

DIFFERENCES AND RELATIONS BETWEEN "HEADACHE" AS A SYMPTOM AND AS A DISEASE

MINGRUN ZOU¹, YING CHEN²

¹The First College for Clinical Medicine of Beijing University of Chinese Medicine, Beijing, China - ²Deputy Chief Physician and Associate Professor of the District 2 of the Department of Encephalopathy, Dongzhimen Hospital, Beijing University of Chinese Medicine, Beijing, China

ABSTRACT

Introduction: To discuss the differences and relations between "headache" as a symptom and as a disease.

Materials and methods: By consulting related literatures, the meanings of "headache", "symptom" and "disease" were analyzed, and the differences and relations between symptom "headache" and disease "headache" were analyzed in several different aspects: historical development, clinical manifestations, etiology, pathogenesis, disease location, treatment and prescription.

Results: The symptom "headache" and disease "headache" had different meanings. The latter covered the former in clinical manifestations, and both of them could be divided into external contraction and internal injuries according to their causes. However, different pathogenesis leads to different disease locations. Dispelling exogenous pathogens and tonifying internal deficiency are the common points in treatment. The former is often treated with one or two specific drugs, while the latter is often treated with more drugs compared with the former.

Conclusion: Through comprehensive analysis and research, more targeted ideas can be used for clinical diagnosis and treatment of the "headache".

Keywords: Headache, symptom, disease, comparison.

DOI: 10.19193/0393-6384_2022_4_409

Received March 15, 2021; Accepted March 20, 2022

Introduction

Headache refers to various pains caused by blockage of qi and blood in human meridians by urgency of cerebral meridians due to exogenous or internal injury factors, or various pains caused by insufficient qi and blood in human meridians by cerebral arterial dystrophy. It is a brain disease characterized by conscious head pain as the main clinical feature. It is not only a common symptom, but also a disease whose etiology and pathogenesis are complex and are related to multiple viscera. The incidence of headache is increasing year by year. It can be caused by tension, fatigue or mood fluctuation in the modern fast paced society⁽¹⁾. Traditional Chinese medicine has unique experience and effect in treating headache. More and more studies have found that headache, as both a symptom and disease, can obtain better effect by

being treated dialectically from different angles in the treatment process. Therefore, the study on the differences and relations between symptoms and disease is of great significance for the treatment of headache. By consulting related literature, and analyzing the differences and relations between symptom "headache" and disease "headache" in different aspects, this paper helps to understand and recognize the concept of the "headache", providing the targeted ideas for clinical diagnosis and treatment of headache.

Concept Discrimination

"Symptom" and "disease" need to be distinguished as two different concepts. The "Symptom" refers to various abnormal states and discomforts due to illness, while "disease" is the meaning of illness, which is a diagnosis composed of a group of characteristic clinical symptoms and

made by the symptoms and signs of a patient at a certain stage. Generally, the common name of disease is named after the main symptom. However, it does not mean that as long as having this main symptom, it can be diagnosed as this disease, because each disease has its core pathogenesis. In addition to its main symptoms, the diagnosis of this disease shall also refer to other common concurrent symptoms and pathogenesis characteristics.

As a symptom, headache is defined by the conscious pain in the upper half of the head. The pain can be located in the forehead, the temporal bones, the parietal, occipital or whole head. It can occur alone or come up in the course of many other diseases. As a disease, headache is mainly characterized by the symptoms of conscious head pain. A severe headache can be accompanied by nausea, vomiting, photophobia, irritability and other symptoms. Migraine, tension headache, cluster headache and traumatic headache in western medicine are all counted as headache diseases⁽²⁾.

Historical Development

Headache, also known as headwind, can appear in a variety of diseases as the clinical manifestation (symptoms) of diseases. The understanding of headache as a symptom can be traced back to earlier days than that of headache as a disease. Taking the Jin and Yuan Dynasties as the dividing line, before Jin and Yuan Dynasties most doctors studied headache as a symptom and after Jin and Yuan Dynasties, it appeared in books as a disease.

Historical development of "headache" as a symptom

The word "headache" was first found in the Moxibustion Classic of Eleven Yin-Yang Meridians, one of the Mawangdui Silk Books situated in Changsha. The discussion on headache in Inner Canon of the Yellow Emperor has laid the theoretical foundation for headache to a certain extent. Plain Questions 42, Treatise on Wind has said: "Wind pathogen enters the brain via Fengfu point, which caused recurrent headache." Plain Questions 10, Treatise on the Engenderment of the Five Viscera has described: "Headache and other diseases at the top position have the syndrome of excess in the upper and deficiency in the lower. The lesions are located in the meridians of foot-Shaoyin and foot-Taiyang, and can be transmitted to the kidney if it is more severe⁽³⁾." In the Eastern Han Dynasty, Zhang Zhongjing proposed six

meridian syndrome differentiation and treatment of headache syndrome. In Treatise on Febrile Diseases, he discussed the symptoms and treatment of various patterns on headaches such as Yangming, Shaoyang, Taiyang, Jueyin. Specifically speaking, pungent herbs which warm and sweatpatient is used for Taiyang headache caused by exopathogenic wind-cold, warm and subsiding medicine formula is used for Jueyin headache caused by turbid phlegm, and the cold cathartic medicine formula is used for Yangming headache caused by heat. He took the lead in treating headache by dispersing wind and dissipating cold, warming and descending turbid phlegm, and diarrhea to dredge viscera⁽⁴⁾. Although the syndrome differentiation and treatment of headache syndrome was attached more emphasis than before, it has not been well treated as same as disease.

During the Sui and Tang Dynasties, Sun Simiao, Wang Tao and others put forward the pathogenesis theories of "phlegm accumulating with pathogenic water", "Yin qi inverse upward" and "wind and phlegm combine and rush upon the head", which further revealed the etiology and pathogenesis of headache. Later in the Song Dynasty, prescriptions for headache continued to come out. For example, Chen Wuze claimed that Sichuan Lovage Rhizome and Asarum Decoction can be used for the severe headache caused by wind-cold pathogen, qi deficiency and phlegm stagnating in meridian. He also said that Realgar can be used for headwind. At that time, headache has become an important factor in discriminating the clinical symptoms. However, it could not be considered as a disease due to its incomplete theoretical system.

Historical development of "headache" as a disease

In the process of continuous improvement of traditional Chinese medicine theory, headache has been increasingly important. When the theoretical system of headache is improved to a certain extent, it is naturally treated as a disease. More and more medical experts continue to make contributions to the theoretical system of headache, which further promotes the theoretical development of headache as a disease.

During the Jin and Yuan Dynasties, Li Dongyuan divided headache into exogenous headache and internal injury headache in his book Secret Record of the Orchid Chamber: Speciality of Headache, supplemented Taiyin and Shaoyin headache, and

advocated the use of drugs by meridians. In Ten books of Dongyuan, headache is divided into qi deficiency headache, blood deficiency headache, qi and blood deficiency headache, damp heat headache, qi and blood inversion headache and wind-cold headache according to the specific etiology and clinical characteristics. Zhu Danxi emphasized the role of phlegm and fire in the pathogenesis of headache. He said in his book *Danxi's Experiential Therapy: Headache*: "most headaches are mainly caused by phlegm, and those with severe pain have more fire. They can be treated by emesis method or diarrhea method⁽⁵⁾". He divided the pathogenesis of headache into phlegm syncope and qi stagnation, and proposed that "if the headache is not treated by the normal prescriptions, drugs about meridians should be added according to different pathogenesis".

Wang Kentang of the Ming Dynasty put forward new opinions on the diagnosis and treatment of headache and headwind. The *Criterion of Syndrome and Treatment: Headache* said: "The symptoms with slight feeling and shallow location are known as headache, which come suddenly, are easy to relieve and can be treated quickly; the symptoms with severe feeling and deep location are known as headwind, which come repeatedly and may relapse after healing⁽⁶⁾." Zhang Jiebin summarized the dialectical points of headache. He said in his book *Jingyue Quanshu: Headache*: "for those who were diagnosed as headache, the duration of the pain should be considered first, and then the pathogenesis location should be distinguished. The reason is that those who suffered the disease for a short time are bound to be affected by pathogen, while those who suffered for a long time may be influenced by the insufficiency of primordial qi⁽⁷⁾."

In the Qing Dynasty, Wang Qingren advocated the blood stasis theory and invented Blood House Stasis-Expelling Decoction to treat persistent headache. In *Corrections on the Errors of Medical Works · Symptoms Treated by Blood House Stasis-Expelling Decoction*, it is described that: "The patients diagnosed with headache have no clinical manifestations of exterior or interior syndrome, and no clinical manifestations of deficiency of vital energy, phlegm and retained fluid. The pain repeated attacks, and treatment with many prescriptions has no effect. In the above case, the patients can be cured with Blood House Stasis-Expelling Decoction⁽⁸⁾." Zou Shicheng summarized Ye Tianshi's treatment experience and said: "If you encounter a headache caused by Yang qi deficiency, pathogenic qi blocking

the meridians and lack of qi and blood, using insect drugs to dredge blood vessels and meridians and promote Yang qi should be taken as the main treatment." For "headache caused by exogenous wind-pathogen and endogenic liver wind, calming liver wind and nourishing kidneysaliva are the main treatment methods⁽⁹⁾." The theory of headache as a disease is gradually enriched, and the treatment methods and prescriptions for different natures are constantly improved.

Differences and Relations in Clinical Manifestations

The similarity between the two is that their clinical manifestations may be the same. They are manifested in patients' conscious head pain, which can occur in the forehead, two temporal, bitemporal, top of a head, parietooccipital or whole head. Syndrome differentiation of six meridians is carried out according to the headache location. The headache of the Taiyang is located in the back of the brain and connected to the neck; Yangming headache is located in the forehead and brow bone; Shaoyang headache, pain on both sides of the head, connected to the ear; Jue Yin headache, is mostly at the top of ahead, or the eye connector; The headache of Taiyin and Shaolin is mainly whole head pain. Migraine can also be seen in clinical syndrome, which is often characterized by severe headache on one side. According to the nature of headache, there are empty pain, dull pain, burning pain, cramping pain, jumping pain, swelling pain, tingling pain, heavy pain, dizzy pain and so on. According to the mode of onset, there are sudden onset and slow onset. According to the time of pain, there are different manifestations, such as endless pain, continuous pain, repeated pain.

Unendurable headache is a special symptom of headache. The patient was in critical condition with sudden severe headache, continuous and paroxysmal aggravation, often accompanied by ejective vomiting, and even cold limbs, convulsion and other symptoms, which are extremely dangerous. "It's a unendurable headache, severe headache, pain in the whole brain, cold hands and feet to the elbow and knee, which is an incurable illness," said Miraculous Pivot⁽¹⁰⁾. "People have a headache, involving the brain, red eyes, a severe headache like a rupture, which is a unendurable headache," said *Anecdotes of Syndrome Differentiation*. The clinical manifestations of unendurable headache are similar to those of subarachnoid hemorrhage "burst"

headache⁽¹⁾. There are some differences between unendurable headache symptoms and headache disease in pain severity and pain time, which need to be differentiated from headache disease.

The differences between headache as a disease and as a symptom have been explained above. As a disease, headache is the main clinical manifestation described in the previous article, with other symptoms. The degree of incidence is relatively serious, and it is of decisive significance for clinical diagnosis and treatment; Headache as a symptom, the above clinical manifestations can be the main symptoms or concurrent symptoms. The degree of incidence can be mild or severe. Comprehensive diagnosis and treatment shall be combined with other symptoms.

Differences and Relations between Etiology, Pathogenesis and Disease Location

"Headache" can be classified into two types: exogenous headache and internal injury headache according to different etiology, whether as a symptom or disease. Exogenous headache is mostly caused by the fact that due to careless living, the external pathogen dominated by wind-pathogen invades the human body. The wind is an pathogenic qi belonging to Yang in nature, and the characteristics of wind-pathogen are light, upward, outward and scattered, which is easy to attack the parts of the human body belonging to Yang. Therefore, "the upper part of the human body is first affected by wind-pathogen." External pathogen invades the meridians from the skin epidermis, directly invades the top of a head, blocks the qi of Qingyang, impedes the movement of qi and blood, blocks the orifices of the head, and leads to pain and headache. Internal injury headache is caused by the injury of liver, spleen and kidney due to various reasons, "Brain is the place where marrow fluid accumulates." "Kidney dominates the growth of bone and bone marrow". The filling of marrow sea mainly depends on the filling of liver and kidney essence and blood, as well as the nourishment of spleen and stomach for essence of water and grain, transporting qi and blood to fill the brain. So if the physiological functions of the liver, spleen and kidney are damaged, it will lead to headache. The etiology of internal injury is mostly related to qi, blood, phlegm, blood stasis and deficiency.

The difference is that as a symptom, headache can be a main symptom or a concurrent symptom. When it is the main symptom, the headache is caused

due to exogenous wind-cold, damp heat and other pathogenic qi, blocking the meridians, blocking the qi of Qingyang, blocking qi and blood, and unable to make the blood rise to the head and not cleared orifices; or the headache is caused due to emotional frustration, liver failure catharsis, stagnation of liver qi and liver-Yang hyperactivity; or the headache is caused due to improper diet, fatigue and internal injury, the damaged and weak spleen and stomach, the irregularly changed operation of the essence of water and grain, endogenic dampness, the blocked upper orifices, and the not rising Qingyang; or the headache is caused due to the kidney injured by fatigue, deficiency of kidney essence and loss of nourishment of marrow sea. The disease is located in the brain and closely related to the liver, spleen and kidney.

When it is a concurrent disease, the etiology is the same, but the location of the disease may not be concentrated in the brain, but in any viscera. Wind is the root of all diseases. It can cause diseases with seasonal qi. External symptoms such as wind cold and pathogenic qi, cold aversion and fever may be more obvious in clinical manifestations, while cold coagulation stagnation and headache are mild in clinical manifestations. The clinical manifestations such as feeling wind-heat pathogenic qi, body heat and feeling irritable, dry mouth and throat may be obvious, and the headache caused by wind-heat inflammation may be mild. Feel the pathogenic qi of rheumatism. Dampness is Yin pathogen, which is easy to attack the lower position. The clinical manifestations such as diarrhea and women's leucorrhea may be more obvious, and the clinical manifestations of headache and dizziness caused by dampness may be mild. Hyperactivity of liver Yang caused by poor emotion may lead to more obvious liver symptoms such as irritability, swelling and pain of hypochondriac ribs, spleen deficiency caused by eating fatigue, and spleen deficiency symptoms such as stupidity, abdominal distension and loose stools may be more obvious, and the deficiency of kidney essence caused by atrial strain may lead to more obvious symptoms of kidney deficiency, such as weakness of waist and knee, spermatorrhea and so on.

It can be seen that headache as a symptom and as a disease syndrome have the same etiology, that is, exogenous pathogenic qi or internal injury to the liver, spleen and kidney, but the pathogenesis and disease location are different. When headache is a concurrent disease, the same etiology may

make the disease location different due to different pathogenesis.

Differences and Relations in Treatment Methods

The same is that in the treatment of headache, it is necessary to distinguish between deficiency pain and excess pain first. The excess pain is mostly "various pains caused by blockage of qi and blood in human meridians", and the deficiency pain is mostly "various pains caused by insufficient qi and blood in human meridians".

Generally, exogenous headaches are excess disease, and is mainly based on exogenous wind pathogen. The method of dispelling wind is the first choice for treatment. According to the difference of concurrent pathogenic qi, the treatment method of dispelling cold and relieving pain, clearing heat and regulating collaterals, and eliminating dampness and arousing consciousness is also used.

Generally, internal injury headaches are mostly deficiency syndrome or a mixture of deficiency and excess. The deficiency disease is mainly based on tonifying qi and nourishing blood or tonifying kidney and filling essence, the excess disease is mainly based on calming liver, resolving phlegm and removing blood stasis. Liver-yang headache shall be treated by calming liver and suppressing yang; headache due to blood deficiency shall be treated by nourishing yin and blood; headache due to qi deficiency shall be treated by supplementing qi and ascending lucidity; phlegm-turbid headache shall be treated by resolving phlegm and lowering the adverse flow of qi; headache due to kidney deficiency shall be treated by tonifying kidney and filling essence; headache due to blood stasis shall be treated by promoting blood circulation and removing blood stasis⁽²⁾. In Treatise on Febrile Diseases, Zhang Zhongjing's syndrome differentiation treatment of headache also used other methods such as elimination method, acupuncture, in addition to the main methods of sweating method, purgative method and warming method⁽¹²⁾.

In terms of treatment, there is no essential difference between headache as a symptom and as a disease, but when headache is a concurrent symptom, the treatment of headache is mostly not elevated to the level of care treatment.

Differences and Relations in Prescriptions

Although the treatment methods for headaches are similar, there are differences in the medication

rules in the prescriptions for the treatment of headache. The prescriptions used for headache as a disease are summarized as follows: in exogenous headache, wind-cold headaches are mostly treated with Tea-Blended Ligusticum Powder; wind-heat headaches are mostly treated with Decoction of Xiong-Zhi-shi-gao; wind-damp headaches are mostly treated with Notopterygium Overcoming Dampness Decoction. In internal injury headache, liver-yang headaches are mostly treated with Gastrodia and Uncaria Decoction; headaches due to blood deficiency are mostly treated with Supplemented Siwu Decoction; headaches due to qi deficiency are mostly treated with Qi-Replenishing Sharp and Bright Decoction; phlegm-turbid headaches are mostly treated with Pinellia, White Atractylodes and Gastrodia Decoction; headaches due to kidney deficiency are mostly treated with Major Original-Qi Tonifying Decoction; headaches due to blood stasis are mostly treated with Orifice-Opening Blood-Activating Decoction for promoting blood circulation and removing blood stasis⁽²⁾.

By studying the composition of the above-mentioned prescriptions, it can be seen that most of the prescriptions are composed of characteristic medicines for headache and basic medicines for fundamental pathogenesis, generally including channel ushering drugs, expelling wind drugs, insect drugs, etc., with special emphasis on the application of channel ushering drugs, such as Notopterygium, Shrub Chastetree Fruit and Sichuan Lovage Rhizome for Taiyang headache; Pueraria, Dahurian Angelica Root, and Common Anemarrhena Rhizome for Yangming headache; Bupleurum, Baical Skullcap Root, Sichuan Lovage Rhizome for Shaoyang headache; Medicinal Evodia Fruit, Chinese Lovage for Jueyin headache; Manchurian Wildginger for Shaoyin headache; Atractylodes Rhizome for Taiyin Headache⁽²⁾.

When treating exogenous headaches, it can be seen from the study of Shengji Zonglu·Zhufengmen that Sichuan Lovage Rhizome is the first choice for the treatment of exogenous wind pathogen headaches. Sichuan Lovage Rhizome combined with Divaricate Saposhnikovia Root is the basic drug pair for dispersing wind pathogens, Sichuan Lovage Rhizome combined with Notopterygium is the basic drug pair for wind-damp headache, Sichuan Lovage Rhizome combined with Gypsum and Chrysanthemum Flower is the basic drug pair for wind-heat headache, Sichuan Lovage Rhizome combined with Manchurian Wildginger is a common

analgesic pair for exogenous headaches⁽¹³⁾. When headache is one of the symptoms of a certain disease, the above-mentioned drug pairs are often used in the complex prescription according to syndrome differentiation and treatment to treat headache, while the rest of the drugs in the prescription mainly treat the main symptoms of such disease.

It can be seen that when headache is the disease, most of the drugs in the prescription are special drugs for the treatment of headache, and when it is a symptom, especially a concurrent symptom, such as headache without special clinical significance, there are more targeted selection of one or two kinds of monarch drugs in a prescription to treat headache.

Medical Case Analysis

Here, the medical records of a patient's two visits in Ye Tianshi's Clinical Guide Medical Records · Headache are taken as an example to analyze the differences and relations between headache as a disease and symptom.

First visit: The patient Shi, whose head was located at a high place on the body like a sky, could not be invaded by turbid qi. Nowadays, the patient had symptoms of vascular protrusion due to prolonged headache, which was caused by exogenous pathogens blocking the circulation of qi and blood. The patient often took warm tonic drugs such as Guizhi, monkshood, dried human placenta, etc., but there was no effect. Considering that the upper body belongs to yang, and the head belongs to the yang of yang, if the yang qi is weak, the pathogenic qi will block the meridians upward, resulting in paralysis due to blood stasis and prolonged pain. The treatment method shall be dispersing clear qi and dredging yang qi, and do not use drugs that diffuse on the surface. The same is true for moxibustion therapy. (qi and blood of Jueyin meridian are blocked by pathogenic qi) Cooked Pinellia Tuber, Asarum Heterotropoides, Processing Common Monkshood Mother Root, Roasted Scorpion, Ginger Juice⁽¹⁴⁾.

It can be seen that Ye Tianshi believed that the patient suffered from a syndrome of headache due to yang deficiency, with Jueyin qi and blood stasis blocking the brain collaterals. At this time, headache, as a disease, shall be treated according to the treatment method of promoting and dredging the flow of clear yang. Therefore, the prescriptions are mainly composed of tonics and stimulants, eliminating stagnation to activate yang, supplemented by drugs for dispelling wind and

searching collaterals, dispelling blood stasis and relieving pain.

Second visit: Because the yang qi was blocked by the pathogenic qi, the clear qi was not dispersing. For reference, Zhou Li used poison to treat diseases, and used insect drugs to search for pathogenic qi in the blood to attack the stasis that disperses pathogenic qi. This ancient remedy was often ignored by physicians. Nowadays, the patient had pain in the back of the head, nausea and vomiting, which were symptoms of Jueyin disease. Prolonged illness made the human body weak. The healthy qi should be nourished in addition to attacking the pathogenic qi. Sichuan Lovage Rhizome, Chinese Angelica, Pinellia Tuber, Ginger Juice, Roasted Scorpion, Hive⁽¹⁴⁾.

It can be seen that Ye Tianshi achieved good results in the first diagnosis. After the pathogenesis of yang deficiency was improved, the headache was relieved, so the pathogenesis of Jueyin qi and blood pathogenic arthralgia was exposed. At this time, headache was no longer the main symptom, but nausea and vomiting under the heart was the main symptom. In the secondary diagnosis, headache was regarded as a concurrent symptom with special clinical significance, and headache was treated by the method of dispelling wind and relieving pain.

Judging from the two diagnosis and treatment records, it can be concluded that there are obvious differences and relations between headache as a disease and as a symptom. When headache is a disease, headache is the main symptom, the etiology and pathogenesis are pathogens attacked while yang deficiency and Jueyin qi and blood blocked by pathogens, the treatment method is to promote and dredge the flow of clear yang, and the prescriptions are mainly composed of yang-warming drugs, with wind-dispelling and collateral-searching drugs. When headache is a concurrent symptom, the main symptom is nausea and vomiting under the heart. The etiology and pathogenesis are Jueyin qi and blood blocked by pathogens with deficiency of healthy qi. The treatment method is to expel pathogens and nourish health, and the prescriptions are mainly composed of wind dispelling drugs and blood activating and nourishing drugs. At this time, Sichuan Lovage Rhizome plays a major role in the treatment of headache, and it has the effect of promoting blood and qi circulation, dispelling wind and relieving pain.

Conclusion

Through the above-mentioned series of studies on headache as a symptom and as a disease, it can be found that the two are very closely related, and the biggest difference is the difference between headache as the main symptom and concurrent symptoms. In recent years, the difference between headache as a symptom and headache as a disease in traditional Chinese medicine has gradually been valued by everyone, which is reflected in the etiology, pathogenesis, treatment, and prescription. With the increasing pressure of modern society and the increasing number of mental work, the incidence of headache is also gradually increasing. For many patients, headache is only a small aspect of life that is troubling, and headache is more of a concurrent symptom that appears in some diseases. Therefore, traditional Chinese medicine has higher requirements for the diagnosis and treatment of headache as a concurrent symptom, in order to obtain a more accurate diagnosis and more targeted treatment in clinical diagnosis and treatment.

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Corresponding Author:

Ying Chen

Deputy Chief Physician and Associate Professor of the District 2 of the Department of Encephalopathy, Dongzhimen Hospital, Beijing University of Chinese Medicine, Beijing, China

Email: angie211@163.com

(China)