Session 6
Heart Pathologies
- Palpitations (Xin Ji, 心悸)

Chinese Medicine Department
Session Content

- Palpitations (Xin Ji, 心悸) will be discussed in this session.

- **2–hour Lecture**
  - Bio-meds perspective
  - TCM perspective

- **1-hour Practical**
  - Physical examinations
  - Clinical reasoning activities
  - Acupuncture and auxiliary treatment activities
Session Rationale

- This session includes the general TCM diagnostic procedures, diagnostic differentiation and treatments for palpitations (Xin Ji).
- There will be a practical tutorial for students to develop TCM assessment, diagnosis and treatment practical skills about palpitations (Xin Ji).
- The aim of this session is for students to develop theoretical knowledge, critical analysis and a clinical perspective in the TCM assessment, differentiation and treatment strategies for palpitations (Xin Ji).
Learning outcomes

- **Define** palpitations from both bio-medical and TCM perspectives.
- **Describe** TCM etiology and pathogenesis of palpitations.
- **Make accurate TCM diagnosis and differential diagnosis** of palpitations by comparing the differentiating features including tongue and pulse for each pattern of palpitations.
- **Prescribe the acu-treatment** and other TCM adjunct therapies for each pattern of palpitations.
- **Practical:** assessment, Clinical reasoning & acupuncture and auxiliary treatment skills
Bio-medical Perspective: Palpitations

- **Definition:** It’s a common symptom seen in cardiovascular diseases, but it’s not a health condition or disease.

- It refers to a *subjective sensation* of unduly rapid and irregular heart beats which is usually accompanied by nervousness and restlessness.

- Palpitations include *changes in heart rate and rhythm*.

- It is mostly *paroxysmal* in character and induced by emotional upsets or overstrain, and is often associated with insomnia, dizziness, tinnitus and amnesia.

- **Assessment**

- **Relevant disease**
  - [HealthDirect](http://www.healthdirect.gov.au/heart-palpitations)
  - [Mayo Clinic](http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/heart-palpitations/basics/causes/con-20034780)
TCM Perspective:
Palpitations
Palpitations CM Definition

Palpitations are typically a subjective sensation of a rapidly or irregularly beating heart. In TCM, Palpitation is called Xin Ji (心悸), including two CM conditions:

- **Jing ji** (惊悸): refers to intermittent palpitations due to panic attacks, fright and anger.

- **Zheng Chong** (怔忪): refers to constant palpitations with restlessness and rapid heartbeat.
CM Aetiology & Pathogenesis of palpitations

- Both Jing Ji and Zheng Chong result from malnourishment of heart:
  - from Qi, Blood, Yin and Yang deficiency or
  - from phlegm (Heat) and blood stasis obstructing the heart channels
CM Palpitations Aetiology

- **Deficiency of heart and gallbladder**
  - Constitutional - lack of confidence, indecisive. Heart is malnourished and spirit is easily disturbed

- **Insufficiency of heart blood**
  - Caused by severe blood loss, or spleen xu. Xue xu can’t nourish the heart and house the spirit

- **Yin-deficiency with fire-hyperactivity**
  - Excess sex. Kid Yin cannot nourish the heart fire and loss of Heart / Kidney communication

- **Deficiency of heart-yang**
  - Chronic or severe illness exhausts Heart Yang
CM Palpitations Aetiology (cont.)

- **Impairment of heart by Cold congesting fluids retention (overflow to the Heart)**
  - Kidney Yang fails to warm and steam water, thus fluids congest. Cold congested fluids spill upward, block and suppress heart Yang circulation

- **Blood stasis obstructing the channels**
  - Heart Yang Xu, lack of circulation
Disturbance of the Heart

- Palpitations

More information? See page 39

- Constitutional deficiency
- Severe blood loss, excessive pensiveness
- Excess sex
- Chronic illness
- Excess cold raw food
- Aging, overexertion
- Long-term Heart Yang Xu

Heart Qi Xu
Heart Blood Xu
Heart Yin Xu
Heart Yang Xu
Spleen Yang Xu
Kidney Yang Xu
Blood Stasis

Heart malnourished
Restless mind & shen

Empty: Empty heat disturbs shen
Empty: Lack of warmth to Heart vessels
Full: Congested fluids overflow to Heart
Full: Blood stasis obstructs Heart

Disturbance of the Heart
Palpitations
CM diagnosis: Palpitations

- **3 principles in the diagnosis strategy:**
  1. Identification of Jing Ji and Zheng Chong (see set text P40)
  2. Identification of excess and deficiency
  3. Identification of severity of the illness

- **Basic patterns (set text):**
  - Heart & Gallbladder Qi deficiency
  - Heart Blood deficiency
  - Heart Yin deficiency with empty fire
  - Heart Yang inactivity
  - Cold congested fluids overflowing towards the heart
  - Heart Blood stasis
Acupuncture Treatment: Palpitations

Treatment principles:

- **Excess:**
  - Eliminate pathogenic factors by invigorating the blood and transforming the stasis, clearing the heat and resolving the phlegm and fluids

- **Deficiency:**
  - Tonify the deficiency by nourishing the Heart blood and calming the spirit, warming the Heart Yang and unblocking the vessels, assisting the yang to resolve congested fluids
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Heart &amp; Gall bladder Xu</td>
<td>Palpitations, easily frightened &amp; agitated</td>
<td>BL15, CV14, HT7, PC6, HT5, GB40 tonify</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heart Blood Xu</td>
<td>Palpitations, dizziness, pale complexion</td>
<td>BL15, CV14, HT7, PC6, BL17, BL20, ST36 tonify</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heart Yin Xu with Xu Fire</td>
<td>Palpitations, irritability, restlessness, insomnia, 5 hearts hot</td>
<td>BL15, CV14, HT7, PC6, BL14, KI3, BL23 tonify</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heart Yang inactivity</td>
<td>Palpitations with restlessness, stuffiness in chest &amp; shortness of breath</td>
<td>BL15, CV14, HT7, PC6, CV4, ST36 even method</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cold congested fluids overflowing towards heart</td>
<td>Palpitations with dizziness, distension in chest &amp; epigastrium, scanty urination, oedema</td>
<td>BL15, CV14, HT7, PC6, CV9, CV4, CV8 with moxa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heart Blood Stasis</td>
<td>Palpitations with restlessness, stuffy chest, stabbing chest pain</td>
<td>BL15, CV14, HT7, PC6, PC3, HT3, CV6, SP10 reduce</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In-Class Student Discussion:

- Outline the rationale of acu-points selected for each pattern palpitations treatment in slide 14.

- What other acu-prescription for different patterns of Palpitations have you found in Maciocia, G. (2008) and Maclean, W., Lyttleton, J. & Bayley M. (2018)? In a table format list them out and may compare them to your prescribed text acu-prescription.
# Chinese herb formula treatment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pattern</th>
<th>Chinese Herbal Formula</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Heart &amp; Gall bladder Xu</td>
<td>An Shen Ding Zhi Wan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heart Blood Xu</td>
<td>Gui Pi Wan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heart Yin Xu with Xu Fire</td>
<td>Tian Wang Bu Xin Dan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heart Yang inactivity</td>
<td>Gui Zhi Gan Cao Long Gu Mu Li Tang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cold congested fluids overflowing towards heart</td>
<td>Ling Gui Zhu Gan Tang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heart Blood Stasis</td>
<td>Xue Fu Zhu Yu Tang</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research Articles
Evidence of Practice

- Acupuncture Treatment of Palpitation (a case study)
  DOI:10.1016/S0254-6272(08)60052-7.
  http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0254-6272(08)60052-7

- Efficacy of Acupuncture in Preventing Atrial Fibrillation Recurrences After Electrical Cardioversion

- Acupuncture Regulates the Heart Rate Variability
  http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.endeavour.edu.au/10.1016/j.jams.2014.10.009
Summary & Discussion

- Summarize this session learning
- In class discussion: Practical Hints on set text Page 45:

  A comprehensive examination including both pulse and clinical manifestations is essential
Break
Practical Tutorial
Practical hints: Apply 4-examinations

- In clinic consultation, what appropriate questions can you ask a patient with palpitations? List at least 5 questions that you may ask.

- What types of pulses you might come across with your patient with palpitations?

- What skills should be highlighted during pulse taking with a palpitations patient?

- Red flag: what clinical s&s of a patient complaining of palpitations could be the indication of red flagging in clinic?
Case Study

A 29 years female presents seeking for Chinese medicine treatment for her chronic palpitations and poor sleep. She reports constant palpitations for around 5 years, accompanying with poor sleep (frequent waking up and difficulty in back to sleep), dizziness, forgetfulness, tiredness, irregular periods (late and scanty periods), and intermittent racing thoughts. Her diet is usually poor and she has a stressful job.

Clinical Assessments:
Other: Pale complexion; Diagnosed with iron deficiency anaemia by Medical Doctor
Pulse: Weak and thready
Tongue: Pale (slightly red tip) with deep crack in the centre, thin white coat on the sides.
Case study questions

- What is the TCM diagnosis (Disease and Pattern)? Explain your answer.
- What is the TCM treatment principle?
- What TCM treatment methods will you choose to combine in the management for the patient’s condition?
- Choose at least five acu-points for your acupuncture prescription to treat this condition based on your diagnosis.
- Give the rationale for the above acupuncture points & demonstrate your appropriate needling techniques and WH&S knowledge and skills.
- Recommend suitable lifestyle/dietary advice for this condition based on Chinese Medicine theory.
- What could be the acu-treatment frequency for this specific case?
- How might be the progress of the patient’s condition after a course of appropriate treatment has been applied?
Practical

- Demonstration and practice of the assessment, diagnosis and treatment for the patient in case study

- Lets “treat” each other according to the above diagnosis and treatment prescription.
Main References


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