



Usual and unusual **changes** with epidemic pathogens

From the Treatise on Warm Epidemics by Wu Youke, 1640¹

Translation by Steve Clavey

The way an epidemic pathogen works as an illness, there can be:

- a) resolution via a shuddering sweat (戰汗 zhàn hàn),
- b) resolution via spontaneous perspiration or night sweats,
- c) resolution via delirium and sweating (狂汗 kuáng hàn),
- d) in some cases no sweating but instead a direct transmission into the Intestines,
- e) resolution via a shuddering sweat, but only after a dripping spontaneous perspiration which instead of reducing the fever or thirst seems to make the fever and thirst worse until the breakthrough comes in the form of a shuddering sweat,
- f) in some cases the Intestines are clogged and pent up, and only after using a purge will the shuddering sweat occur that allows the illness to resolve,
- g) in some cases the exterior is resolved through sweating, but there is residual pathogen in the interior and so the illness recurs after three to five days, even though there is no apparent reason for it to do so,
- h) in some cases with jaundice they will be cured through purging,
- i) in other cases with jaundice, when you purge them mottled spots and maculae appear (斑 bān); in some cases the illness will resolve with the spots coming out, but if there is an urgent Intestinal pattern then even though there are spots you still must purge them before they recover.

EVEN THOUGH IT may take complicated twists and turns, an epidemic pathogen comes down to resolution through the surface with sweating, or elimination through the bowel with purging: these

are the two standard routes [after the pathogen leaves the membrane source].

However, some changes have nothing to do with either of these routes. For example, a male gets exposed immediately after having sex, or who is constitutionally empty and weak in his lower source (下元空虛 xià yuán kōng xū), in which case the pathogenic heat can drop directly into the lower *jiao* and cause urinary obstruction with lower abdominal distention and fullness, and every evening he becomes feverish. When you try formulas such as *Dao Chi San* (Guide out the Red Powder), *Wu Ling San* (Five-Ingredient Powder with Poria) or *Wu Pi San* (Five Peel Powder) they do not work at all. But then he takes a single dose of *Cheng Qi Tang* (Order the Qi Decoction) and the urine pours out, and then he is cured.

Or in other cases there is pre-existing illness that has weakened some organs, so the pathogen flows toward the weak spots. For example, a woman with heavy bleeding, or vaginal discharge, or irregular periods is vulnerable to the epidemic pathogen invading the uterus. Or people with pre-existing chest pain, hernia, or asthma from phlegm-fire will be subject to changes and transmission of the pathogen in ways that are different to all those described above.

Think of the epidemic pathogen as being like water: it will pour into whatever will receive it. So when the changes in the illness are unusual, this is because every patient brings their own complications to the situation. When the epidemic pathogen brings on an old long-standing illness, don't worry about which channel or which illness it is, just treat the epidemic pathogen and the old illness will go away by itself.

1. *Wen Yi Lun* 瘟疫論 by Wú Youxìng 吳有性 (aka 吳又可 Wú Yòukè).

Urgent patterns need urgent purging

[Here is an illustrative case:]

In warm epidemics, after one or two days with a fever, the white tongue coat looks like thick flour, and in the morning a dose of Reach the Source Drink (達膜原飲 *Dá Mó Yuán Yǐn*) is taken.

Before noon, the tongue has turned yellow and soon after the chest and diaphragm are full and painful, there is intense thirst and restlessness; this shows the lurking pathogen about to break and the pathogenic toxin will turn to the Intestines. Reach the Source Drink with *Da Huang* (Rhei Radix et Rhizoma) is used to purge, the thirst diminishes somewhat and the fever goes down by 30 to 40 per cent.

But by after lunch the restlessness and the fever returns and goes higher, and the tongue coat turns black and grows prickles. Furthermore, the nostrils have turned black as coal.

This is the pathogenic toxin at its most virulent, again stagnating in the Intestines. An urgent purge is given with *Da Cheng Qi Tang* (Major Order the Qi Decoction). Around evening the patient passes a lot of stool, and by midnight the fever recedes. The next morning the black nostrils and tongue prickles appear to have gone.

So here in a single day there are three changes. Methods that usually would be spread over several days are applied in the space of a few hours. This is because the toxin is intense and the changes are rapid: the herbs absolutely must be spot on.

If in this situation the patient takes no herbs or the herbs are too mild, the patient would be lucky to survive for two or three days. Even if they don't die, the herbs they take will be no use.

So often have I seen in warm epidemics how it can turn bad within two or three days and the patient dies, and it is always a scenario like I've described above.

Epidemic while pregnant: Da Huang as a foetal calmer

IF A WOMAN while pregnant catches the epidemic, and if she needs to be purged with one of the *Cheng Qi* formulas, you should go ahead and treat her exactly as the pattern demands. Don't get confused by the idea that you have to use "foetal calmers" such as ginseng or *Bai Zhu* (*Atractylodes*).

Sometimes the family of the patient will see the prescription for *Da Huang* (Rhei Radix et Rhizoma) and object even before the patient has taken the script, or vacillate, or prevent the doctor from going ahead. All this is really bad for the patient.

This is because if she needs to be purged but she is given tonifying medicine instead then the pathogenic fire will become pent up and constrained until it becomes toxic heat that flares and disturbs the foetus. If that pathogen transmits into the qi level and/or the blood level, what is going to nourish the foetus?

This is why the ancients had the "hanging bell" analogy: if the beam from which the heavy bell is suspended becomes rotten, then the bell will fall down. This describes the importance of the digestion in supporting the foetus with qi and blood.

When needed, only the use of the *Cheng Qi* formulas to expel the pathogen will allow the toxic fire to disperse and bring cooling to the flaring blaze. Once the normal qi has recovered the foetus will have a solid foundation.

So in the right circumstances,

Da Huang surprisingly becomes one of the best foetal calmers: every time I use it the results are good, both the baby and the mother benefit.

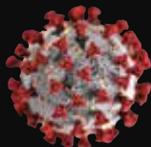
For example if [in the context of epidemic] there is stabbing abdominal pain and splitting lower back ache, these are signs of impending miscarriage and the usual herbs haven't helped. In this case only *Cheng Qi Tang* (Order the Qi Decoction) will cure the illness and restore the mother.

The ignorant think that this will abort the foetus and all the blame will be on the doctor. But if you look into it, I say that this is a problem of stagnant heat in the Intestines of the pregnant women, whereas the foetus is in the uterus close to the spine [ie. nourished by the *Du*, *Ren* and *Chong* extra channels]. The herbs will first arrive in the Intestines and unblock them, and that is precisely when the foetus can begin to relax and be nourished, so this is actually promoting the good and eliminating the bad, you need not worry.

Once you have cleared 80 per cent of the pathogenic obstruction you can stop: the rest will clear itself; do not overdo it.

Of course this applies only to healthy pregnancies; if they are particularly weak you have to remedy the weakness. All this goes for postpartum women as well. But if they aren't weak and you mistakenly tonify, you could kill them.

A GUIDE TO TREATING COVID-19



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