

The Healthcare Medicine Institute presents

Erectile Dysfunction



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Erectile Dysfunction

Biomedicine

Erectile dysfunction (ED) is the inability to achieve or maintain an erection firm enough for sexual intercourse. It is a common condition that can affect men of all ages, though it becomes more prevalent with age. ED can occur occasionally or become a persistent issue, which may indicate an underlying health problem. This course focuses on acupuncture and herbal medicine for the treatment of ED as a primary condition. To begin, we start with a biomedical overview.

Common Causes of ED

1. Physical Causes

- Cardiovascular diseases (e.g., atherosclerosis, high blood pressure)
- Diabetes
- Obesity
- Hormonal imbalances (e.g., low testosterone)
- Neurological conditions (e.g., Parkinson's disease, multiple sclerosis)
- Side effects of medications
- Smoking, alcohol, or substance abuse

2. Psychological Causes

- Stress
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Relationship issues

Treatment Options

- **Lifestyle Changes:** Improving diet, exercise, quitting smoking, and reducing alcohol consumption.
- **Medications:** Prescription drugs like sildenafil (Viagra), tadalafil (Cialis), or other phosphodiesterase inhibitors.
- **Therapies:** Psychological counseling or sex therapy for underlying emotional issues.
- **Medical Devices:** Vacuum erection devices or penile implants.
- **Acupuncture and Herbal Medicine**

ED Secondary as a Secondary Illness

Several physical ailments can contribute to erectile dysfunction (ED) by interfering with blood flow, nerve function, or hormone levels, which are all critical for achieving and maintaining an erection. Below are common physical conditions that may lead to ED:

1. Cardiovascular Diseases

- **Atherosclerosis (clogged arteries):** Reduces blood flow to the penis.
- **High blood pressure (hypertension):** Can damage blood vessels and impair circulation.
- **Heart disease:** Affects overall blood flow and vascular health.

2. Diabetes

- **High blood sugar levels** can damage blood vessels and nerves, both of which are essential for erectile function.
- Men with diabetes are at significantly higher risk of developing ED.

3. Hormonal Disorders

- **Low testosterone levels:** Can reduce libido and impair erections.

- **Hyperthyroidism or hypothyroidism:** Can disrupt hormone regulation and erectile function.
- **Hyperprolactinemia:** Excess prolactin levels can interfere with testosterone.

4. Neurological Disorders

- **Multiple sclerosis (MS):** Impairs nerve signals to and from the penis.
- **Parkinson's disease:** Affects the nervous system and sexual function.
- **Spinal cord injuries:** Can block nerve signals necessary for erections.
- **Stroke:** May damage areas of the brain that regulate sexual response.

5. Chronic Conditions

- **Kidney disease:** Can lead to hormonal imbalances and blood flow issues.
- **Liver disease:** Impairs metabolism of hormones and overall health.
- **Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD):** Reduces oxygen levels in the blood, affecting erectile health.

6. Obesity

- Increases the risk of cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and hormonal imbalances, all of which are linked to ED.

7. Pelvic or Prostate Conditions

- **Prostate cancer treatments:** Surgery or radiation can damage nerves or blood vessels in the pelvic area.
- **Benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH):** May contribute to urinary and erectile issues.
- **Pelvic surgeries or trauma:** Can damage nerves and blood flow to the penis.

8. Medications

- **Antidepressants** (SSRIs and others): Can inhibit sexual response.
- **Antihypertensives**: Certain blood pressure medications may impact erections.
- **Antihistamines or pain medications**: May interfere with nerve or blood flow functions.

9. Lifestyle Factors Contributing to Physical Ailments

- **Smoking**: Damages blood vessels and restricts blood flow.
- **Alcohol abuse**: Impairs nerve function and hormone levels.
- **Substance abuse**: Affects physical and mental health, impacting erectile function.



Chinese Medicine

According to jing-luo (channel and collateral) medicine principles, erectile dysfunction (ED) is defined as the lack of male copulative power wherein there is a weak erection or lack thereof. There may be concomitant diminished sperm motility, sperm count, or azoospermia (absence of sperm).

Kidney Qi and Yang Deficiency

The decline of Ming Men fire is a major contributing factor to erectile dysfunction. Ming Men fire (命门火), also known as the “Fire at the Gate of Life,” represents the vital energy that sustains life and governs many physiological functions. A central foundation of kidney yang is Ming Men fire.

In the *Nanjing (Huang Emperor's Canon of 81 Difficult Issues)*, it is noted that the Ming Men is the abode of both jing-essence and shen-spirit and is a source of original qi. According to Chinese medicine principles, the decline of Ming Men fire occurs with age and from excessive sexual activity. Other factors such as prolonged illness may diminish Ming Men fire.

The kidneys play a vital role in supporting the functions of the reproductive system. A deficiency in kidney qi and yang can lead to absence of penile erection capabilities or weak erectile function. If there is heart and spleen qi deficiency, the production of qi and blood is diminished. As a result, the blood inadequately nourishes the heart and there are palpitations and insomnia. There may be a loss of appetite due to spleen and stomach deficiency.

Since the lower back houses the kidneys, there may be soreness or weakness of the back and knees due to kidney deficiency. Diminished vitality, pale complexion, coldness, frequent urination, involuntary nocturnal emissions, blurred vision, and dizziness may also be due to kidney deficiency. The kidneys store the jing-essence, which includes semen and

sperm. As a result, deficiency leads to sperm motility and count disorders. The following acupuncture treatments help to restore erectile function and healthy sperm count and motility.

Often, there is a pale tongue and the pulse is thin, deep, and weak at the rear (kidney position). A deep, weak, and thin pulse on the right side at the kidney position indicates kidney yang deficiency.

Treatment Principles

- Tonify kidney yang
- Support Ming Men fire

Differential Diagnostics

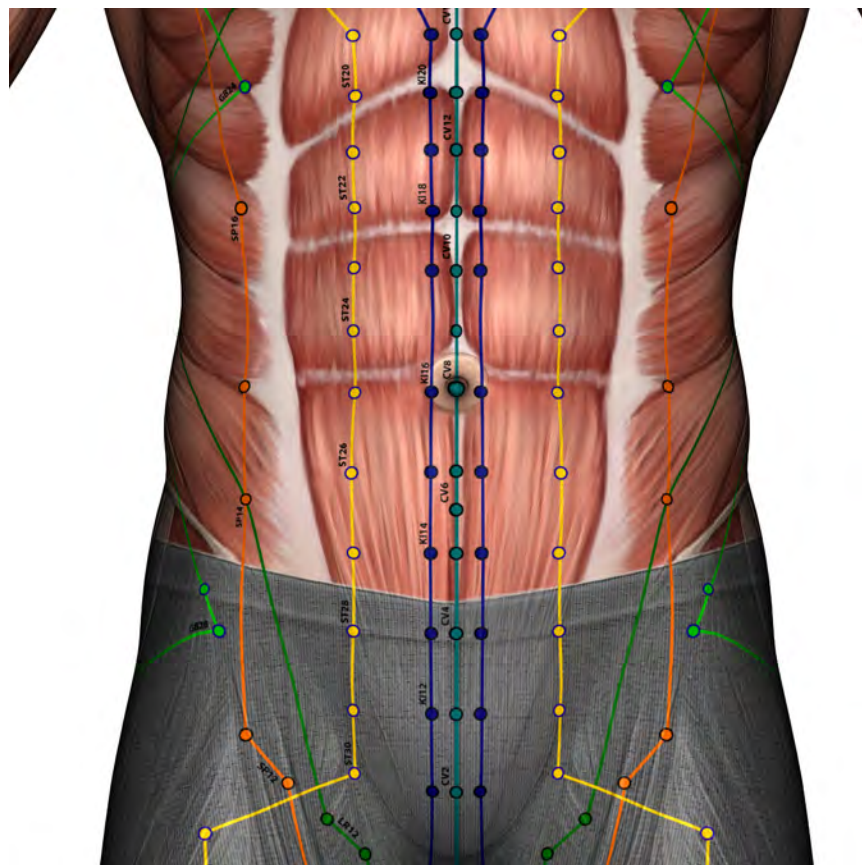
Patients with erectile dysfunction may present with varying diagnostic causation. In this course, we cover a variety of causes:

- Kidney Yin and Yang Deficiency with Deficient Fire
- Kidney Yin Deficiency with Deficient Fire and Damp-Heat in the Lower Jiao
- Kidney Yang Deficiency
- Heart and Spleen Deficiency
- Damp-Heat
- Liver Qi Stagnation
- Kidney Damaged by Fear or Fright

There may be other causes as well, such as blood stagnation due to injury or toxicity due to medications. The treatments presented in this course are mostly for erectile dysfunction as a primary condition and not secondary to another.

Acupuncture Dantian Treatment

Acupoints on the conception vessel in the lower abdomen (especially CV6, CV4, CV3) benefit the dantian (cinnabar field, lower dantian) and nourish & benefit qi for patients with deficiency. **The dantian tonifying technique with the acupoint prescription of CV6, CV4, CV3, and ST36 is an important strengthening protocol for patients with erectile dysfunction (ED).**

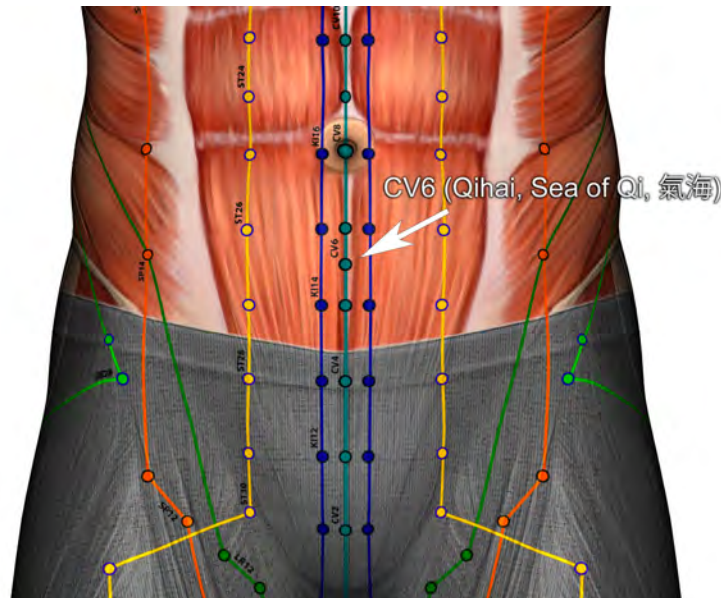


This combination powerfully tonifies jing, qi, blood, yin, and yang. Tonification techniques with lifting and thrusting are applicable. Note that tonification techniques are appropriate; however, in the presence of heat and damp-heat, reducing (attenuation) techniques may also be applied when needing to address these differential diagnostic patterns. The following are the acupuncture points in the lower dantian treatment:

CV6 (Qihai, Sea of Qi, 氣海)

CV6 is located on the midline of the abdomen, 1.5 cun below the umbilicus.

CV6 is contraindicated for deep needling to avoid reaching the peritoneal cavity.



Ocean of Vital Energy

Qi is vital energy and hai is the ocean. This point is the ocean/sea of vital energy. This point is used for the treatment of any qi deficiency condition.

Functions

CV6 regulates qi, strengthens kidneys and qi, benefits yang, harmonizes blood, regulates the chong (penetrating) and ren (conception) vessels, and dispels dampness.

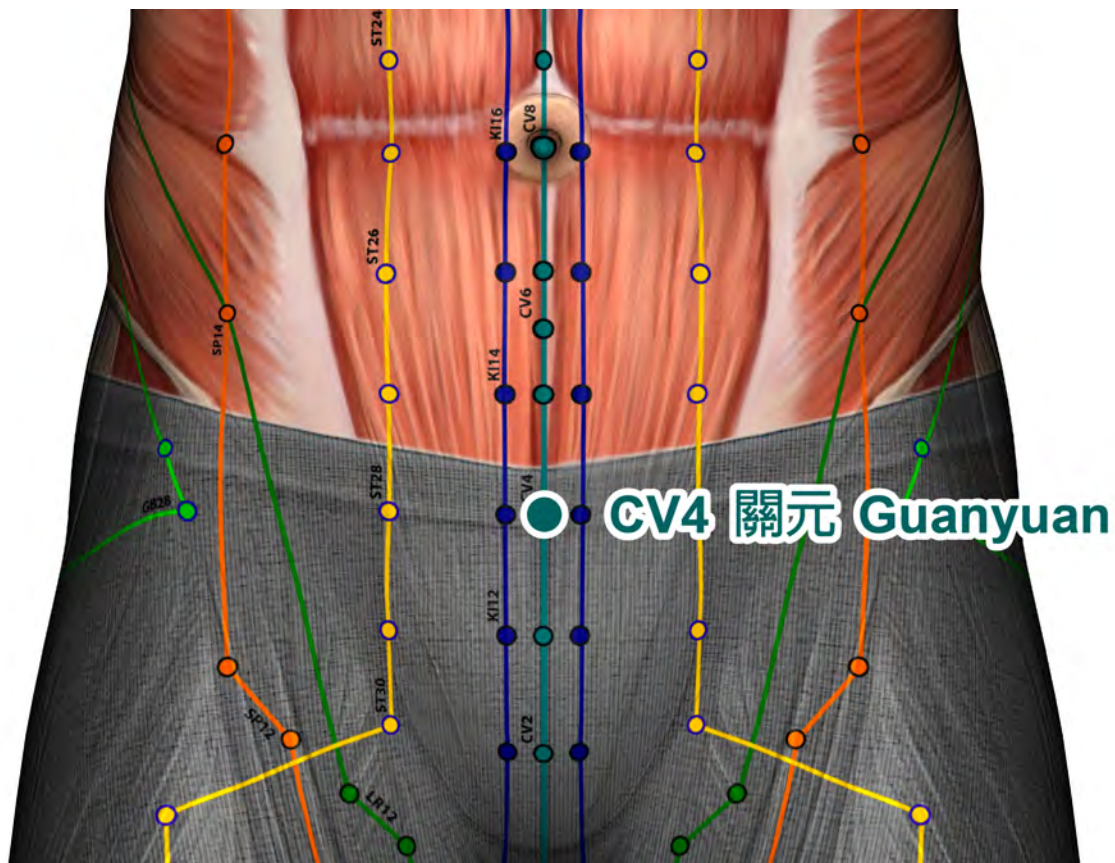
Indications

Indications for use include abdominal pain, irregular menstruation, dysmenorrhea, leukorrhea, abnormal uterine bleeding, urination bladder disorders, spermatorrhea, nocturnal emissions, erectile dysfunction, and cold sensations of running piglets rushing upwards. CV6 is used to help the kidneys receive the lung qi to promote proper inhalation. This is especially applicable for the treatment of asthma.

CV4 (Guanyuan, Gate of Origin, 關元)

Location

CV4 is located on the midline of the abdomen, 3 cun below the umbilicus.



Source Qi and Jing

Guanyuan (CV4) refers to the source of yuan qi (source qi) for both yin and yang. This refers to prenatal qi, postnatal qi, and the vital energy related to aging. As a result, this point is related to fertility. This point strengthens original (source, yuan) qi and benefits jing-essence. This is an important and powerful point for these purposes because it treats the source energy (prenatal and postnatal).

Functions

CV4 is the front mu-alarm point of the small intestine. CV4 nourishes and stabilizes the kidneys, tonifies yuan (source) qi, benefits the bladder and spleen, benefits the uterus and conception, regulates qi, moves and builds qi, and restores yang. CV4 is an intersection of the three leg yin channels (deeply) and is also a crossing point of the spleen channel (superficially).

General Indications

Indications include the treatment of chronic fatigue syndrome, infertility, issues related to aging (premature graying, loss of hair, etc...), erectile dysfunction, nocturnal emissions, loss of sperm, and children with slow growth and responses.

Lower Jiao

Lower jiao (burner) indications for use include enuresis, frequent urination, urgent urination, leukorrhea, dysmenorrhea, irregular menstruation, hernia, abdominal pain, and kidney yang deficiency morning diarrhea.

Emotional Stability and Qi

This point boosts confidence in patients with emotional instability due to the loss of their source of energy.

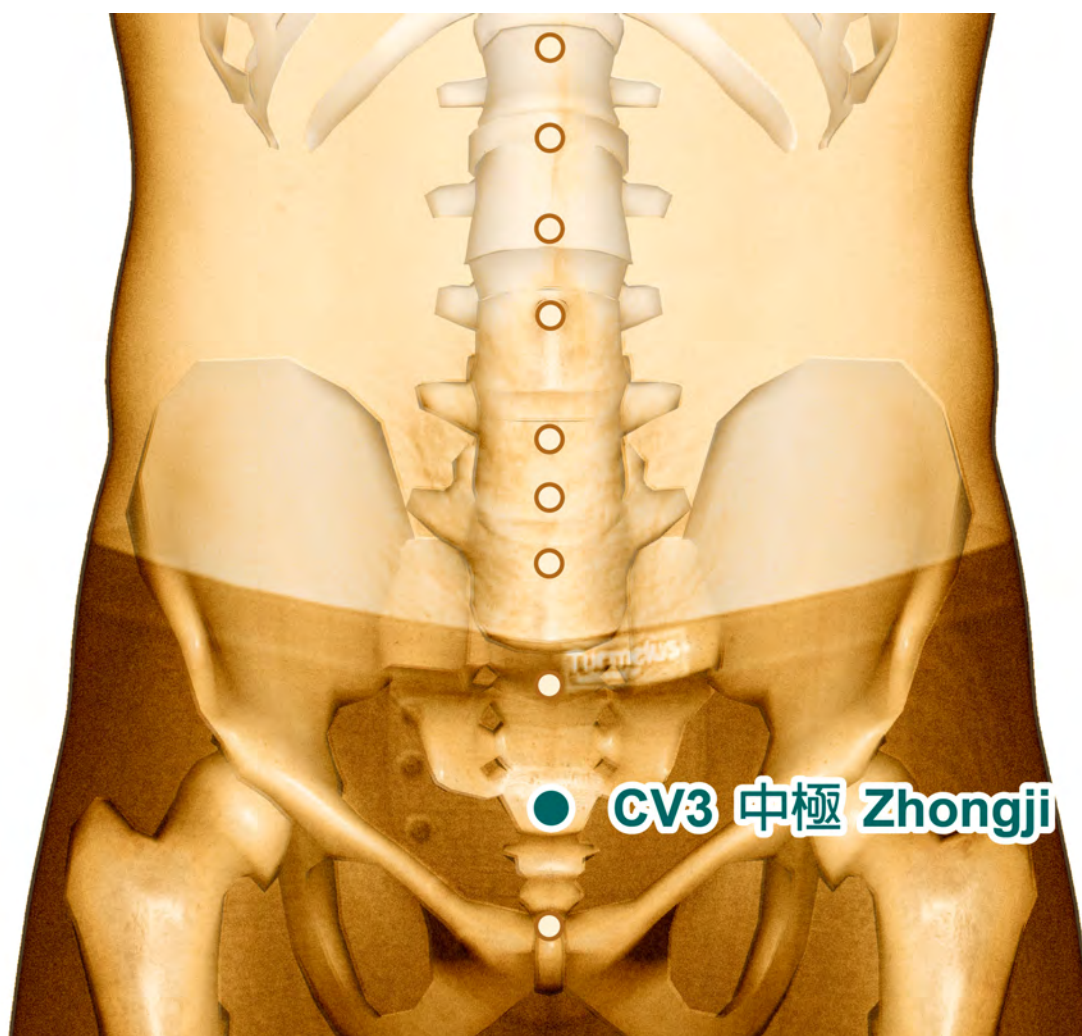
Caution

Use with caution during pregnancy or avoid. Deep insertion may penetrate a full urination bladder. Make sure the patient has visited the bathroom prior to needling this point.

CV3 (Zhongji, Center Pole, 中極)

Location

CV3 is located on the midline of the abdomen, 4 cun below the umbilicus.



CV3 is the mu (alarm) point of the bladder and is the meeting point of the conception vessel with the spleen, liver, and kidney channels. CV3 is the intersection of the three leg yin channels. CV3 assists the transforming function of qi, regulates the uterus and menstruation, benefits kidneys, and alleviates damp-heat of the lower burner (jiao) and urogenital system.

CV3 balances the yin and yang to treat the extremities and head. CV3 is useful for balancing extreme emotions, including patients with bipolar disorder. Other extremes include cold hands and feet with a hot head.

Running Piglet

Running piglet is another emotional and physical imbalance that CV3 addresses. Indications for running piglets include a feeling of pulsing under the navel with a sensation running upwards:

- piglet runs under the chest and lungs resulting in difficult breathing
- running to the chest and heart becomes palpitations
- running to the throat is plum pit throat
- running to the brain is irritability

Emotional Release

The emotional aspect of running piglets can be strong. After acupuncture treatment, patients may note that the running piglet sensation runs out of the top of the head. After this experience, the symptoms may resolve.

General Indications

CV3 is useful for treating urinary tract infections (UTI), frequent urination (including in the elderly), spermatorrhea, infertility due to kidney deficiency, erectile dysfunction, dysmenorrhea, prolapsed uterus, vaginitis, premature ejaculation, urinary retention, enuresis, and frequent urination.

ST36 (Zusanli, Leg Three Miles)

This acupoint is 3 cun below ST35, one finger-breadth from the anterior crest of the tibia, in tibialis anterior. This point is lateral to a notch that is palpable on the tibia. Zusanli (leg three measures) is a He Sea, earth, Lower He Sea of the Stomach, and Sea of Nourishment point. ST36 is a Gao Wu command point and a Ma Dan-Yang heavenly star point. Needling is inserted perpendicularly, 0.5–1.2 cun.

ST36 is effective for benefitting the muscles and lower limbs. ST36 activates the stomach foot-yangming channel and alleviates pain. Jin Dynasty physician Ma Dan-yang notes that ST36 benefits patients with cold stomach disorders, diarrhea, parasites, knee pain, leg swelling, or cold-damp painful obstruction.

ST36 orders the spleen and stomach, regulates qi and blood, and tonifies qi. Common indications for usage include gastric pain, vomiting, abdominal distention, diarrhea, constipation, mastitis, breast abscesses, enteritis, gastritis, edema, asthma, general weakness, emaciation, anemia, indigestion, hemiplegia, neurasthenia, and mental disorders.



Additional Acupuncture Points

- Additional points for ED due to kidney qi and yang deficiency include **GV4 (Ming Men)**, **BL23 (Shenshu)**, and **KD3 (Taixi)**. Moxibustion is often added to GV4.
- If there is heart and spleen qi deficiency, **HT7 (Shenmen)**, **BL15 (Xinshu)**, and **SP6 (Sanyinjiao)** are applicable.
- **LV5 (Ligou)** is appropriate because it is the luo-connecting point of the liver channel (which encircles the genitals). A main function of LV5 is to benefit the genitals. LV5 is also applicable for the treatment of damp-heat affecting the genitals.
- **BL32 (Ciliao)** is often added as it is traditionally used to treat sexual dysfunction.

Emotions Affect Channels and Organs

- Fear causes the kidney qi to sink and fright dissipates kidney qi. The result is erectile dysfunction. Fright affects the heart and causes the shen-spirit to wander, which leads to palpitations, insomnia, and exacerbates ED.
- Worry may damage the mind (shen-spirit). This injures both the heart and spleen qi and may lead to ED with palpitations, insomnia, and digestive disturbances.
- Mental illness may lead to ED. In addition, depression and other mental illnesses may result from chronic sexual dysfunction, leading to stagnation of liver qi. The liver, according to five element theory, is associated with the tendons and sinew. As a result, liver qi stagnation contributes to ED due to insufficient circulation of qi and blood to the tendons and sinew. In addition, the liver primary channel encircles the genitals.

The emotional disturbances indicate the need for points to address specific differential diagnostic complexities. The prior acupoints in the **dantian protocol** and **additional acupuncture point sections** apply for benefitting

the kidneys, heart, spleen, and liver. For benefitting the emotions, the following acupoints are also applicable:

- **LV3**
- **BL15**
- **BL18**
- **BL19**
- **Sishencong**
- **PC7**

LV3 (Taichong)

This point is located on the dorsum of the foot in the depression distal to the junction of the first and second metatarsal bones. LV3 is a shu stream, earth, and source point. LV3 pacifies the liver, regulates blood, and opens the channels. Common indications for use include: headache, vertigo, insomnia, irregular menstruation, abnormal uterine bleeding, extremity and joint pain, eye pain, rib pain, retention of urine or enuresis.

BL15 (Xinshu, Heart Shu)

This point is located 1.5 cun lateral to T-5, at the level of the lower border of the spinous process. Oblique or transverse-oblique insertion towards the spine is indicated. **Avoid perpendicular or oblique needling away from the spine to avoid pneumothorax.** BL15 is the heart back shu point. BL15 benefits the heart, calms the spirit, and regulates qi and blood. Common indications for use include cardiac or chest pain, cognitive disorders, mental illness, and night sweats.

BL18 (Ganshu)

This point is located 1.5 cun lateral to T9, at the level of the lower border of the spinous process of the vertebra. BL18 is the liver back shu (beishu) point. BL18 benefits the liver, gallbladder, and eyes. BL18 cools damp-heat and moves stagnant qi. Common indications for usage include eye disorders, pain of the hypochondrium, irritability, mental disorders, epistaxis, and liver yang uprising related pain of the neck and shoulders.

BL19 (Danshu)

BL19 is 1.5 cun lateral to T-10 at the level of the lower border of the spinous process. BL19 is the back shu point of the gallbladder. BL19 regulates qi, tonifies gallbladder qi, expands the diaphragm, cools and drains liver and gallbladder heat, and calms the stomach. BL19 is indicated for the treatment of insomnia, palpitations with fright and restless sleep, jaundice, bitter taste in the mouth, hypochondriac pain, and afternoon fevers. Oblique or transverse-oblique insertion towards the spine is indicated. Avoid perpendicular or oblique needling away from the spine to avoid pneumothorax.

Sishencong (M-HN-1)

Sishencong is translated as four alert spirit. These are the four points at the vertex of the scalp, located 1 cun anterior, posterior, and lateral to DU20. This set of points calms the spirit, pacifies wind, and benefits both the ears and eyes. Sishencong is effective for benefitting the brain and for the treatment of insomnia, headaches, vertigo, poor memory, and epilepsy.

PC7 (Daling)

This acupoint is between the palmaris longus and flexor carpi radialis tendons. PC7 is level with HT7 (Shenmen) and is located on center of the transverse wrist crease. Alternately, this point is located as level with the proximal border of the pisiform bone, which is the level that HT7 is located. PC7 is a Yuan-source, Shu-Stream, earth, son, and Sun Si-miao Ghost point. PC7 clears heart heat, calms the spirit, harmonizes the stomach and intestines, expands the chest, and clears heat in the blood and nutritive levels. PC7 is indicated for the treatment of insomnia, palpitations, mental disorders (e.g., fear, fright, mania, excess inappropriate laughing, sadness, grief), seizures, epilepsy, stomach or chest pain, vomiting, febrile diseases, and wrist pain.

Damp-Heat

Downward pouring of damp-heat causes ED. Often, improper dietary intake due to greasy food or alcohol damages the transformation and transportation function of the spleen and stomach. This leads to dampness that generates heat, which then drives downward.

Damp-heat indications include ED, bitter taste in the mouth, low back soreness, thirst, and dark or red urine. The tongue is red with a greasy, yellow coating. The pulse is slippery (hua mai) or soggy (ru mai) and rapid.

A slippery pulse feels like pearls rolling and indicates dampness or heat. A soggy pulse is floating, fine, and soft like a silk thread in water. Soggy pulses often indicate dampness but may also be present in yin, blood, and spleen deficiency. The dampness obstructs the vessels causing the soggy pulse. In the case of the aforementioned deficiencies, qi and blood cannot fill the vessels, leading to the soggy pulse.

Treatment Principle: Drain dampness, Clear heat

CV3 (Zhongji), SP6 (Sanyinjiao), SP9 (Yinlingquan), ST36 (Zusanli), and LV5 (Ligou) are the principle acupoints for this condition. Damp-heat is an excess condition. As a result, reducing (attenuation) needle techniques are applicable.

CV3, SP6, and SP9 regulate the spleen channel qi to eliminate damp-heat. ST36 is the he-sea point and is exteriorly-interiorly related to the spleen channel. As a result, ST36 improves the transformation and transportation function of the spleen to clear damp-heat. A main function of LV5 is to benefit the genitals and to clear damp-heat affecting the genitals.

CV3 and ST36 were covered in a prior section, here are the additional points for review:

SP6 (Sanyinjiao, Three Yin Intersection, 三陰交)



SP6 is 3 cun directly above the tip of the medial malleolus, on the posterior border of the medial aspect of the tibia. Sanyinjiao is translated as 3 yin junction; this point is the meeting of the 3 lower yin meridians. SP6 strengthens the spleen, transforms dampness, spreads liver qi, and benefits the kidneys. SP6 is an important acupuncture point in obstetrics and gynecology. Indications for use include: dysmenorrhea, irregular menstruation, abnormal uterine bleeding, leukorrhea, prolapse of uterus, infertility, difficult or delayed labor. Other common indications for use include: abdominal pain and distention, diarrhea, nocturnal emissions, enuresis, dysuria, lower limb atrophy, lower limb motor impairment or hemiplegia, vertigo from blood deficiency (xue xu), insomnia.

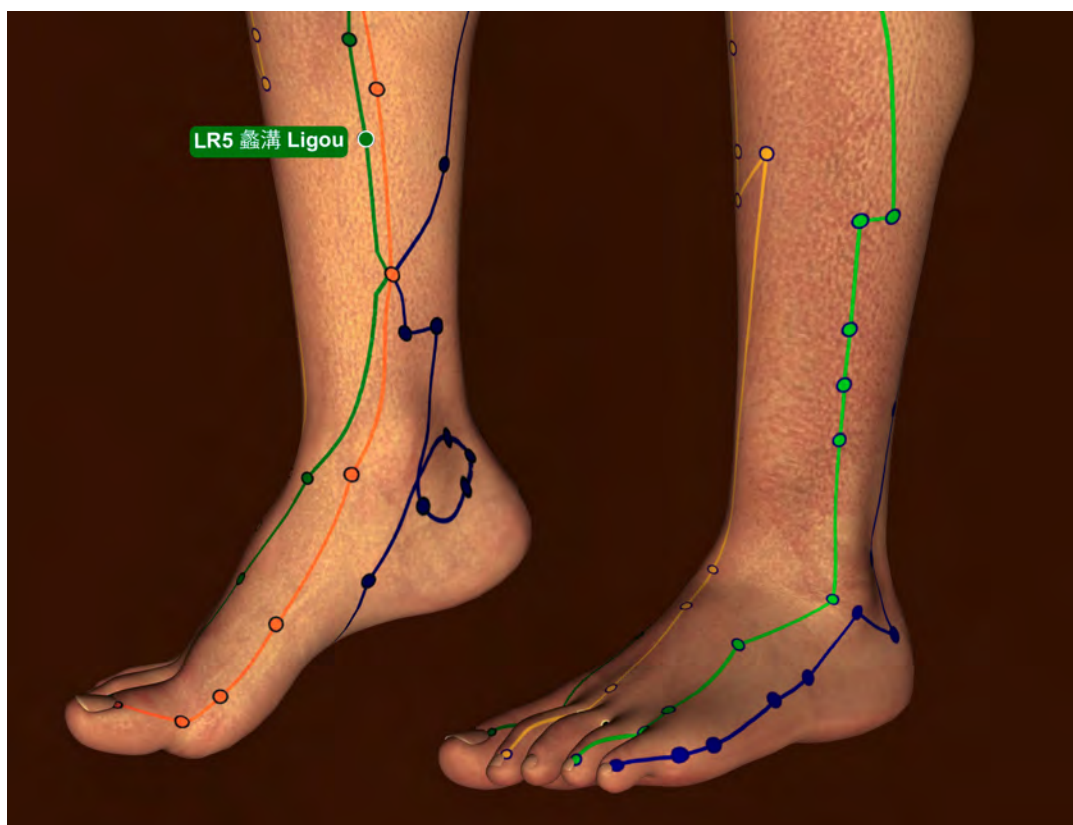
SP9 (Yinlingquan, Yin Mound Spring, 陰陵泉)

SP9 is located at the lower border of the medial condyle of the tibia, in the depression posterior and inferior to the medial condyle of the tibia. Located on the medial side of the body, this acupoint is level with GB34 (Yanglingquan), which is located on the lateral aspect of the lower leg. Perpendicular insertion between 0.5–1.5 cun is applied.

SP9 is a He-Sea and water point. SP9 transforms damp stagnation and benefits the lower jiao (burner). Indications include abdominal pain and distention, diarrhea, dysentery, edema, enuresis, urinary incontinence or

retention, genital pain, dysmenorrhea, irregular menstruation, and knee pain. For swelling of the knee, this acupoint may be combined with GB34.

LV5 (Ligou, Woodworm Canal, 蠡溝)



LV5 (LR5) is located 5 cun above the tip of the medial malleolus, immediately posterior to the medial crest of the tibia, in the depression between the medial crest of the tibia and the gastrocnemius muscle, near the medial border of the tibia.

Standard needle insertion is 0.5–1 cun perpendicularly or obliquely toward to abdomen 1–2 cun. LV5 is the luo-connecting point of the liver channel. LV5 spreads and regulates liver qi and benefits the genitals. LV5 clears damp-heat from the lower burner (jiao). LV5 regulates menstruation and treats plum-pit throat. Indications include irregular menstruation, leukorrhea, urinary retention, enuresis, hernia, and damp-heat affecting the genitals.

Herbal Medicine

The following are herbal medicines used for the treatment of erectile dysfunction. Herbal medicines are chosen by differential diagnostics and modified according to individual patient presentations.

Kidney Yin and Yang Deficiency with Deficient Fire

The following herbal formula is helpful because it addresses both yin and yang deficiency and also damp & heat.

Er Xian Tang (Two Immortals Decoction)

Er Xian Tang (二仙汤) is a Chinese herbal formula primarily used to nourish the kidney yin and yang, tonify kidney jing, regulate the chong (penetrating vessel) and ren (conception vessel) channels, clear deficient heat, and clear damp-heat.

It is appropriate for menopause-related symptoms, including hot flashes, night sweats, irritability, insomnia, and fatigue. This formula is helpful in the treatment of erectile dysfunction, low libido, and frequent urination.

Additionally, the formula addresses conditions involving kidney deficiency with deficient fire. The tongue is pale and the coating is thin and white. The pulse is thready and rapid.

Caution: because Xian Mao is toxic, do not use Er Xian Tang long-term in its original form. Options also include omitting Xian Mao or substituting it with another herb if using long-term.

Ingredients

Xian Mao (仙茅, Rhizoma Curculiginis)

- Dosage: 6–12 grams
- Properties: Acrid, hot, toxic

- Channels Entered: Kidney, Liver
- Functions: Warms the kidney yang, benefits ming men fire, strengthens the sinew, tendons and bones, and dispels cold and dampness. Often used for infertility due to cold in both men and women, impotence, cold-damp bi syndrome, urinary incontinence, nocturnal emissions, and irregular menstruation. Xian Mao is effective for cold-damp bi syndrome with weakness of the lower back, knee pain, or abdominal pain. Due to its toxicity, long-term use is not recommended.

Yin Yang Huo (Xian Ling Pi, 淫羊藿, Herba Epimedii)

- Dosage: 6–12 grams
- Properties: Acrid, sweet, warm
- Channels Entered: Kidney, Liver
- Functions: Tonifies the kidney yang, strengthens the bones, and improves libido. It is also used for treating weakness in the lower limbs, erectile dysfunction, and menopausal symptoms. This herb expels wind-cold damp bi pain, especially with spasms or cramps in the hands and feet or pain and numbness in the extremities.

Ba Ji Tian (巴戟天, Radix Morindae Officinalis)

- Dosage: 6–9 grams
- Properties: Acrid, sweet, slightly warm
- Channels Entered: Kidney
- Functions: Tonifies the kidney yang, strengthens the sinew and bones, and dispels wind-cold dampness. This herb treats erectile dysfunction, male and female infertility, premature ejaculation, frequent urination, incontinence, of urination, irregular menstruation, and pain in the lower back due to kidney yang deficiency. This herb is especially useful for wind-cold dampness with lower back and leg pain and stiffness.

Zhi Mu (知母, *Rhizoma Anemarrhenae*)

- Dosage: 6–12 grams
- Properties: Bitter, sweet, cold
- Channels Entered: Lung, Stomach, Kidney
- Functions: This herb clears heat, drains fire, nourishes yin and moistens dryness, promotes the production of body fluids, clears qi and yangming level heat, clears stomach fire, and clears lung heat. It is often used to manage deficient fire symptoms, such as night sweats and hot flashes, while balancing the warming herbs in the formula. Additional indications include steaming bone syndrome, dry throat, mouth ulcers, afternoon fever, high fever, thirst, bleeding gums, and five sole (palm) heat.

Huang Bai (Huang Bo, 黄柏, *Cortex Phellodendri*)

- Dosage: 6–12 grams
- Properties: Bitter, cold
- Channels Entered: Kidney, Bladder
- Functions: This herb clears heat and drains dampness, particularly for damp-heat in the lower jiao (burner). It also addresses deficient fire associated with kidney yin deficiency. Huang Bai is used internally and topically for toxic sores and damp skin lesions.

Dang Gui (当归, *Radix Angelicae Sinensis*)

- Dosage: 6–12 grams
- Properties: Sweet, bitter, acrid, warm
- Channels Entered: Heart, Liver, Spleen
- Functions: This herb tonifies and invigorates the blood, regulates menstruation, stops pain due to blood stasis, moistens the intestines, and reduces swelling and expels pus. It is often included to address blood deficiency and its associated symptoms, such as fatigue and

dryness. Indications include anemia, pale complexion, brittle nails, palpitations, blurred vision, amenorrhea, dysmenorrhea, irregular menstruation, joint pain, chronic constipation with dry stools, abscesses and boils. Use with caution or omit during pregnancy.

General Functions of Er Xian Tang

Tonifies Kidney Yin and Yang: This formula simultaneously nourishes kidney yin and kidney yang and benefits kidney jing.

Clears Deficient Heat: The inclusion of Zhi Mu and Huang Bai addresses symptoms such as hot flashes, night sweats, and a dry throat caused by yin deficiency with deficient fire.

Regulates the Chong and Ren Channels: By addressing hormonal imbalances and nourishing the kidneys, Er Xian Tang helps stabilize the chong and ren channels, which are often affected during menopause.

Invigorates Blood and Strengthens Sinews: Dang Gui nourishes the blood and enhances circulation, while the yang tonifying herbs support musculoskeletal strength and mobility.

Indications

Er Xian Tang is often used for the following conditions:

- Menopausal syndrome, including hot flashes, sweating, irritability, and insomnia
- Hypertension linked to kidney deficiency
- Andropause-related symptoms in men, such as fatigue and low libido
- Chronic fatigue syndrome with kidney deficiency as a root cause
- Osteoporosis and reduced bone density due to hormonal deficiencies

Preparation and Administration

Er Xian Tang is prepared as a decoction. The herbs are boiled in water for 20–30 minutes, and the resulting liquid is consumed 1–2 times daily. It may also be available in granule or pill form for convenience.

Dose

Adjust dosage of individual herbs to match patient differential diagnostics.

Pregnancy caution: Certain herbs in the formula are considered strong in action and should be avoided during pregnancy.

Potential side effects: In some individuals, overly warming herbs may cause mild digestive upset or heat sensations.

Balance

Er Xian Tang is a powerful, balanced formula that addresses a variety of conditions stemming from kidney yin and yang deficiency. Its ability to tonify both yin and yang while clearing heat makes it appropriate for many menopausal symptoms and other kidney related disorders.

Er Xian Tang is useful for a variety of presentations with kidney yin and yang deficiency with deficient fire and damp-heat in the lower jiao. As a result, it is often helpful in the treatment of erectile dysfunction with its balanced nature of tonification, clearing deficient fire, and clearing heat and dampness in the lower jiao.

Kidney Yin Deficiency with Deficient Fire and Damp-Heat in the Lower Jiao

Zhi Bai Di Huang Wan

(知柏地黄丸, Anemarrhena, Phellodendron, and Rehmannia Pill)

Zhi Bai Di Huang Wan is based on Liu Wei Di Huang Wan (六味地黄丸), and is designed to clear deficient heat while nourishing kidney and liver yin. It is often used for conditions where kidney yin deficiency leads to internal heat or fire. This formula nourishes kidney yin while clearing empty heat. This formula is notable for its ability to clear damp-heat from the lower jiao (burner).

Indications include erectile dysfunction, steaming bone disorder, night sweating, hot flashes, five palms heat, dry mouth, thirst, irritability, painful gums, tinnitus, tidal fever, spermatorrhea, spontaneous seminal emission. The tongue is red and the pulse is thready and rapid.

Zhi Bai Di Huang Wan is appropriate for patients presenting with erectile dysfunction when symptoms align with kidney yin deficiency with internal heat. Standard decoction methods apply; cover with water and boil for 20-30 minutes.

Ingredients:

Shu Di Huang (熟地黄, Radix Rehmanniae Praeparata) 24 g
Nourishes kidney and liver yin, replenishes jing (essence), and nourishes blood.

Shan Zhu Yu (山茱萸, Fructus Corni Officinalis) 12 g

Tonifies the liver and kidneys, astringes jing to prevent leakage. Indications include erectile dysfunction spermatorrhea, frequent urination or incontinence, leukorrhea, abnormal uterine bleeding, tinnitus, lower back pain.

Shan Yao (山药, Radix Dioscoreae Oppositae) 12 g
Tonifies spleen, stomach, and lung qi and yin, nourishes kidneys and stabilizes jing.

Ze Xie (泽泻, Rhizoma Alismatis) 6-9 g
Drains damp-heat from the lower jiao and clears deficient kidney fire. Indications include premature ejaculation, spermatorrhea, edema, urinary tract infection, difficult urination, painful urination, dribbling urine.

Fu Ling (茯苓, Poria) 6-9 g
Promotes urination to expel dampness, drains damp-heat, drains water retention and treat edema, tonifies spleen qi.

Mu Dan Pi (牡丹皮, Cortex Moutan Radicis) 6 g
Clears heat, cools the blood, and invigorates blood circulation.

Zhi Mu (知母, Rhizoma Anemarrhenae) 9-12 g
Clears qi and yangming level heat, clears stomach fire and lung heat, nourishes yin and moistens dryness, promotes the production of body fluids.

Huang Bai (黄柏, Cortex Phellodendri) 9-12 g
Clears heat from deficiency and drains damp-heat from the lower jiao.

Kidney Yang Deficiency

Kidney yang deficiency is characterized by chills and aversion to cold, cold limbs, pale face, low energy levels, soreness and weak in the low back and knees, erectile dysfunction, low libido, infertility, spermatorrhea, copious clear urine, frequent urination or incontinence, reduced urine, edema, loose teeth, diminished hearing, loose stool, asthma, shortness of breath. The tongue is pale, swollen, with a thin white coat. The pulse is deep, weak, thready, and slow. The following are two formulas that benefit kidney yang and are often used for the treatment of erectile dysfunction.

You Gui Wan

(右归丸, Restore Right Kidney Pill)

This formula warms and tonifies kidney yang, replenishes jing, and tonifies the blood. It is often used to treat kidney yang deficiency, with cold sensations, fatigue, weakness in the lower back and knees, and reproductive system or urinary dysfunctions.

Ingredients:

Shu Di Huang	(熟地黄, Prepared Radix Rehmanniae)	12 - 24 g
Fu Zi	(附子, Radix Lateralis Praeparatus Aconiti)	4 - 6 g
Shan Yao	(山药, Radix Dioscoreae Oppositae)	9 - 12 g
Shan Zhu Yu	(山茱萸, Fructus Corni Officinalis)	9 - 12 g
Gou Qi Zi	(枸杞子, Fructus Lycii Chinensis)	9 - 12 g
Lu Jiao Jiao	(鹿角胶, Gelatinum Cornu Cervi)	9 - 12 g
Tu Si Zi	(菟丝子, Semen Cuscutae Chinensis)	6 - 12 g
Du Zhong	(杜仲, Cortex Eucommiae Ulmoidis)	9 - 12 g
Dang Gui	(当归, Radix Angelicae Sinensis)	9 g
Rou Gui	(肉桂, Cortex Cinnamomi Cassiae)	6 g

Doses are adjusted to standard decoction doses. This formula warms and tonifies kidney qi and yang, tonifies blood, and nourishes kidney jing (essence). **Care must be used with Fu Zi because it is toxic and because it is also contraindicated during pregnancy.**

- Shu Di Huang is sweet, slightly warm and enters the liver, kidney, and heart channels. Shu Di Huang tonifies the blood and nourishes yin.
- Fu Zi is acrid, sweet, hot, toxic and enters the heart, spleen, and kidney channels. Fu Zi restores devastated yang, warms kidney fire, and strengthens yang. Fu Zi warms the kidneys and spleen, expels cold, warms the channels, and alleviates pain. Indications include erectile dysfunction, frequent urination, and low back and knees soreness and weakness.
- Shan Yao is sweet, neutral and enters the spleen, lung, and kidney channels. Shan Yao tonifies and benefits the spleen and stomach, benefits the lungs, and nourishes the kidneys.
- Shan Zhu Yu is sour, slightly warm, and enters the liver and kidney channels. Shan Zhu Yu stabilizes the kidneys, contains the essence, stabilizes menstruation, and stops bleeding.
- Gou Qi Zi is sweet, neutral, and enters the liver and kidney channels. Gou Qi Zi nourishes and tonifies the liver and kidneys, benefits the essence, and brightens the eyes.
- Lu Jiao Jiao is sweet, salty, slightly warm, and enters the liver and kidney channels. Lu Jiao Jiao nourishes and tonifies jing (essence) and blood, stops bleeding, and tonifies the liver and kidneys. When combined with Shu Di Huang, indications include erectile dysfunction, infertility, spermatorrhea, and leukorrhea.
- Tu Si Zi is acrid, sweet, neutral, and enters the liver and kidney channels. Tu Si Zi tonifies the kidney yin and yang, benefits the essence, pacifies the fetus, benefits vision, nourishes liver yin, tonifies spleen yang, and stops diarrhea. Common indications for usage include premature ejaculation, spermatorrhea, low back pain from kidney deficiency, dizziness, tinnitus, blurred vision, and spots in

front of the eyes. This herb calms the fetus and is an important herb for the treatment of habitual or threatened miscarriage.



Tu Si Zi

- Du Zhong is sweet, slightly acrid, warm and enters the liver and kidney channels. Du Zhong tonifies the liver and kidneys, strengthens the sinews and bones, aids in the smooth flow of qi and blood, pacifies the fetus, and calms the womb. Common indications for usage include weak, sore, or painful lower back and knees, fatigue, erectile dysfunction, and frequent urination.
- Dang Gui is sweet, acrid, bitter, warm, and enters the heart, liver, and spleen channels. Dang Gui tonifies the blood, regulates menstruation, invigorates and harmonizes blood, moistens the intestines, and moves the stool.
- Rou Gui is acrid, sweet, hot, and enters the kidney, spleen, liver, and bladder channels. Rou Gui warms the kidneys, fortifies yang, warms the middle, disperses cold, warms the channels, promotes menstruation, alleviates pain, leads the fire back to its source, and generates qi and blood.

Wu Zi Yan Zong Wan (五子衍宗丸, Five-Seed Progeny Pill)

Wu Zi Yan Zong Wan strengthens the kidneys, tonifies yang, and enhances reproductive function. It addresses low libido, erectile dysfunction, weak sperm quality, and infertility for men and women. The name “Five-Seed Progeny Pill” reflects its ingredients—five seeds that nourish the kidneys and jing (essence, 精), the foundation of reproductive health in Chinese medicine. Standard decoction methods apply to preparation. Ingredients:

Gou Qi Zi (枸杞子, Fructus Lycii Chinensis) 12 grams

Nourishes kidney and liver yin, replenishes kidney jing, benefits vision, nourishes liver blood. Zeaxanthin, a key component in Gou Qi Zi, supports eye health by protecting the retina and preventing macular degeneration.

Tu Si Zi (菟丝子, Semen Cuscutae Chinensis) 12 grams

Tonifies kidney yang, benefits kidney yin, strengthens kidney jing, tonifies liver yin and improves vision, tonifies spleen yang, pacifies the fetus. Indications include erectile dysfunction, spermatorrhea, diarrhea, frequent or dribbling urination, tinnitus, threatened miscarriage.

Wu Wei Zi (五味子, Fructus Schisandrae Chinensis) 6 grams

Astringes jing, calms the spirit, stops sweating and promotes the generation of body fluids, tonifies kidneys, and restrains lung qi.

Fu Pen Zi (覆盆子, Fructus Rubi Chingii) 12 grams

Tonifies kidneys, astringes jing, and is indicated for the treatment of erectile dysfunction, spermatorrhea, early graying of hair, blurred vision, premature ejaculation, and urinary incontinence.

Che Qian Zi (车前子, Semen Plantaginis) 6 grams

Promotes urination, clears the eyes, clears lung heat, clears lower jiao damp-heat through urination.

Heart and Spleen Deficiency

Patients with erectile dysfunction may have heart and spleen deficiency with indications including palpitations, insomnia, forgetfulness, lack of appetite, fatigue, pale complexion, and anxiety. The following formula is specific for this diagnostic pattern.

Gui Pi Tang (Restore the Spleen Decoction)

Ren Shen	(人参, Ginseng)	3–9 grams
Huang Qi	(黄芪, Astragalus)	15 g
Bai Zhu	(白术, White Atractylodes)	9 g
Fu Shen	(茯神, Poria Pararadicis)	9–12 g
Dang Gui	(当归, Angelicae Sinensis)	9 g
Long Yan Rou	(龙眼肉, Arillus Longan)	9 g
Suan Zao Ren	(酸枣仁, Semen Zizyphi Spinosae)	9 g
Yuan Zhi	(远志, Radix Polygalae)	6 g
Mu Xiang	(木香, Radix Aucklandiae)	3 g
Sheng Jiang	(生姜, Rhizoma Zingiberis)	2 slices
Da Zao	(大枣, Jujubae Fructus)	4 pieces
Zhi Gan Cao	(炙甘草, Glycyrrhizae Radix Preparata)	3–6 g

This is a decoction version made from the raw herbs, this formula is commonly administered in pill and powder form. Grind the Suan Zao Ren prior to boiling. Zhi Huang Qi (honey-fried) and Chao Bai Zhu (dry-fried) are often used. Dry-frying Bai Zhu enhances its warming and transforming dampness properties. Honey-frying Huang Qi focuses the herb's functions towards the treatment of spleen, lung, and yang deficiency. It is more common to use the honey-fried version for chronic cases of deficiency whereas raw Huang Qi is more often used for exterior conditions, including tonifying and hardening wei qi. Fu Shen is more for calming the spirit but Fu Ling may replace it to increase the transformation of dampness effect. Cover with water and decoct for 15-30 minutes.

- Ren Shen is sweet, slightly bitter, slightly warm and enters the spleen and lung channels. Ren Shen tonifies source qi, spleen and stomach qi, lung qi, and heart qi. Ren Shen calms the spirit. Ren Shen benefits yin and generates fluids. It is used to treat wasting and thirsting syndrome and other cases when the qi and fluids have been injured by high fever and profuse sweating. Indicated for the treatment of erectile dysfunction.
- Huang Qi is sweet, slightly warm and enters the spleen and lung channels. Huang Qi tonifies the spleen qi and raises the yang qi of the spleen and stomach. Huang Qi stabilizes the exterior and stops sweating (hardens wei qi). Huang Qi promotes urination, removes edema, promotes the discharge of pus and healing. tonifies qi and blood, and is used for the treatment of wasting and thirsting syndrome
- Bai Zhu is bitter, sweet, warming and enters the spleen and stomach channels. Bai Zhu tonifies the spleen, benefits the qi, dries dampness, stabilizes the exterior, and stops sweating.
- Fu Shen is neutral, sweet, and bland. Fu Shen calms the spirit and promotes urination. Common indications for usage include insomnia, poor memory, palpitations, irritability.
- Dang Gui is sweet, acrid, bitter, warm, and enters the heart, liver, and spleen channels. Dang Gui tonifies the blood, regulates menstruation, invigorates and harmonizes blood, moistens the intestines, and moves the stool.
- Long Yan Rou is sweet, warm, and enters the heart and spleen channels. Long Yan Rou tonifies the heart and spleen, nourishes the blood, and calms the spirit.
- Suan Zao Ren is sweet, sour, neutral, and enters the heart, spleen, liver, and gallbladder channels. Suan Zao Ren nourishes the heart and liver, calms the spirit, and nourishes blood and yin. Suan Zao

Ren treats excess sweating including both spontaneous and night sweating.

- Yuan Zhi is bitter, acrid, warm, and enters the heart, kidney, and lung channels. Yuan Zhi calms the spirit, facilitates the flow of qi in the heart, expels phlegm and clears the orifices, and expels phlegm from the lungs.
- Mu Xiang is acrid, bitter, warm, and enters the spleen, stomach, large intestine, and gallbladder channels. Mu Xiang moves qi, alleviates pain, regulates stagnant qi in the intestines, strengthens the spleen, and prevents stagnation. Common indications for usage include diarrhea and abdominal pain.
- Sheng Jiang is acrid, hot, and enters the lung and stomach channels. Sheng Jiang releases the exterior, disperses cold, warms the middle burner, alleviates vomiting, alleviates coughing, reduces the poisonous effect of other herbs, and adjusts the nutritive and protective qi (ying and wei).
- Da Zao is sweet, neutral, and enters the spleen and stomach channels. Da Zao tonifies the spleen and stomach, nourishes the nutritive qi, moistens dryness, calms the spirit, and moderates and harmonizes other herbs.
- Zhi Gan Cao is sweet, warm, and enters all 12 primary channels, especially the spleen and lung channels. It moderates and harmonizes the characteristics of other herbs, tonifies the spleen qi, moistens the lungs, stops coughing, clears heat and detoxifies fire poisons, and soothes spasms. It is use for cases of deficient qi or blood patterns with an irregular or intermittent pulse or palpitations.

Damp-Heat

Long Dan Xie Gan Tang (龍膽瀉肝湯, Gentiana Purge Liver Fire Decoction)

This formula is for acute cases where there is liver fire and liver and gallbladder damp heat. Available in pill and powder form.

Pulse: Rapid, wiry

Tongue: Red body with red dots on the sides
Thick, greasy-yellow coating

Diagnosis: Liver Fire, damp-heat in the liver and gallbladder channels

Indications: acute lower abdominal pain, inguinal groove pain, profuse yellow or red belt leukorrhea (yellow or red, brown discharge) with foul odor, fever, vaginal bleeding, erectile dysfunction, dizziness, irritability, easily angered, bitter taste in the mouth, nausea, vomiting.

Urine: concentrated dark yellow color and burning sensation

Treatment Principle: Purge Liver and Gallbladder Fire, Clear Liver and Gallbladder Damp-Heat, Cool the Blood, Stop Bleeding

Long Dan Cao	(Radix Gentianae Longdancao)	6 grams
Huang Qin	(Radix Scutellariae)	9
Zhi Zi	(Fructus Gardeniae Jasminoides)	6
Ze Xie	(Rhizoma Alismatis Orientalis)	9
Che Qian Zi	(Semen Plantaginis)	9
Mu Tong	(Caulis Mutong)	6
Sheng Di Huang	(Radix Rehmanniae Glutinosae)	12
Dang Gui	(Radix Angelicae Sinensis)	9
Chai Hu	(Radix Bupleuri)	6
Gan Cao	(Radix Glycyrrhizae)	4.5

For lower burner blood stagnation and constipation add: Da Huang 9

Dose: 1 bag per day Ratio: Decocted in 3:1 cups of water

Liver Qi Stagnation

Xiao Yao San (逍遥散, Rambling Powder)

Xiao Yao San and two variations of this formula (i.e., Dan Zhi Xiao Yao San, Hei Xiao Yao San) are appropriate for this condition. Use Xiao Yao San for the treatment of liver qi stagnation with blood deficiency and spleen deficiency. Use Dan Zhi Xiao Yao San (also known as Jia Wei Xiao Yao San) if there is internal heat. Use Hei Xiao Yao San if there is a predominance of blood deficiency.

This harmonizing formula is applicable for patients with liver qi stagnation with qi and blood deficiency. Indications include hypochondriac region pain, headaches, vertigo, bitter taste in the mouth, digestive disturbances, stress, anger, depression, anxiety, erectile dysfunction, cold extremities, five palms (soles) heat, insomnia (especially waking 1-3 am), irregular menstruation, fatigue, and flatulence.

Chai Hu	(Radix Bupleuri)	9 g
Bai Shao	(Radix Paeoniae)	9 g
Zhi Gan Cao	(Glycyrrhizae Radix Preparata)	6 g
Dang Gui	(Radix Angelicae Sinensis)	9 g
Bai Zhu	(Rhizoma Atractylodis Macrocephalae)	9 g
Fu Ling	(Poria)	12 g
Bo He	(Herba Menthae)	3 – 6 g
Sheng Jiang	(Rhizoma Zingiberis)	2 slices
Da Zao	(Jujubae Fructus)	4 pieces

This is a decoction version of the original. Use Fu Shen instead of Fu Ling to increase the calm the spirit function. Add Bo He last five minutes to soak when preparing the decoction.

Dan Zhi Xiao Yao San (Mu Dan Pi and Zhi Zi Rambling Powder)

Add Mu Dan Pi (Cortex Moutan) and Zhi Zi (Fructus Cardeniae) to create the formula Dan Zhi Xiao Yao San when there is internal heat. Indications

include irritability, mental restlessness, feeling excessively warm, excess sweating, night sweats, insomnia, vertigo, dry mouth and eyes, red cheeks.

Hei Xiao Yao San (Black Rambling Powder)

Add Sheng Di Huang (Radix Rehmanniae) or Shu Di Huang (Radix Rehmanniae Praeparata) to create the formula Hei Xiao Yao San when there is blood deficiency or internal heat. Use Sheng Di Huang for internal heat and Shu Di Huang for blood deficiency.

Xiao Yao San Ingredients:

- Chai Hu is bitter, slightly acrid, cooling and enters the liver and gall bladder channels. Chai Hu resolves lesser yang (Shaoyang) heat patterns, relaxes constrained liver qi, and raises the yang qi in patterns of spleen or stomach deficiency.



Chai Hu

- Bai Shao is bitter, sour, cooling and enters the liver and spleen channels. Bai Shao nourishes the blood, pacifies the liver, and

alleviates pain. Bai Shao restrains the yin and adjusts the nutritive and protective levels (ying and wei).

- Zhi Gan Cao is sweet, warm, and enters all 12 primary channels, especially the spleen and lung channels. It moderates and harmonizes the characteristics of other herbs, tonifies the spleen qi, moistens the lungs, stops coughing, clears heat and detoxifies fire poisons, and soothes spasms. It is use for cases of deficient qi or blood patterns with an irregular or intermittent pulse or palpitations.
- Dang Gui is sweet, acrid, bitter, warm, and enters the heart, liver, and spleen channels. Dang Gui tonifies the blood, regulates menstruation, invigorates and harmonizes blood, moistens the intestines, and moves the stool.
- Bai Zhu is bitter, sweet, warming and enters the spleen and stomach channels. Bai Zhu tonifies the spleen, benefits the qi, dries dampness, stabilizes the exterior, and stops sweating.
- Fu Ling is sweet, bland, neutral, and enters the heart, spleen, and lung channels. Fu Ling promotes urination and leeches out dampness. It strengthens the spleen, harmonizes the middle burner (jiao), transforms phlegm, quiets the heart, and calms the spirit.
- Bo He is acrid, aromatic, cooling and enters the lung and liver channels. Bo He disperses wind heat, clears the head and eyes, benefits the throat, encourages rashes to surface, and allows constrained liver qi to flow freely.
- Sheng Jiang is acrid, hot, and enters the lung and stomach channels. Sheng Jiang releases the exterior, disperses cold, warms the middle burner, alleviates vomiting, alleviates coughing, reduces the poisonous effect of other herbs, and adjusts the nutritive and protective qi (ying and wei).
- Da Zao is sweet, neutral, and enters the spleen and stomach channels. Da Zao tonifies the spleen and stomach, nourishes the nutritive qi, moistens dryness, calms the spirit, and moderates and harmonizes other herbs.

Kidney Damaged by Fear or Fright

Da Bu Yuan Jian

(大補元煎, Great Tonify the Primal Decoction)

This formula tonifies yin and blood, benefits yang and qi, strengthens kidney jing, and invigorates the spleen. This is applicable for patients with severe depletion of yuan (source) qi and blood with kidney jing deficiency.

For patients presenting with uterine prolapse, erectile dysfunction, soreness and weakness in the lower back, severe lower abdominal distention, urinary frequency that worsens at night, and tinnitus. Additional symptoms include nocturnal emission, profuse pink menstrual discharge, nocturia, hearing loss, dizziness, forgetfulness, weakness of the lower limbs, and a lack of spirit. The tongue is pale-red with a normal coating, and the pulse is deep and frail or deep and slow.

Ren Shen (人參, Radix Ginseng)	3–10g
Shan Yao (山药, Rhizoma Dioscoreae)	6–18g
Shu Di Huang (熟地黄, Radix Rehmanniae Preparata)	9–30g
Du Zhong (杜仲, Cortex Eucommiae)	6–15g
Dang Gui (当归, Radix Angelicae Sinensis)	6–12g
Shan Zhu Yu (山茱萸, Fructus Corni)	3–30g
Gou Qi Zi (枸杞子, Fructus Lycii)	6–12g
Zhi Gan Cao (炙甘草, Radix Glycyrrhizae Preparata)	3–9g

Ingredient functions:

- Ren Shen (人參): powerfully tonifies yuan qi and strengthens the spleen and stomach qi. it is particularly effective when combined with Shu Di Huang for severe qi and blood deficiencies resulting from blood loss and qi and yin deficiencies.

- Shan Yao (山药): tonifies the spleen, nourishes stomach yin, stops diarrhea, and strengthens kidney yin while astringing jing. it works synergistically with other herbs to address kidney deficiency symptoms like night sweats and spermatorrhea.
- Shu Di Huang (熟地黄): a vital herb for nourishing blood, liver and kidney yin, and jing, while also filling the marrow. combined with Dang Gui, it addresses blood deficiency symptoms like dizziness and menstrual dysfunction. together with Shan Zhu Yu and Shan Yao, it strengthens kidney and liver yin, alleviating symptoms such as weak back, erectile dysfunction, and night sweats.
- Du Zhong (杜仲): tonifies the kidneys and liver, strengthens sinews and bones, and supports kidney yang. it is an important herb for addressing musculoskeletal weaknesses and back pain.
- Dang Gui (当归): tonifies blood and regulates the menses while invigorating and harmonizing blood flow. it also disperses cold, alleviating pain caused by blood stasis. paired with Shu Di Huang, it effectively addresses blood deficiency.
- Shan Zhu Yu (山茱萸): stabilizes the kidneys, astringes jing, and tonifies liver and kidney yin. it also strengthens kidney yang and stabilizes the menses, making it effective for urinary frequency, tinnitus, and lower back pain when combined with Shu Di Huang and Shan Yao.
- Gou Qi Zi (枸杞子): nourishes and tonifies liver and kidney blood and yin, while benefiting jing. it is particularly effective when combined with Shu Di Huang for treating liver and kidney deficiencies.
- Zhi Gan Cao (炙甘草): tonifies the spleen and augments qi while moderating and harmonizing the properties of other herbs in the formula, ensuring a balanced and effective treatment.

Additional Conditions

There are other conditions wherein impotence is a secondary disorder, including a variety of additional diagnoses such as cold and dampness, qi and blood stagnation, and spleen and kidney deficiency. Herbal formulas may be modified to account for varying differential diagnostic complexities.

For example, for spleen and kidney deficiency, appropriate herbs include Shan Yao and Rou Gui. For qi and blood stagnation, examples include Mo Yao, Tao Ren, and Chi Shao to address this diagnostic pattern.

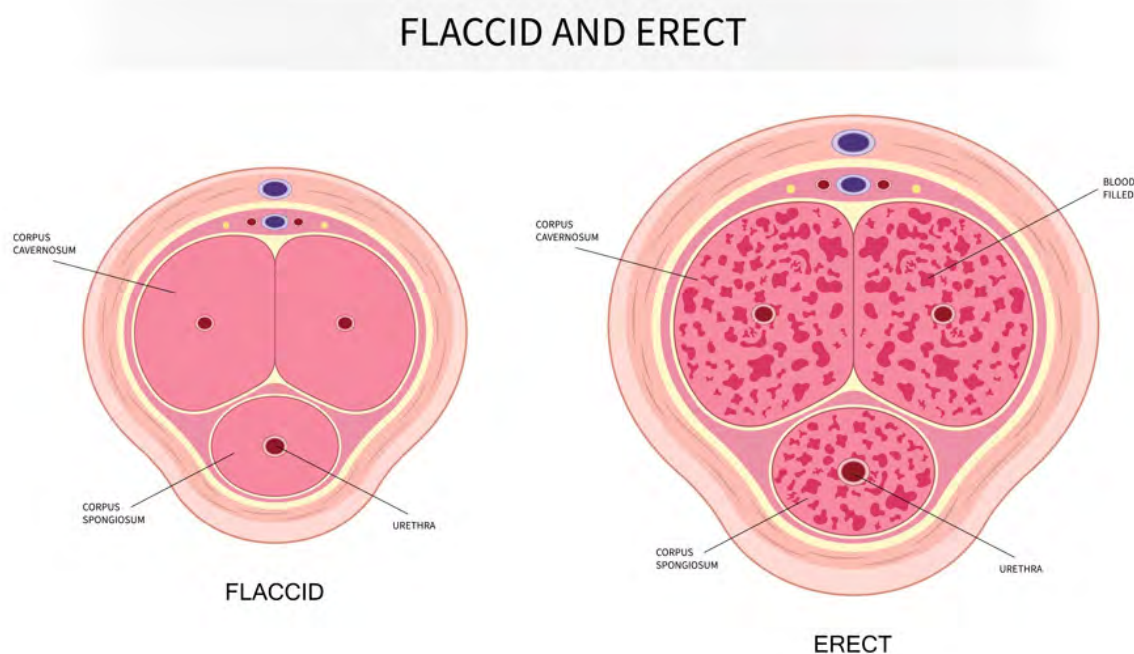
Summary

Acupuncture and herbs are powerful tools to help patients with ED. In addition, other aspects of Chinese medicine including dietetics, qi gong, tai ji, tui na, and lifestyle balance are important considerations when conversing with patients.

Research

Before completing our course materials, let's review research on this topic on the following page:

Acupuncture For Erectile Dysfunction Research



A recent randomized controlled trial (RCT) conducted at Xiyuan Hospital, China Academy of Chinese Medical Sciences, demonstrated significant benefits of acupuncture for psychogenic erectile dysfunction (pED). Researchers found that acupuncture treatments led to notable improvements in erectile function and psychological symptoms compared to sham acupuncture treatments.¹

Study Design and Methods

The RCT involved 66 male participants, aged 20–50, who were diagnosed with pED. These participants were randomly assigned to either the acupuncture group (n = 33) or the sham acupuncture group (n = 33). Both groups underwent treatments three times a week for six weeks, totaling 18 sessions. Researchers conducted follow-up assessments four weeks after the final session to evaluate the sustainability of the outcomes.

1. Yu, L., Zhang, Q., & Zhao, X. "Acupuncture for Psychogenic Erectile Dysfunction: A Randomized Controlled Trial." *Journal of Traditional Chinese Medicine*, vol. 45, no. 2, 2024, pp. 89–98.

Acupuncture Procedure

A structured acupuncture protocol targeted key points associated with erectile function and emotional well-being. The specific acupoints included:

- **GV20 (Baihui):** At the vertex of the head, traditionally used to calm the mind and alleviate psychological distress.
- **PC6 (Neiguan):** On the inner forearm, 2 cun proximal to the wrist crease, associated with calming the spirit and regulating the heart.
- **CV4 (Guanyuan) and CV3 (Zhongji):** Both located on the lower abdomen along the midline, known for strengthening kidney essence and addressing reproductive health. These are important acupoints, often combined with CV6 (Qihai) and ST36 (Zusanli), for many types of erectile dysfunction (ED).
- **KD12 (Dahe):** On the lower abdomen, 0.5 cun lateral to the midline, associated with tonifying the kidneys.
- **KD3 (Taixi):** Posterior to the medial malleolus, in the depression between the malleolus and the Achilles tendon, renowned for kidney-tonifying effects.
- **LV3 (Taichong):** On the dorsum of the foot, distal to the junction of the first and second metatarsal bones, used for liver qi regulation and tension relief.

Sterile, single-use stainless steel needles (0.25 mm gauge, 40 mm length) were inserted perpendicularly to a depth of 10–30 mm, depending on the acupoint and the patient's anatomy. Needles were retained for 30 minutes per session, and manual stimulation was used to elicit the *deqi* sensation—characterized by numbness, distention, or heaviness at the needle site.

Control Group: Sham Acupuncture

Participants in the sham acupuncture group received superficial needle insertions at non-acupoint locations, ensuring minimal therapeutic effects. This design maintained participant blinding and minimized placebo responses.

Outcomes and Measures

The primary outcome was the International Index of Erectile Function-5 (IIEF-5) score, a widely accepted measure of erectile function. Secondary outcomes included:

- Erection Hardness Score (EHS).
- Sexual Encounter Profile questions 2 and 3 (SEP-2 and SEP-3), which assess penetration ability and sexual satisfaction.
- Psychological assessments via the Self-Rating Anxiety Scale (SAS) and Self-Rating Depression Scale (SDS).

Outcomes were measured at baseline, during treatment (weeks 2, 4, and 6), and at a follow-up four weeks post-treatment.

Results and Findings

Participants in the acupuncture group demonstrated significant improvements in IIEF-5 scores from baseline to week 6, with sustained benefits observed at the follow-up. Improvements in EHS, SEP-2, and SEP-3 scores further indicated enhanced erection hardness and satisfaction during sexual activity.

Psychological measures revealed that acupuncture also alleviated anxiety and depression, as indicated by reduced SAS and SDS scores. These results highlight the dual physical and emotional benefits of acupuncture for pED.

From a biomedical perspective, the study documented reductions in serum cortisol levels in the acupuncture group, reflecting a decrease in stress, which is a major contributor to psychogenic erectile dysfunction. Additionally, functional MRI (fMRI) scans showed enhanced activity in the prefrontal cortex and limbic system regions, correlating with improved psychological and sexual function.

Clinical Recommendations for Practitioners

The trial provides a replicable treatment protocol for licensed acupuncturists:

- **Frequency:** 18 sessions (three per week for six weeks).
- **Needling Technique:** Perpendicular insertions, depths varying by acupoint; manual stimulation to elicit *deqi*.
- **Key Acupoints:** GV20, PC6, CV4, CV3, KD12, KD3, and LV3.
- **Needles:** 0.25 mm gauge, 40 mm length.

The study underscores the importance of consistent treatment frequency and careful acupoint selection to maximize therapeutic outcomes.

Safety and Adverse Events

Acupuncture treatments were well-tolerated, with minimal adverse events. Two participants experienced mild dizziness post-treatment, which resolved without intervention. One participant reported slight bruising at the needle site, which healed within days. No serious adverse events were reported, reaffirming the safety profile of acupuncture for this population.

Conclusion

This RCT adds to the growing body of evidence supporting acupuncture as an effective and safe treatment for psychogenic erectile dysfunction. By targeting specific acupoints and addressing both physical and psychological aspects of the condition, acupuncture offers a holistic and minimally invasive alternative to pharmacological interventions. Further research with larger sample sizes and extended follow-up periods will solidify its role in clinical practice.

Source: Yu, L., Zhang, Q., & Zhao, X. "Acupuncture for Psychogenic Erectile Dysfunction: A Randomized Controlled Trial." *Journal of Traditional Chinese Medicine*, vol. 45, no. 2, 2024, pp. 89–98.

Thank you for reviewing this course material.



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