy yet, I'll have the link for you below. It goes through all the theories and all the diagnosis, and it comes with my fillable intake form you can use with your patients every single time.

Okay, so now let's talk about treatment. How do we address blood deficiency? We're gonna start with acupuncture. When you are selecting your points, always remember first, treat the root, which is the blood deficiency, which is your pattern.

Then add up points for the symptoms that are specific to that person. Yes.

First, let's pick the basic points that work for any blood deficiency. No matter what organ is affected.

Stomach 36 is the only point that actually tonify chi and blood. So it has to be there.

Spleen six nourishes blood, and it's also nourishing spleen chi. And because spleen chi creates blood, we have to do spleen six, right? Plus it's the crossing point of liver. Spleen and kidney, which really is going to be a great point. Specifically if it's affecting the reproductive system, the digestive system, or the mental health, which if there's blood deficiency, pretty much that's a good bet. Yes, those two points have to be there.

If it's a liver blood deficiency, we'll add up liver eight. If it's a spleen blood deficiency, we'll add up spleen four. If it's a heart blood deficiency, heart seven is your best bet.

And the last point you could add is bladder 17. The backs, shu point of blood. So good.

Now that we have all our acupuncture points, let's answer that question I had at the beginning.

When someone is anemic in the Western sense, they have anemia like I did when my iron and ferritin level was four. When someone is anemic, are they automatically TCM blood

deficient? Not always. They could be young deficient, they could be QE deficient and they could be blood deficient. If someone is TCM blood deficient, are they automatically anemic?

Not always. The best answer in TCM with every question. It depends. So yes, when we see anemia, we cannot say for sure that is A TCM blood deficiency and vice versa. We always have to do a TCM diagnosis per each unique patient.

Now let's look at formula. I love Chinese herbal formulas specifically when it comes to blood deficiency. They're very powerful and very useful. However, if you don't do hers, then please do not prescribe them because they have side effects.. if you're doing herbs, then let me tell you, my three favorite herbal formulas for blood deficiency are,

Si Wu Tang. Si means four. So there's only four ingredients, Si Wu Tang is going to be your best bet when there is heart and liver blood deficiency.

Heart and liver blood deficiency would look like pale tongue fatigue, poor memory, poor sleep, pale face, pal nails and blood vision.

C spots, maybe floaters and maybe dizziness. Cante menstruation. Now, Si Wu Tang is also moving because it has moving herbs in there like swan. So because it's moving, we have to be careful. If we need to move because there's a tendency towards blood stasis, then that's a great formula. But if we don't wanna move, let's say there's heavy menstruation, we probably wouldn't give that formula.

We probably would give the second one. So, Ba Zhen Tang, the next one Ba means eight. So there's eight ingredients in now. One is a much better formula when there's liver and spleen, blood deficiency.

Liver and spleen, blood deficiency would look more like a spleen. qi deficiency with fatigue, digestion issues, but then also liver would be affected. So some scant menstruation, maybe some dizziness. Poor focus, poor concentration that comes from the spleen. Overworked, overdone. Ba Zhen Tang is a really perfect formula for women. Specifically, I would say, not that you can give it to men. But in practice, this is a very often given to women. And the last one is Gui Pi Tang is when there is heart and spleen, blood deficiency.

Heart, and spleen.

Blood deficiency would be a lot of anxiety. Difficulty in falling asleep, feeling fatigue, weak digestion, poor circulation. That is the best formula. Whe means nourish, and P means

spleen. This is a really good formula to nourish the spleen and the heart, specifically when mental health is affected.

So those are the three main Chinese herbal formulas for blood deficiency. There are many more, but those are very common and they are very effective.

Now let's look at nutrition from a TCM perspective. When there is blood deficiency, we need to nourish this blood with red, purple-ish kind of food. So beet soup, if you've never had borsch, borsch is really good for blood deficiency. It combines beets and purple cabbage. Very good for that.

We can also add berries, cherries and moderate amount of red meat.

We wanna have stews and soups and warm food. We wanna make it easy on the spleen to stay strong, to produce the blood. We wanna support the spleen, so we don't wanna have a lot of raw food or cold food or cold drinks.

Other food to incorporate are dry dates and figs. Eggs are great. Bone broth is good too to support the spleen. This all going to help when it comes to blood deficiency.

If you haven't invested in my Chinese Medicine Treatments Made Easy book yet, let me tell you, it is a fantastic resource in practice. I have put my years of experience and Clinical Pearl into a guide that is easy, clear, and covers over 160 syndromes with common patterns, acupuncture points, formula, nutrition, ear points, and so much more.

You'll also have blood deficiency treatment in there. She deficiency, liver cheese, stagnation liver, yang rising, all the common patterns on top of the syndrome,

If you haven't watched my video on spleen sheet deficiency, the causes, the consequences and the treatment similar to what we're talking here with blood deficiency, I'll have the length for you in the show notes below.

This pattern we see so much in practice, responds really well to Chinese medicine, acupuncture, nutrition, and herbal formulas. But one of the hacks I wanted to share with you is using the eight extra vessels to nourish blood according to TCM.

If you haven't seen my eight extra vessel video to understand how we utilize them in clinical practice. I'll have the link for you below because it's very useful and it's gonna help you understand how to tap in those amazing eight vessels.

So for the blood deficiency, one of the things that I do all the time is I do spleen four.

On the right side and pericardium six on the left side. This allows to tap into the Chong vessel and open the Chong vessel. And what is the Chong vessel? It's called the sea of Blood. So it really goes to help us when there's blood deficiencies.

So spleen four on the right, pericardium six on the left. The pericardium six is the confluent point of the yin wave vessel. And spleen four is a confluent point of the Chong vessel. Together. They will help in nourishing blood and increasing energy. I use this during pregnancy, fertility, perimenopause, all the time. If there is blood deficiency, it's a very powerful combo. I hope this was beneficial and you really felt connected to blood deficiency. How it comes about the causes, the consequences, and how we treat it in practice. Every day, I'm humbled by the amount of love I receive from everyone in this amazing TCM communities. The rock stars out there are unbelievable.

I get dms, emails, comments, with so much love. I'm gonna read you one because they all make my day. I can't share them all. But here's one.

Clara, I want to say you are doing so much for us, TCM students. I love all your content. I'm catching up and still going through everything you provide us. Recently started finding a way to incorporate the podcast in my routine.

Please don't stop what you're doing. It is an amazing legacy you are creating. You are making a huge mark on the TCM world. There is an at TCM student in my school who doesn't know who you are.

Please, please, please keep up all your hard work and thank you for sharing all your knowledge. It helps us so much. I hope to become a great practitioner myself and know you will be part of the reason why I'm able to help my patients. Love your energy, love all that you do. Thank you. A million times over

this is why I continue to spend hours creating content and supporting everyone in this beautiful TCM community. So thank you. Thank you, thank you.

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 that may benefit from it as well. Follow the show, live 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.

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