

## Blood stasis

### Terminology:

“Blood stasis” (yu xue): a slowing down or complete standstill of blood flow.

*Tong zhi bu tong*  
*Bu tong zhi tong.*

If there is free flow, there is no pain.  
If there is pain, there is no free flow.

Qi and Blood stasis cause an interruption to normal circulation of qi and Blood in the jing-luo. This local accumulation causes pain, sometimes simply stiffness and numbness.

### Historical considerations

- Zhang Zhong Jing (Shang Han Lun) coined the term xu xue or blood amasement related to pathogenic heat in the lower burner. Created: tao he cheng qi tang and gui zhi fu ling wan.
- Wang Qing Ren (Qing dynasty) differentiated “stasis”, created many formulas including: xue fu zhu yu tang and tong qiao huo xue tang and bu yang huan wu tang (Tonify the Yang to Restore the Five {Tenths} Decoction).
- Modern practitioners expanded the term to include many biomedically-defined conditions including CHD (KHK). Example of integrated Chinese-western medicine. Modern research topic in China.

### Localization

- localized
- systemic

### Presentations

- neurological/psychiatric
- connective tissue diseases
- cardiovascular
- gastrointestinal
- traumatic

**Major features**

- fixed painful irregular masses or lumps
- stabbing, localized and immobile pain
- pain gets worse with pressure or massage
- purplish or brown discoloration of the skin or a dark complexion
- tongue- sometimes purple, or isolated dark spots; distended veins most common
- pain on palpation in the lower left quadrant
- feeling of fullness especially in the lower abdomen
- bleeding anywhere in the body
- a choppy pulse

**Secondary features**

- history of physical or emotional trauma, surgery
- thickened and discoloured nails
- dry rough scaly skin which is circumscribed
- dark circles around the eyes
- chronic numbness or paraesthesias not responding to other treatment
- chronic itching of the skin
- chronic inflammatory diseases
- recurrent night fevers without sweating
- insomnia not responding to treatment
- carbuncles, boils, deep ulcers
- all diseases which do not respond to treatment
- any elderly person

**Cause of Blood stasis from a Chinese medical point of view**

- emotional or physical :trauma
- qi stagnation
- qi deficiency
- cold
- heat
- chronic constipation
- damage to the fluids and yin
- chronic illness and age
- miscellaneous (oral contraceptives, immobility, obesity, pregnancy, post-partum)

**Pathophysiology from a western biomedical point of view**

- abnormalities of haemodynamics
- abnormalities of microcirculation
- coagulation and fibrinolysis
- blood viscosity

**Treatment of Blood stasis with Chinese herbs****a) main considerations:**

- treat patients over a long period of time (sometimes one year)
- start with low doses and then increase slowly then taper off
- monitor patients regularly (every 3 months check platelets and hemoglobin counts)
- try to avoid these formulas the patient is taking aspirin, warfarin or any other anticoagulants on a regular basis.

**b) Selected principal formulas:**

- Xue fu zhu yu tang (Blood Mansion Expel Stasis)
- Tao he cheng qi tang (Peach Pit Decoction to Order the Qi)
- Tao hong si wu tang (Four Substance Decoction with Safflower and Peach Pit)
- Wu jin wan (Black Gold Decoction)
- Gui zhi fu ling wan (Cinnamon and Poria Decoction)
- Bu yang huang wu tang (Tonify the Yang to Restore Five(Tenths) Decotion)

Xue fu zhu yu tang (Blood Mansion Expel Stasis) Wang Qing Ren formula.

Persicus (tao ren)	12g
Carthamus (hong hua)	9g
Angelica (danag gui)	9g
Ligusticum (chuang xiong)	4.5
Red peony (chi shao)	6g
Niuxi	9g
Bupleurum (chai hu)	3g
Platycodon (jie geng)	4.5g
Citrus aurantium (zhi ke)	6g
Rehmannia (sheng di)	9g
Licorice (gan cao)	3g

**Actions:** invigorates the Blood, dispels Blood stasis, spreads stagnant Liver qi and unblocks the channels.

**Indications:** Pain in the chest and hypochondria, strong headache which is fixed, chronic hiccoughs (singultus), choking sensation when drinking, palpitations, insomnia, depression, manic depression, restlessness. Occasionally a “warm feeling” (uncomfortable) in the chest.

**Analysis of the formula:** This formula is for blood stasis in the upper burner with impairment of blood flow above the diaphragm.

**Pathophysiology:**

- Liver qi stagnation (chronic or acute) complicates the presentation and the Blood stasis further obstructs the movement of qi in the chest and hypochondria.
- The obstruction also prevents the clear yang to rise up to head
- Blood stasis obstructing the Stomach causes rebellious Stomach qi to rise causing hiccoughs.
- Long-term Blood stasis turns to heat and constrained qi turns to Fire. Combined stasis, Fire and blood malnourishment of the Heart causes warmth in the chest, palpitations, insomnia, etc.

**Caution:** very dispersing formula, depletes zheng qi and Blood.

## Tao he cheng qi tang (Peach Pit Decoction to Order the Qi)

Persicus (tao ren)	12-15g
Rhubarb (da huang)	12g 6
Cinnamon (gui zhi)	6g 6
Mirabilitum (mang xiao)	6g 1.5
Licorice (gan cao)	6g 3

**Actions:** Drains heat and breaks up Blood stasis

**Indications:** Acute lower abdominal pain, incontinence of urine, night fevers, delirious speech, irritability, restlessness and thirst. Manic-depressive behaviour. Dysmenorrhea or amenorrhoea in females. Will Maclean employs for traumatic injury with severe pain and bruising accompanied by difficulty in passing urine and stools. Also very useful in the post-partum and post-abortion. I use this to treat salpingitis, endometriosis and pelvic inflammatory disease with clear signs of stasis (acute pain +++).

**Analysis of the Formula:** The main ingredients, Persicus and Rhubarb can damage the Spleen and Stomach, Licorice is added here. Mirabilitum or magnesium sulphate is a salty ingredient which is used here to soften lumps and as a mild laxative. Maclean says that the formula may accelerate the breakdown of the hematoma via the biliary system- the patient reports black sticky stools (but not melena!)

Pathophysiology:

- Postpartum or post-abortion, there is Blood stasis in the uterus affecting the Heart through the *bao mai*.
- Blood build-up in the lower burner due to external evil or heat leads to pain.
- The patient becomes incontinent because Bladder qi is disrupted.
- The Heat is in the Blood level and not in the qi level so the feverishness occurs only at night.
- The Heart rules the blood and is the organ from which the clarity of the *Shen* emanates; the retained Heat rises and disturbs the *Shen*.

**Tao hong si wu tang (Four Substance Decoction with Safflower and Peach Pit)**

Angelica (dang gui)

Peony (bai shao)

Ligusticum (chuang xiong)

Prepared Rehmannia (shu di)

Peach/Persicus (tao ren)

Safflower/Carthamus (hong hua)

**Actions:** Tonifies and regulates qi and Blood, gently moving stagnant Blood and warming the Uterus.

**Indications:** Typical formula irregular periods accompanied by dysmenorrhoea and mild uterine stagnation such as small fibroids, fallopian tube blockage or cysts which may be causing infertility. Used in patients with Blood stagnation complicated by Blood deficiency. Also for varicose veins, spider naevi, chronic phlebitis, numbness or tingling of the extremities.

**Analysis of the Formula:** the patient is “fragile and vulnerable” so the combination of Peony and Angelica helps the patient to “open up” and allow any other treatments (including psychotherapy) to enter the deeper level and “unblock” and “untangle” the emotions.

**Pathophysiology-**

- Patient is Blood deficient and has some emotional trauma (acute or long-term) causing stasis in the lower burner.

**Notes:**

- Safe formula to use in patients on anti-coagulants.
- Increase the dose over a period of weeks and taper according to the decrease in symptoms.
- Look for signs and ask for symptoms of Blood deficiency such as postural hypotension, dry skin and hair, pale purplish tongue, thready pulse.

**Wu Jin Wan (Black Gold Pill)**

Solidago (liu ji nu)  
Curcuma (e zhu)  
Typhae angustifoliae (pu huang)  
Mugwort (ai ye)  
Cinnamon bark (rou gui)  
Dry ginger (gang jiang)  
Angelica (dang gui)  
Atractylodes (bai hzu)  
Immature citrus (ching pi)  
Citrus aurantium (zhi ke)  
Cyperus (xiang fu)  
Scutellaria (huang qin)

**Actions:** regulates the qi and Blood, moves stagnant Blood and warms the Uterus.

**Indications:** uterine fibroids, ovarian cysts, endometriosis, Mittelschmerz, polycystic ovaries, intermenstrual bleeding, infertility, chronic pelvic inflammatory disease, prostatic masses and prostatic hypertrophy (with Blood stasis, cold and qi deficiency). For infertility in women around 20-30 who have yang qi circulation failure.

**Analysis of the formula:**

The main ingredients, Solidago, Curcum and Bullrush pollen, move the Blood. Moxa, Cinnamon bark and dry ginger warm the yang; Angelica is a Blood tonic; Atractylodes here to tonify the qi; the two oranges break up stagnation and move the qi as does Cyperus and the scutellaria is here to “settle the foetus” and clear any heat.

**Pathophysiology:**

- Long-standing cold, stagnation and yang deficiency contribute to Blood and qi stagnation of the lower jiao structures. Maclean:”this finely-balanced formula... takes into account the complex events that occur in chronic situations- mixtures of deficiency and excess, cold accumulation with potential for heat generation.”

**Gui zhi fu ling wan (Cinnamon and Poria Pill)**

Cinnamon twig (gui zhi)      all herbs 9-12g  
Poria (fu ling)  
White peony (bai shao)  
Tree peony (mu dan pi)  
Peach/Persicus (tao ren)

**Actions:** invigorates the Blood, transforms Blood stasis, reduces fixed abdominal masses AND warms the Uterus.

**Indications:** (Bensky) for Blood stasis in the Uterus; traditionally for mild persistent uterine bleeding during pregnancy accompanied by abdominal pain increasing with pressure. Also for immobile masses in the lower abdomen accompanied by pain and tenderness. In Formulas and Strategies- for cervical erosion.

(Maclean) for patients with uterine fibroids where you are not sure what the underlying syndrome is (hot? cold?) but he finds it most useful for testicular problems such as post-vasectomy hematomas, hydrocoeles, and “shan qi” or hernial disorders. He combines this formula with yang tonics for aspermia and with yin tonics for non-liquefaction of sperm. In infertility- always look at the patients testicles for signs of Blood stasis.

**Analysis of the formula:** Cinnamon warms and unblocks the blood vessels and promotes circulation. Poria moves downward circulation of blood and nourishes the qi of the Heart and Spleen, calming the foetus. Poria is also useful here to deal with Phlegm or Dampness. Red peony moves the Blood and alleviates stasis but may be substituted by white peony which is spasmolytic and analgesic. Tree peony and Persicus cool and invigorated the Blood, break up and disperse accumulation.

### Tonify the Yang to Restore the Five {Tenths} Decoction (Bu yang huan wu tang)

Astragalus (huang qi)	120g
Angelica (dang gui)	6g
Ligusticum (chuang xiong)	3g
Red peony (chi shao)	4.5g
Peach/Persicus	3g
Safflower/Carthamus	3g
Lumbricus (di long)	3g

**Actions:** tonifies the qi, invigorates the Blood and unblocks the channels. From a biomedical viewpoint, it promotes and improves peripheral blood circulation and inhibits platelet aggregation.

**Indications:** for sequelae of wind-stroke such as hemiplegia, paralysis, atrophy of the limbs, facial paralysis, slurred speech, drooling, dry stools, urinary incontinence. Patient has a white tongue coating and a moderate pulse (as indication of qi deficiency)

**Analysis of the Formula:** Astragalus tonifies the zhong (source) qi, which moves the Blood and relieves the paralysis. Indirect way of dealing with Blood stasis without injuring the normal qi. Angelica, Ligusticum and Peony invigorate the Blood; Persicus and Carthamus unblock the Blood stasis and the Channels. Lumbricus is especially useful in unblocking and invigorating the channels.

#### Pathophysiology:

- There is a combination of blood stasis and yang qi deficiency which impairs the movement of qi.
- The sinews, muscles, blood vessels and flesh are deprived of nourishment leading to hemiplegia, wasting, etc.
- Deficiency of yang qi inhibits the downward movement of Stomach qi and slurred speech and drooling develop.

#### **Notes:**

- Do not use if there is any active bleeding
- Do not use in unconscious/comatose patients