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On the Theoretical Basis and Applied Research of "Spleen and Stomach as the Foundation"

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Abstract

The "spleen and stomach" theory of the spleen and stomach includes multiple visceral functions in the process of reception, transportation, and transmission. The "Neijing" clearly points out that "the spleen and stomach are the foundation of the five organs", mainly because they are the source of qi and blood biochemistry, which can transform and disperse qi, blood, and body fluids for use in the human body; The second is the hub for the lifting and lowering of the Qi machine, which can regulate and maintain the normal movement of the human body's Qi machine; The three abilities nourish other organs to maintain the acquired health of the human body, hence it is called the "foundation of acquired life". Therefore, the acquired life process of the human body will change with the rise and fall of spleen and stomach function. The theory of "spleen and stomach as the foundation" has been applied in clinical internal medicine, surgery, gynecology, and pediatrics diagnosis and treatment, and has achieved good therapeutic effects, but overall, it has not received the attention it deserves. Therefore, in today's increasingly refined clinical disciplines and deepening disciplinary construction, the viewpoint of emphasizing the importance of the overall organs and spleen and stomach is proposed, which not only reflects the holistic view of traditional Chinese medicine, but also an important concept for understanding human health status and treating diseases.

Keywords

spleen and stomach as the foundation; traditional Chinese medicine theory; overall concept; clinical application

The spleen and stomach are important organs in the human body. The "spleen and stomach" in the spleen and stomach theory is not only a narrow definition of the spleen and stomach organs, but also includes multiple organs involved in the process of reception, transportation, and transmission. The spleen and stomach system in traditional Chinese medicine is not limited to the digestive system of modern medicine, but also involves endocrine, immune, blood, urinary, and exercise systems. The concept of spleen and stomach disease in the theory of spleen and stomach also belongs to the broad category of diseases.

"The five organs are all innate in the stomach, and the stomach is the foundation of the five organs." Therefore, the spleen and stomach are the foundation of human survival. Since the Neijing, various schools of traditional Chinese medicine have

attached great importance to the spleen and stomach, known as the "foundation of postnatal development", which is an important link in strengthening the body and preventing and treating diseases. However, the current classification of traditional Chinese medicine disciplines, especially clinical sub disciplines, is based on modern medicine, resulting in each department acting independently, which gradually weakens the overall concept in clinical application. Based on this, this article briefly discusses the theoretical basis and related research on the widespread application of the concept of "spleen and stomach as the foundation" in disease treatment.

1 Theoretical tracing of spleen and stomach function

1.1 The spleen and stomach are the source of qi, blood, and biochemistry, capable of transforming and dispersing qi, blood, and body fluids for use by the human body

According to the "Suwen · Tiaojing Lun", "What humans possess is blood and qi ears." Human life activities rely on the supply and support of qi and blood, and the transformation of qi and blood is due to the function of the spleen and stomach to transport and transform water and grain essence. As the famous medical expert Zhou Shenzhai of the Ming Dynasty said, "The spleen and stomach are the source of qi and blood.".

The five grains and miscellaneous grains enter the stomach and are transformed into water and grain essence through the circulation of the spleen and stomach, transforming into blood that circulates throughout the body and nourishes the five organs and six organs. Therefore, the "Ling Shu Jue Qi" states: "The middle jiao receives qi to extract juice, changes and turns red, which is called blood." The "Ling Shu Xie Ke" also states: "Those who nourish qi secrete their body fluid, inject it into the pulse, transform it into blood, to honor the four ends, and inject it into the five organs and six organs...", The "Shenzhai Posthumous Letter" states: "Blood is the main source of human life, and the stomach is the source of blood production.". At the same time, the movement and transformation of the spleen and stomach are involved in the generation of human body qi. According to the Eight Difficulties in the Classic of Difficulties, "Qi is the foundation of human beings." The Five Flavors in the Ling Shu state, "If the grain does not enter, half a day will lead to qi decline, and one day will lead to insufficient qi.". The rise and fall of the qi in the spleen and stomach directly determine the rise and fall of the human body's vital energy. Li Dongyuan said in his book "Spleen and Stomach Theory": "The abundance of vital energy is not damaged by the qi in the spleen and stomach, but can nourish it. If the stomach qi is weak and the diet is doubled, then the qi in the spleen and stomach is damaged, and the vital energy cannot be replenished.".

1.2 The spleen and stomach are the hub for the rise and fall of qi, which can regulate and maintain the normal movement of the human body's qi

The spleen and stomach are the hub for the rise and fall of the body's qi, playing an important role in regulating and maintaining the normal movement of the body's qi. According to Ye Tianshi's "Clinical Guidelines for Traditional Chinese Medicine", "taking food is the main body of the stomach, promoting digestion is the main body of the spleen. If the spleen is suitable for ascending, it is healthy, and if the stomach is suitable for descending, it is harmonious." He Mengyao's "Medical Handbook: Five Organs and Five Elements and Eight Trigrams" points out that "the spleen is in the middle and serves as the hub for ascending and descending." The spleen and stomach, through one ascending and one descending, jointly play a pivotal role in regulating and smoothing the qi mechanism.

The food included in the human body must rely on the function of promoting spleen qi and clearing, continuously infusing the transformed essence of water and grains into the heart and lungs, so that the heart exercises the main blood vessels and the lungs exercise the main qi and respiratory functions; When the stomach qi decreases turbidity, the small intestine can distinguish and secrete turbidity, the large intestine can transmit dregs, and water and grains can be digested and absorbed normally. According to the "Miscellaneous Treatise on Meridians" in Su Wen, "Drinking enters the stomach, overflows essence and qi, and is transmitted upwards to the spleen. The spleen qi disperses essence, and it is transmitted upwards to the lungs, regulating water channels, and descending to the bladder. Water and essence are distributed in four directions, and the five meridians run parallel.". Li Dongyuan's "Spleen and Stomach Theory: The Theory of Heaven and Earth Yin and Yang Life and Death Between Ascension, Fluctuation, and Sinking" also mentions: "Covering the stomach is the sea of water and valleys, and diet enters the stomach. Essence and qi are first transported to the spleen and return to the lungs, and then up to the order of spring and summer to nourish the whole body, which is the essence of heaven; ascending to the bladder and down to the order of autumn and winter, which is the essence of the earth.".

Therefore, the healthy circulation of the spleen and stomach is the guarantee for the full flow of qi, blood, and body fluids in the human body, and it is also the key to the smooth flow of qi in the body.

2 Spleen, stomach, and five organs

2.1 Taking "spleen and stomach as the foundation", nourishing other organs to maintain human acquired health

The spleen and stomach are the foundation of nurture, nour-

ishing other organs and maintaining human health through the distribution of water and grain essence. They can also be called the foundation of the five internal organs of the human body. Therefore, according to the Su Wen, "all five internal organs are endowed with qi in the stomach, and the stomach is the foundation of the five internal organs.", The Complete Book of Jing Yue, Za Zheng Mo, also points out: "Therefore, those who are good at treating the spleen can regulate the five zangs, and therefore treat the spleen and stomach. They can treat the spleen and stomach, and make food enter the stomach strongly, which is why the five zangs are safe." This explains the special position and role of the spleen and stomach in the five zangs.

The spleen and stomach can nourish other organs. On the one hand, it can nourish the heart and transform red, regulate blood, ensure sufficient qi and blood, smooth blood vessels, nourish the organs internally, and nourish the muscles externally. The "Blood Syndrome Theory: Salivary Blood" states: "Its qi is transmitted to the heart and lungs, to the liver and kidneys, and externally irrigates the four sides, filling the muscles. This is what is called being in the center and unobstructed in all directions. The blood then follows and runs endlessly. The so-called spleen unifies blood, that is, it can ascend the clear and prosperous wood.", Harmony and smoothness of Qi flow, liver storing blood for regulating blood flow, spleen and stomach promoting good circulation, then liver blood is sufficient, and blood flow is normal. Qi flow is regulated smoothly, and the claws are able to nourish and grasp, while the eyes are able to nourish and see, just as the saying goes in "Su Wen: On Meridians": "Eating Qi enters the stomach, dispersing essence in the liver, and lustful Qi in the tendons."; The three can disperse essence in the lungs, replenish and nourish the vital energy. The lungs are responsible for regulating respiration and the vital energy. The vital energy is synthesized from the natural clear qi and the water and grain qi generated by the spleen and stomach, and then transmitted from the lungs to the whole body through the hundred meridians to nourish the organs and tissues, as well as the limbs and bones. If the spleen and stomach are healthy, the vital energy is transformed into abundant energy, and if the vital energy is nourished, the lung energy is sufficient; The four can nourish the kidney essence, nourish the innate, the spleen is the innate foundation, the kidney is the acquired foundation, and the innate essence of the kidney relies on the continuous nourishment of the acquired water and grain essence generated by the spleen and stomach, in order to continue to thrive.

2.2 The holistic view of organs and the concept of "spleen and stomach as the foundation"

The holistic concept is the understanding of the completeness, unity, and connection of things and phenomena [1]. The holistic concept of traditional Chinese medicine involves two levels. One is the "big whole" that connects humans with nature, the four seasons, and the environment. The other level is the "small whole" of the human body, which includes the self composition of the five organs and six organs, qi, blood, body fluids, meridians and muscles. In terms of "small whole" alone, traditional Chinese medicine theory holds that the five organs and six viscera are also inseparable as a whole, each performing its own duties, As stated in "Su Wen: Ling Lan Mi Dian Lun": The heart is the official of the monarch, and the gods come out of it. The lungs are the official of the prime minister, and the governance comes out of it. The liver is the official of the general, and the planning comes out of it. The gallbladder is the official of the middle and upright, and the decision-making comes out of it. The yin is the official of the ministers, and the joy comes out of it. The spleen and stomach are the officials of the granary, and the five flavors come out of it. The large intestine is the official of the preaching, and it changes out of it. The small intestine is the official of the receiving prosperity, and it transforms things out of it. The kidney is the official of the strong, and the tricks come out of it. The Triple Jiao is the official who determines blasphemy, and the waterway leads out. "Bladder is an official in the capital city, where bodily fluids are stored and qi can be released." Here, the functions of the organs are metaphorically compared to the well-known social functions, reflecting their respective characteristics. They each perform their respective duties and coordinate their operation, demonstrating a person's normal state. When one or more of the organs are dysfunctional, there may be pathological changes in the original or other organs, as stated in "Suwen · Cough Theory": "All five organs and six organs cause coughing, not just the lungs.".

Under the holistic concept of traditional Chinese medicine, the functions of various organs must be relative rather than absolute. Taking the theory of the Five Elements as an example, the spleen and stomach are the middle earth. According to the relationship between birth and restraint, the spleen is the son of the heart and the mother of the lungs. The spleen overcomes the kidneys and is controlled by the liver. Therefore, the functions of the five organs are closely related and cannot be separated in isolation. However, we believe that the spleen is the fundamental part of the five organs and has an important significance throughout the occurrence and development of other four organ diseases. It can help and affect the function of other organs: the spleen and stomach are healthy, and the qi and blood biochemistry are sufficient, and the human body's qi and blood are regulated, resulting in health. The other four organs are expected to be vibrant and the disease is expected to gradually recover. The spleen is located in the center and can irrigate the four organs.

Because the spleen soil can produce lung gold, nourish kidney water, nourish liver wood, and nourish heart fire, the deficiency of qi and blood in the four organs can be effectively treated from the perspective of the spleen and stomach. Therefore, the post-natal life process of the human body will change with the rise and fall of the spleen and stomach function. Taking the five organs as a whole and the spleen and stomach as the foundation is an important concept for treating diseases.

3 The clinical application of "spleen and stomach as the foundation"

Due to the importance of the spleen and stomach, medical practitioners throughout history have attached great importance to regulating the spleen and stomach in clinical diagnosis and treatment. The Inner Canon states that "positive energy exists within the body, and evil cannot be eliminated." It points out that if the positive energy is deficient and weakened, it is easy for diseases and evil to occur, leading to various diseases. The rise and fall of the righteous qi is closely related to the normal function of the organs, and it is closely related to the rise and fall of the spleen and stomach, as stated in Li Dongyuan's "Spleen and Stomach Theory": "Internal injury to the spleen and stomach leads to the generation of various diseases.". Throughout history, medical practitioners have attached great importance to regulating the spleen and stomach in clinical diagnosis and treatment. Their theory and clinical treatment experience have been passed down from generation to generation, and have important guiding value for various specialties.

3.1 The application of the concept of "spleen and stomach as the foundation" in the diagnosis and treatment of internal medicine

As is well known, dysfunction of the spleen and stomach can lead to various spleen and stomach diseases such as diarrhea and constipation, which will not be further elaborated. Diseases of other organs or body surfaces caused by spleen and stomach disorders can also be effectively treated by treating the spleen and stomach. If there are lung diseases such as coughing and wheezing, shortness of breath, mental fatigue and physical fatigue, and lung infections that can be treated by strengthening the spleen and tonifying qi [2]; According to the theory of spleen and stomach in treating coronary heart disease, it is believed that "if the spleen fails to function properly, there will be insufficient blood flow in the heart; if the spleen fails to transform dampness, it will accumulate dampness and form phlegm; if phlegm and blood stasis are intertwined, it will block the meridians and cause chest obstruction." [3]; According to the "Synopsis of the Golden Chamber", "If the spleen is weak, the blood will be loose, and if the stomach is weak, the body will be swollen." Renal edema is primarily caused by the spleen, originates from the kidneys, and is related to the stomach. In the treatment of chronic kidney failure in modern medicine, nutritional therapy is regarded as the most basic and important measure in non dialysis therapy, and the health of "stomach qi" is the basis for ensuring the best therapeutic effect of nutritional therapy in treatment. Therefore, "protecting stomach qi" is also in an important position in the treatment of chronic kidney failure [4]. From this, it can be seen that various internal medicine diseases can be effectively treated through the spleen and stomach theory, which verifies the theoretical idea of spleen and stomach as the foundation.

3.2 The application of the concept of "spleen and stomach as the foundation" in the diagnosis and treatment of surgery, gynecology, and pediatrics

Surgical diseases are often caused by damage to the spleen and stomach, leading to the loss of spleen function and the development of various diseases, including ulcers, breast diseases, galls (thyroid diseases), skin diseases, peripheral vascular diseases, and intestinal carbuncle [5]. Throughout history, medical practitioners have attached great importance to the protection of the spleen and stomach in their treatment, as stated in the "Orthodox Surgery": "Gettori has strong blood and a strong spleen and stomach, causing pus to self discharge, toxic gas to self resolve, dead meat to self ulcerate, new meat to self grow, diet to self consume, and wounds to self heal.". Although skin diseases occur on the surface of the muscles, they are closely related to the five organs, six viscera, qi, blood, and body fluids. As the saying goes, "if there are internal factors, they must be external factors." Therefore, paying attention to regulating the spleen and stomach of the middle jiao can achieve the goal of "consolidating the middle jiao and eliminating all diseases.". In clinical treatment of skin diseases, hemorrhoids, fistulas, ulcers, and other diseases, Sijunzi Tang is often used as the basic formula to regulate the spleen and stomach, tonify qi and blood, and promote muscle growth and flesh growth [6].

Fu Qing, a medical expert in the Ming and Qing dynasties, was skilled in treating gynecological diseases. His book "Fu Qing's Guide to Women's Health" believed that the physiological states of a woman's entire life, such as menstruation, girdle, pregnancy, and childbirth, were all based on blood, and the human blood sea Chongmai was also under the jurisdiction of Yangming. Therefore, the stomach and spleen circulation were closely related to women's menstruation, girdle, pregnancy, and childbirth. His treatment advocated strengthening the spleen and supplementing qi, as well as regulating menstruation, girdle, kidney, heart, phlegm, and other methods Infertility and other gynecological diseases [7]. Based on the theories and experiences

of ancient people, contemporary doctors also attach great importance to the health of the spleen and stomach in the diagnosis and treatment of gynecological diseases. For example, the famous national doctor You Zhaoling attaches great importance to the treatment of gynecological diseases from the perspective of the spleen and stomach. She believes that menstrual diseases are important in supporting the spleen and regulating menstruation, leading to the strengthening of the spleen and removing dampness. Pregnancy diseases must use Qi tonifying to carry the fetus. Postpartum diseases are important in nourishing the spleen and stomach, and fatigue should be treated with nourishing qi. In infertility, menstrual periods should strengthen the spleen and relieve diuresis After menstruation, it nourishes blood, helps with membranes, and nourishes bubbles [8].

It is a normal physiological phenomenon for children to have a natural deficiency of yin and yang, and the spleen is often insufficient. The famous pediatric expert Qian Yi in the Song Dynasty explained the physiological and pathological characteristics of children in his book "The Direct Formula of Pediatric Medicine Syndrome". At the same time, he believed that various diseases related to internal injuries in children are all related to the spleen and stomach, and the important factor for their pathogenesis is spleen and stomach dysfunction. He also proposed the viewpoint that "spleen and stomach weakness, limb weakness, and various evil factors arise", paying special attention to the care of the spleen and stomach in children [9]. Dysfunction of spleen and stomach circulation for a long time, insufficient water and grain essence to nourish congenital growth, development, and reproduction can also be affected, leading to symptoms such as stunted growth and development, short stature, and intellectual disability in children. Modern research has also shown that regulating the function of the spleen and stomach in the middle energizer and nourishing the spleen and kidneys can effectively improve the functional impairment of children, promote growth and development, and improve intelligence [10].

It can be seen that the treatment concept of "spleen and stomach as the foundation" is widely used in the diagnosis and treatment of traditional Chinese medicine in various specialties, which can effectively improve clinical symptoms and reflect the important role of the holistic view of organs and the concept of "spleen and stomach as the foundation" in treatment.

4 Summary

The spleen and stomach are the source of qi and blood biochemistry, as well as the hub for the rise and fall of qi. Guided by the holistic view of traditional Chinese medicine, with "the five organs as a whole and the spleen and stomach as the foundation, " the interaction between organs is comprehensively considered. "If the spleen and stomach are deficient, the five organs will be damaged." By strengthening the spleen and regulating qi to regulate the qi mechanism of organs and taking into account the characteristics of other organs, it is an important concept for treating diseases, and it is integrated throughout clinical treatment in various disciplines, It is indeed effective. Therefore, the spleen and stomach play a relatively important role in the life state of the human body. In today's increasingly refined clinical disciplines and deepening disciplinary construction, more attention should be paid to the concept of "spleen and stomach as the foundation" and applied to the treatment of various clinical disciplines and systemic diseases.

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