

A Brief on the Use of Essential Oils with Traditional Chinese Medicine

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The use of essential oils based on Chinese medicine has proven to be an exceptional modality in gaining maximum results with clients. This ancient healing system naturally adopts the use of essential oils.

This case study will give the reader an overview of how to work with the Spleen and Stomach (Earth Element).

Two of the major pathogenic factors in Chinese medicine are Damp and Cold. These influences cause stagnation of Qi. In short, when there is stagnant qi the energy does not flow properly and the body will experience signs and symptoms that mirror this.

According to Chinese medicine a primary function of the Earth element (Spleen and Stomach) is to transform and transport postnatal qi. Our postnatal qi is associated with diet, which includes what we absorb from our environment. (Gian 2015) (1) TCM physiology states, that the Spleen ascends the pure postnatal qi and the stomach descends the impure. So, if the Qi is deficient the Spleen will not be able to do its proper job and this causes stagnation. A cardinal sign of Spleen Qi Deficiency and Stagnation is flatulence. This was the case with one of my clients, a 35 year old woman.

The below case study illustrates the healing protocols in dealing with flatulence as a symptom of Spleen Qi Deficiency accompanied by the secondary complaint of low libido.

My client had the chief complaint of excessive flatulence that worsened with cold and damp weather. Her flatulence was hard to control, and made her feel embarrassed when she was not home. The frequency could be high, as in 1 to 2 minutes per time for 10 minutes. It further complicated the condition when she drank black tea, green tea, coffee, iced tea – both hot and cold.

To a great extent, the healing protocols were done within a TCM context. I successfully treated the symptoms with the blend below:

2 drops of Ginger (*Zingiber officinale*)
1 drop of Cardamom (*Elettaria cardamomum*)
1 drop of Spike Lavender (*Lavandula latifolia*)
1 drop of Clary Sage (*Salvia sclarea*)
1 drop of Lavender (*Lavandula angustifolia*)
10 ml Olive Oil

As Aromahead Institute (2015) (2) has it that Ginger is carminative, which can help to prevent gas. It can also warm the body and improve the circulation. The high ester content is beneficial to prevent gas. It is warming, so it can help improve circulation and bring the Qi upwards. It aids digestion and tones the body. I added Spike Lavender for the purpose of removing dampness from the lungs. Clary sage is a very calming oil which can calm the CNS. It helps to relieve the stress and anxiety of my client. Additionally, it can stimulate the immune system – which can bring the body back to normal. Lavender is a calming oil which can help ease the digestive tension (which could be a leading cause to the gas emission problem of the client).

Ginger is a warming oil that assists in strengthening the Spleen and warms the Kidneys. Ginger is integral for two reasons, one is that the Spleen relies on the warming nature of the Kidneys to supply proper Qi. Secondly, the Kidneys are associated with sexual desire. Low libido is a sign of Kidney Qi Deficiency. Therefore, when we look closer at this condition and put these symptoms together, the truer condition in terms of Chinese medicine is Kidney Qi and Spleen Qi Deficiency.

Ginger being warming has a rising nature - meaning it will have the ability to support and raise the Spleen Qi. Lavender supports the function of Ginger because the directionality of Lavender is upwards. The cooling nature of Lavender will balance out the warming nature of Ginger.

Cardamon, is a very aromatic essential oil and has the function to aromatically open the Middle Jiao (the Spleen and the Stomach). Because of Cardamons opening ability it will assist in alleviating stagnation.

I asked her to apply the mixture to her abdomen, chest, her entire back, and back of the neck. I suggested that she apply the mixture to the chest, the upper back, and the posterior aspect of the neck and shoulders. Thus, the condition improved. Although within the first 15 minutes, she was still experiencing flatulence the frequency had reduced. With this method, she only needed to reapply the mixture every 3 hours; which was a great relief.

Instead of using suppositories, I reverted to another gas-relieving blend [Adapted from the East West School of Aromatic Studies (2015) (3)]:

0.25 beeswax
1.5 oz jojoba wax
8 drops Ginger (*Zingiber officinale*)
4 drops Frankincense (*Boswellia frereana*)

According to Chan (2015), the warming oil of Ginger, and the uplifting and revitalizing oil of Frankincense frereana were combined to make the blend, for the purpose of warming the cold inside the body, and regulating the Qi.

I used the formulation above to make a salve (butter). To apply, I advised her to use a Q-tip to dip some butter and applied to the perineum. The intention behind applying it to the perineum was twofold. One was to further assist in stimulating proper digestion and the other was to begin to work on increasing her libido. The warming nature in Ginger is key to increase libido in both women and men.

This proved to be very effective. After she applied this method once, all the symptoms were gone. To ensure full eradication of the symptoms I asked her to apply it 3 more days. She later told me that this blend assisted in her enjoying her sexual life again!

Although the symptoms of flatulence was alleviated and sexual arousal increased symptoms of constipation developed. The body is always trying to attempt to create balance. One of the functions of the Qi is to hold, it is possible that the warming nature of Ginger and its ability to warm the Yang was a cause of this. No problem, let's see how we can alleviate this and assist the system in truly balancing out.

1 drop of Cardamom (*Elettaria cardamomum*)
1 drop of Frankincense (*Boswellia frereana*)
1 drop of Clary Sage (*Salvia sclarea*)
2 drop of Ylang Ylang (*Cananga odorata*)
5 ml of Olive Oil

Cardamom is primarily here to continue in supporting the Spleen and Stomach. Frankincense frereana is revitalizing; Clary Sage is added as an anti - spasmodic to alleviate constipation while continue to support her libido. Ylang Ylang, known as the "flower of flowers" is a very cooling oil that is well known for its ability to increase libido and sexual desire.

I asked her to apply the blend to the abdomen and lower back. This protocol work amazingly well and she had no more complaint afterwards.

A quick note on blending, there are many oils that are known to treat constipation. However, it is pertinent to look at all the symptoms. By looking broadly at my client, I came up with the specifics of blending the Clary Sage and Ylang Ylang. There are many oils that can treat constipation. Yet, Clary Sage was the correct choice as this oil will assist in alleviating constipation and support her libido.

In healing, we need to look at the whole picture and understand that constipation was the client's progression towards healing. One symptom was alleviated then another one came in place. One of the great benefits of holistic aromatherapy and Chinese medicine is that we look at the whole person and treat more than the symptoms.

Remarks: This was Fai Chan's client and Marc Gian assisted with highlighting the TCM concepts and functions
<http://www.marcgian.com>

* This article will be published on AIA's Blog.

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Marc J. Gian LAc, LMT is a distinct practitioner of the healing arts. He is a natural empathy with over 15 years of clinical experience. In 2007, Marc developed the essential oils class at Pacific College of Oriental Medicine, which he continues to teach. He has been at the forefront of educating the massage and acupuncture community on Essential Oils based on the Principles of Chinese Medicine. Marc maintains a private practice in New York City and travels for teaching and speaking events to spread his message of healing.

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Fai Chan is the founder of Deli Aroma LLC. She received her certification from Academy Natural Health Sciences. She has finished her clinical study with Andrea Butje at Aromahead Institute. She is also a Clinical Member with AIA, and a Professional Member with NAHA. She is the publisher of Aroma Search (a Chinese aromatherapy journal for China market), which will be launched in September 2015. In addition, she has written articles for Lab Aroma, AIA (2 articles) and Aromatherapy Today (April edition, 2015).

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