Female Infertility

Biomedicine

Infertility is the term applied to a female’s inability to produce children while impotence is the term applied to men who are unable to produce sperm which will fertilize an egg. In western medicine there are 2 types of female infertility:

1. Primary infertility
   Per biomedicine, if a woman who has never been pregnant before and has been trying unsuccessfully to conceive (unprotected intercourse) for more than a year she has a diagnosis of primary infertility. Compare this to TCM which says that a woman is infertile (primary) if she has been trying for 2 years unsuccessfully to conceive. This is usually the result of Kidney xu of either yin, yang, or essence.

2. Secondary infertility:
   Per biomedicine, if a woman has been pregnant in the past, but has been trying to conceive for 1-2 years unsuccessfully, then she is infertile for secondary reasons. This can also be the result of reasons such as fibroids (blood stasis and/or blockage of the Ren/Chong), artificial abortion, miscarriage.

Note that sterility is the inability to produce offspring, which would include inability to conceive (female sterility) or inability to induce conception (male sterility).

The etiology is said to be one of the following:

- Hormone disorder – 41%
  This will show in irregular menses. One must have at least 3 months of regular menstrual cycles in order to get pregnant.
- Fallopian tube disorder (blockage) – 32%
- Cervical and vaginal disorder – 8%
- Uterine disorder – 15%
- Other disorders/reasons – 4%
Etiology of Female Infertility

Female infertility can be the result of the following etiologies:

1. Congenital Essence Deficiency
   The term *Tian Gui* is “heavenly water,” the material substance of both menstrual blood and sperm. The Kidney essence is the origin of the formation of *Tian Gui*. *Tian Gui* is in charge of growth of reproductive organs. A deficiency of congenital essence leads to a deficiency of *Tian Gui*. This refers especially to primary infertility.

2. Emotional Disorder
   The Liver is one of the blood chambers of the body and is charge of separation and discharge of the female reproductive egg. If the Liver is affected by emotional disorder the result is Liver Qi Stagnation, leading to blood stasis and thus dysfunction of this blood chamber and the separation/discharge of the egg.

3. Diet
   Two possibilities resulting from poor diet:
   a. Blood deficiency
   b. Damp-phlegm retention. This is Yin pathogen blocking Chong or Ren, especially if the patient is overweight.

4. Other
   Other factors can lead to miscarriage and artificial abortion. Consider these possibilities:
   a. Overworking leading to Kidney and other deficiencies
   b. Strong smells
      Pregnant women should stay away from strong smells, especially pungent incenses. These can contain blood moving herbs which stir both the Blood and Qi which can cause fetal instability. Inhalation of herbs is much stronger and faster than taking them orally!
   c. Constitutional weakness
   d. Cold invasion
   e. Physical trauma

As a side note, winter time is the best time to conceive, as the Kidney’s essence is supposed to be strongest at this time, rendering the baby’s essence much stronger if conceived at this time. This is a Yin time of rest and accumulation of Essence.

Mechanism of Female Infertility

Deficiency or Excess of Chong and Ren Channels.
Discussion

Tian Gui, as previously mentioned, is reliant upon congenital Kidney Essence. Kidney Essence stimulates the production of Kidney Qi which in turn stimulates the production Kidney Yang. Kidney Essence also stimulates the creation of Kidney Yin. Note the following symptom generalizations about deficiency of these:

- If one has a Kidney essence or Qi deficiency, there will be a lack of heat or cold signs/symptoms
- If one has a Kidney yin deficiency there will be empty heat signs
- If one has Kidney yang deficiency, there will be empty cold signs

The Liver and Kidney are in charge of the hormonal system. Remember that the Kidney is the congenital organ of importance for men while the Liver is the most important organ for women.

The extra meridians, Du, Chong, and Ren, all originate from the uterus. Du is primarily for male infertility while Ren and Chong are used for female infertility. Because of this:

- For an essence or yin deficiency, treat the Ren meridian
- For Blood disorders, either excess or deficient, treat the Chong meridian
- For deficiency types, needle the single master point, which is for tonifying that meridian.
- For excesses, open the extra points (coupling points for needling), which is a regulating treatment.

There is an herbal prescription for female infertility developed by Dr. Wu:

Ze he che or tai pan (placenta) – take this as a powder daily one week to 10 days before ovulation and up to ovulation. The dose is 2 scoops BID early morning or late at night. You can also encapsulate it and take 4 BID or add it to other herbs in a formula.

Differential Diagnosis and Treatment

Excesses causing female infertility include cold in the uterus, phlegm damp obstruction, Liver Qi stagnation, and Blood stasis. Deficient reasons include Kidney deficiencies, and Heart/Spleen deficiencies. The latter is a Heart Blood deficiency coupled with a Spleen Qi deficiency.

Bear in mind that this is always a disorder of Ren and Chong, so be sure to regulate them.

Basic Points:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ren 4</th>
<th>This is also called the Lower Dantian, the sea of Qi in the lower body. As such, it is a very important point to tonify the Kidney. Use it to:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Promote and foster original Qi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Benefit the Essence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Fortify Kidney Yang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Nourish Kidney Yin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ren 6</td>
<td>This too is referred to as the Lower Sea of Qi and treats Qi deficiencies as well as reproductive problems.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Zigong

Zigong is the “Palace of the Child.” It is used to treat infertility and irregular menstruation.

SP 4

SP 4 is the confluent point of the Chong channel, which addressed infertility and irregular menstruation.

SP 6

SP 6 is the meeting point of all 3 lower Yin channels. It treats blood disorders as well as female and male reproductive disorders and tonifies Yin. Be sure your patient is not preggers because this can cause restless fetus.

SP 9

SP 9 is excellent for damp issues, but also for reproductive issues.

SP 10

SP 10 is the Sea of Blood. Ok, yes, there are several “sea of bloods” in the body, but this is a great point to treat all kinds of blood issues – heat, stasis and deficiency -- that might be causing infertility.

Kidney Deficiencies

This can be deficiency of Kidney Yin, Yang, Qi or Essence causing infertility. Symptoms are outlined in the column to the left while treatment principles and points are in column on the left.

| Yang Xu | Strengthen Kidney  
| Strengthen Chong and Ren Channels |
| --- | --- |
| Cold extremities | Basic points plus… |
| Aversion to intercourse | KI 3, GB 39, UB 23, UB 52, DU 4 |
| Qi Xu | Also: |
| Weakness of the lower back or knees | ST 36, ST 29 for prolonged cycles |
| Fatigue | KID 13 to nourish Chong, tonify Kidney, strengthen uterus |
| Yin Xu | UB 52 to tonify Kidney and nourish essence |
| Prolonged or shortened menstrual cycle with pale, scanty menstrual discharge | LU 7 to regulate Ren, strengthen uterus and Kidney |
| Urination: Frequent, copious, often nighttime urination. | Herbal formula is yu lin zhu, Unicorn Rearing Pill |
| Dizziness | |
| Tinnitus | |

Tongue: Pale, swollen, wet  
Pulse: Weaker, deeper in 3rd position

Discussion:

- **Kidney 3** is the principle point to tonify the kidney and to nourish the Chong and Ren since they have their root in (note, I did not say “originate from”) and are nourished by the Kidney.
- **GB 39** is the meeting point of marrow. One reason to use this is that it helps smoothe the Liver qi, but it’s not a strong enough indication for that really…I believe Dr. Luo said to use it to nourish Kidney essence, but you might want to ask him about that before taking my word for it.
- **UB 23** is the back shu of the Kidney and treats all of the deficiencies (yin, yang, essence, qi).
- **UB 52** is on the same level as 23 and also tonifies the Kidney.
DU 4 is the Mingmen or Gate of Life and again is on the same level as UB 23 and UB 52. It tonifies the Kidney, treats reproductive problems and Yang deficiency.

Heart and Spleen Deficiency

This is Heart Blood Xu plus Spleen Qi Xu. Symptoms are outlined in the column to the left while treatment principles and points are in column on the left.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symptoms</th>
<th>Treatment Principles and Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Infertility lasting for a long time</td>
<td>Treatment principles:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inability to conceive</td>
<td>Tonify Spleen Qi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heart symptoms:</td>
<td>Nourish Heart Blood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Palpitations</td>
<td>Strengthen Chong and Ren channels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Insomnia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Poor memory</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Bad concentration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blood symptoms:</td>
<td>Points:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Scanty light menses</td>
<td>Basic points, plus…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Dizziness</td>
<td>ST 28, UB 20, UB 21, UB 17, UB 15, Ren 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Pale complexion</td>
<td>ST 36, KID 13, UB 23, Ren 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Blurred vision</td>
<td>Herbal Formula: Ba Zhen Tang or Eight Precious Decoction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spleen Qi deficiency symptoms:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Poor appetite</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Fatigue</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Shortness of breath</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Depression</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tongue: Pale and thin with a thin white coat</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pulse: Weak and thin or fine and choppy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion

- **ST 28** activates the lower jiao and dispels stagnation. It is also local to the uterus, treating dysmenorrhea, infertility, cold congealing the uterus.
- **UB 15** is the Back Shu of the Heart. It tonifies and nourishes the heart, regulates the Heart Qi, calms the spirit and unbinds the chest. It is indicated for palpitations, shortness of breath, poor memory, anxiety, insomnia and dream disturbed sleep and depression. UB 15 also tonifies deficiencies
- **UB 17** is the Hui Meeting Point of Blood. This point invigorates blood and dispels stasis, cools the blood, nourishes and harmonizes the Blood. This point is used for chest oppression, depression (as well as mania), deficiency of Blood,
- **UB 20** is the Back Shu of the Spleen. This point tonifies Spleen Qi, regulates and harmonizes the Qi of the Middle Jiao, raises Spleen Qi and hold the blood. The Spleen provides the post-natal Qi. Without proper Spleen Qi this function is impaired. Without proper post-natal Qi to support the congenital Qi and without the ability to hold the blood, the body is unable to support a fetus.
UB 21 is the Back Shu of the Stomach. This point regulates the functions of the Stomach and harmonizes the Middle Jiao. The Stomach itself is the “Sea of water and grain” and is coupled with the Spleen in the provision of post natal Qi to the body.

Ren 14 is the Front Mu Point of the Heart, the complement to UB 15, with many of the functions and actions overlapping. Ren 14 can also assist in treating the shortness of breath symptom above.

ST 36 is a primary point for the treatment of Spleen Qi Xu. It is indicated for all types of problems related to Spleen Qi xu including Spleen Qi and Blood deficiency. It also helps to calm Shen disturbance causing poor memory, sleep disorders, and depression.

KI 13 is one of the meeting points of the Kidney channel with the Chong channel. The application for this point is the treatment of reproductive disorders. It is used to regulate the Ren and Chong vessels and to regulate the Lower Jiao. It is indicated for infertility and irregular menstruation.

UB 23 is the back shu of the Kidney and treats all of the deficiencies (yin, yang, essence, qi).

Ren 12 is the Front Mu of the Stomach as well as the Hui Meeting Point of Fu. It harmonizes the Middle Jiao and tonifies the Spleen and Stomach.

**Cold in the Uterus**

Symptoms are outlined in the column to the left while treatment principles and points are in column on the left.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symptoms</th>
<th>Treatment Principles and Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Typically, external cold pathogen causing severe dysmenorrhea with cold sensations, severe pain, retarded or late menses, and dark red clots. | Treatment principles:  
- Warm Uterus  
- Expel external Cold pathogen  
- Regulate Chong and Ren Channels |
| Inability to conceive | Points:  
- Basic points, plus… |
| Pain relieved by heat, worse with cold |  
- DU 4, REN 4 with Moxa  
- UB 12 and UB 13 with Moxa |
| Cold extremities |  
- Ren 2 with Moxa to scatter cold  
- KI 7 and UB 23 to tonify Kidney Yang |
| If still has the external cold will have shivering and chills. |  
- Ren 7 to nourish Kidney and strengthen uterus. |
| Pale face |  |

**Tongue:** Normal or pale and swollen with a thin white coat.  
**Pulse:** slow and deep. If more Yang, then slow and weak.

**Discussion**

- **Du 4**, the Mingmen or Gate of Life, tonifies the Kidney and treats reproductive problems. It also has a strong effect upon Yang Qi and ministerial fire, tonifying and warming the fire, especially with the addition of Moxa. The Mingmen also connects with the uterus.

- **Ren 4** is also called the Lower Dantian, one of the seas of Qi in the body. In addition to the Kidney tonifying benefits mentioned in the Basic Point, it is also the meeting point of
the Conception/Ren channel with the Spleen, Liver and Kidney channels, benefiting the uterus and assisting in conception. Adding moxa to the treatment of this point is effective in alleviating cold in the uterus. Kidney deficiency can lead to coldness in the Uterus, or Palace of the Child, resulting in the infertility under discussion in this section. Moxibustion here will not only assist in nourishing and tonifying the Kidneys, but will also warm the uterus and Spleen.

As a fun aside, Ren 7 through Ren 4 are considered to be the residence of the deepest energies of the body, touching the energies that move between the Kidneys – the Gate of Life. This is the basis of human life, the source of the Zangfu, the door of respiration and the origin of the San Jiao.

As another fun aside, did you know that Dantian has been translated as “Cinnabar Field?” That may not seem interesting unless you know that cinnabar is another word for mercury and that mercury when purified properly by a master alchemist is said to give incredible longevity and health. It has been called the Sorcerer’s Stone by alchemists. Sun Simiao, the dude we studied in Foundations long ago, was not only the Herb King, but an alchemist who is said to have lived well over 100 years, having successfully purified and ingested mercury. Legend has it that when he died his body did not decay. Read In Search of the Medicine Buddha on your next break if this sparks your interest. I should be done with it and will have returned it to the library by then.

- **UB 12** is the Wind Gate, used to expel pathogenic factors from the body. External pathogenic factors can obstruct the body’s defensive Qi, impairing its warming function. Moxibustion is the best solution for Wind Cold invasions at this point.
- **UB 13** is the Back Shu of the Lung. This point is also used to expel external pathogens from the body. Use it with Moxa like UB 12.
- **Ren 2** warms and invigorates the Kidneys. It is used to treat a wide array of genital and urinary disorders and gynecological diseases.
- **KI 7** is the Jing Well of the Kidney Channel, controlling the flow of fluids and blood as well as the flow of defensive Qi which is part of original Qi and emanates from the lower jiao. OK, I’ll admit I’m shaky on this, so I’d ask Dr. Luo for sure, but Deadman says that KI 7 has wide applications in regulating the opening and closing of sweating pores which also helps regulate heat. Could this help regulate and alleviate the cold affecting the uterus?
- **UB 23** is the Back Shu of the Kidney. It tonifies the Kidneys, fortifies Yang, benefits essence, nourishes Kidney yin and Kidney qi, and warms/benefits the Uterus. It is indicated for accumulation of Cold in women and chronic cold of the Uterus.
- **Ren 7** is a point at which the Ren and Chong channels meet together with the Kidney channel. It treats cold disorders in the uterus as well as deficiency, excess, heat, exterior pathogens and interior disharmony.
Obstruction by Phlegm-Damp

This is typically true in overweight patients or patients with high cholesterol. Symptoms are outlined in the column to the left while treatment principles and points are in column on the left.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symptoms</th>
<th>Treatment Principles and Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| ❖ Profuse vaginal discharge  
❖ Blockage of fallopian tubes  
❖ Inability to conceive  
❖ Prolonged menstrual cycle and in some severe cases, amenorrhea  
❖ May be overweight  
❖ Chest distention with profuse mucous and phlegm  
❖ Heavy sensation  
❖ Nausea/vomiting  
❖ Dizziness and vertigo  
Tongue: normal or pale and swollen with a thick white or yellow greasy coating  
Pulse: slippery | Treatment principles:  
❖ Remove Damp Phlegm  
❖ Open the Chong and Ren channels  
Points:  
❖ Basic points, plus…  
❖ ST 40, Ren 12, Ren 17, PC 6  
❖ Ren 3 to strengthen the uterus and resolve dampness  
❖ ST 28, SP 9, SP 6, and Ren 9 to resolve dampness  
❖ LU7 + KI 6 to regulate Ren and strengthen the uterus  
❖ ST 30 to regulate Chong, also invigorates Blood to transform water  
❖ UB 32 drains damp from the genital system |

Herbal formula: Qi Gong Wan or Uterus Opening Pill

Discussion

❖ **ST 40** is the most important point in the body to resolve phlegm. Phlegm occurs when the Spleen’s transportation and transformation function is impaired, allowing body fluids to collect and over time change to phlegm. The Spleen should be regulated in any phlegm condition. Because this point is the Luo connecting point, it also connects with the Spleen channel.

❖ **Ren 12** is the Front Mu of the Stomach as well as the Hui Meeting Point of Fu. It harmonizes the Middle Jiao and tonifies the Spleen and Stomach. Proper function of the Spleen and Stomach are imperative when resolving phlegm as stated above. This also treats the symptoms of nausea and vomiting.

❖ **Ren 17** is the Front Mu of the Pericardium and the Hui Meeting Point of Qi. In this case, Ren 17 regulates the proper flow of Qi, assisting the Qi of the middle jiao in descending properly. This in turn benefits the harmony of the Stomach which again assists in the resolution of phlegm. This point will also help treat nausea and vomiting by assisting in the descent of Qi.

❖ **PC 6** has a powerful effect upon the middle jiao and is important to harmonize the Stomach and alleviate nausea and vomiting.

❖ **Ren 3** is the Front Mu of the Bladder and is another of the meeting points of the Ren channel with the Spleen, Liver and Kidney channels. It drains dampness, assisting the
resolution of phlegm, dispels stagnation and benefits the lower jiao, predominantly in excess patterns

- **ST 28**, also called “Water Passage,” has an action of regulating the lower jiao and dispelling stagnation. Sun Simiao, our own personal Herb Saint, referred to the left ST 28 as the Gate of the Uterus and to the right ST 28 as the Child’s Door. Combine that together and there is an implication that this point could get rid of accumulation/stagnation affecting the uterus. Hmmm. It also drains off dampness which could exacerbate the condition of phlegm blocking the uterus.

- **SP 9** is the He Sea and Water point of the Spleen channel. It is essential in the treatment of dampness and Spleen disorder, especially in the lower jiao.

Liver Qi Stagnation

Symptoms are outlined in the column to the left while treatment principles and points are in column on the left.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symptoms</th>
<th>Treatment Principles and Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clearly related to an emotional disorder</td>
<td>Treatment principles:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infertility with PMS and irritability</td>
<td>- Soothe Liver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irregular, late or absent periods</td>
<td>- Promote circulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Premenstrual depression and tension</td>
<td>- Regulate Chong and Ren Channels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Painful periods</td>
<td>Points:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sighing a lot</td>
<td>- Basic points, plus…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depression in general</td>
<td>- Four gates: LI 4 + LV 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breast tenderness</td>
<td>- GB 34, LV 14, UB 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tongue: normal</td>
<td>Herbal formulas:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pulse: wiry</td>
<td>- Jia Wei Xiao Yao San</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Kai Yu Zhong Yu Tang or Depression Opening Jade Plant Decoction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion

- Four gates (LI 4 + LV 3)
- GB 34
- LV 14
- UB 18
Blood Stasis

Symptoms are outlined in the column to the left while treatment principles and points are in column on the left.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symptoms</th>
<th>Treatment Principles and Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inability to conceive</td>
<td>Treatment principles:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irregular or delayed menses</td>
<td>❖ Invigorate Blood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Painful periods</td>
<td>❖ Remove stasis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower abdominal pain, worse with pressure</td>
<td>❖ Soothe Liver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dark blood (purplish black) with dark clots</td>
<td>❖ Regulate menses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irritability</td>
<td>Points:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental restlessness or manic behavior</td>
<td>❖ Basic points, plus…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tongue: dark purple with spots or patches</td>
<td>❖ UB 17, ST 20, LU 7 + KI 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pulse: wiry or choppy</td>
<td>❖ LV 3, GB 34, KI 14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Herbal formula: Shao Fu Zhu Yu Tang or Lesser Abdomen Stasis Expelling Decoction

Discussion

❖ UB 17
❖ ST 20
❖ LU 7 and KI 6
❖ LV 3
❖ GB 34
❖ KI 14

Regarding Treatment Principles:
There are four phases of the menstrual cycle. Adjust your treatments to the phase your patient is in when she comes to see you.

1. Period phase:
   Regulate menstruation. Stop the period if it is heavy or invigorate Blood if the period is scanty.

2. Post-menstrual phase:
   Nourish Blood and tonify the Kidney

3. Inter-menstrual phase:
   Tonify the Kidney and consolidate Ren and Chong

4. Pre-menstrual phase:
   Tonify Yang and move the Liver Qi
Li, Female Age 25

She suffered from infertility for 4 years. She had profuse, white, watery vaginal discharge. She had pale complexion, fatigue, profuse clear and frequent urination, chronic loose stools, edema in the lower extremities, lower back pain, pale and swollen tongue with sticky white coating. Her pulse was slow and weak.

1. The differential diagnosis for this case is:
   a. Liver overacting on Spleen with lower pouring of dampness
   b. Spleen and Kidney Yang xu with dampness
   c. Spleen and Kidney Qi xu with damp retention
   d. Liver and Kidney Yin xu with damp phlegm retention.

2. Which group of points for this case?
   a. LI 4, LI 11, SJ 5, ST 44, GB 41, GB 34, LV 2, BL 26
   b. SP 6, BL 23, DU 4, ST 36, SP 9, GB 26, BL 32
   c. GB 26, ST 34, GB 37, LV 5, H7, P6, SI 3, LI 10
   d. GB 26, BL 17, BL 13, DU 14, GB 20, LI 15, GB 34
Male Impotence

In TCM this is called *Yang Wei*. Hmmm. That rings a bell, doesn’t it? Ah yes. There’s a whole channel called Yang Wei too. In this case it means “Yang Flacidity” Syndrome.

Definition

By definition, impotence is the inability of a man to sustain an erection sufficient for sexual intercourse and/or the inability to achieve ejaculation. Levels of these dysfunctions can vary: there may be a total inability, inconsistent ability, or a tendency to sustain only very brief erections. While there is no total agreement on this issue, generally, if one has this problem for 3 months or more, then the dude has a problem.

Discussion

While Yin and Blood are triggers for female infertility, it is Yang and Qi which are the triggers for male impotence. The most important organ for men is the Kidney.

- Externally the Kidney controls the scrotum, testicles and penis.
- Internally the kidneys control the Kidneys themselves as well as the prostate.

Note that the penis and scrotum are also related to the Liver. The penis, or “yang instrument” as described in the *Nei Jing* is the place of convergence for sinews and ligaments. The term penis in Chinese is called the “Zong Jing” or the convergence (zong) of ligaments (jing). About 15% of all cases of impotence have an organic cause; emotional causes springing from a Liver disharmony (or causing a Liver disharmony) are the more common cause.

*Infertility* in males includes but is not exclusively impotence. Be sure you can differentiate between infertility and impotence. Men need both Yin and Yang in order to have fertility. Yin provides essence and thus sperm while Yang gives this sperm motility. When a male is infertile this includes deficiencies of Yin, Blood, and Essence (or quantity, quality, and function) of sperm. Impotence however is more related to Qi and Yang deficiencies.

Left Axis

On the left side of the body or left axis you find the Heart, Liver, and Kidney Yin. Also on the left are the endocrine system, nerve system and emotion.

Right Axis

On the right side of the body or right axis, you find the Lung, Spleen, and Kidney Yang. Also on the right are the reproductive system, urinary system and immune systems.

TCM Etiology

- Emotional Disorders
  
  About 85% of impotence cases are functional rather than organic. The emotions of anxiety, guilt, sadness, depression, stress, fright, and frustration all contribute as causes of impotence. This causes a Liver Qi stagnation which blocks the channel and results in failure to have or sustain an erection.
Overwork
Too much work taxes the Kidneys, the most important organ for men. This includes excessive sexual intercourse or masturbation (damn!).

Western medications
Medications for stress, high blood pressure and anti-depressants are known to cause sexual dysfunction in men.

Mechanism of Impotence

Liver Qi Stagnation
This results in failure to support the movements of sinews and ligaments. Refer back to the discussion at the beginning of this section for more specific info on this.

Kidney Qi and Yang deficiencies failing to support function of external kidneys.
Externally the Kidney controls the scrotum, testicles and penis.

Lower pouring of damp heat blocks the channels

Differential Diagnosis and Treatment of Impotence

Differentiations of both deficiency and excess can be cited in impotence. Deficiencies can include Spleen and Kidney Qi xu as well as Spleen and Kidney Yang xu. Excesses can include Liver Qi Yu and Lower pouring of damp heat.

As with all disease studied so far, there are a basic set of points you use in addition to the points specified below for the differential diagnoses.

Basic Points

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ren-4, 6</th>
<th>Jing gong</th>
<th>BL-23, DU-4, Ba liao</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Discussion

Ren 4 is the Guan Yuan or “gate of origin”. It is also one of the points in the area of the dantian. This point promotes and fosters the original Qi, benefits essence, fortifies KI yang, nourishes KI yin, and is extremely important to tonify the Kidneys.

Ren 6 is the lower “Sea of Qi” and is good to use for general Qi deficiencies and for Qi stagnations.

Frankly, I’m not sure if this is what Dr. Luo was referring to, but Jinggong is another name in Chinese for BL 52. This name has to do with this point’s ability to fortify Kidney Qi and Yang, control sexual function and discharge of semen, so it is used to treat impotence.

Back Shu of the Kidney.
### Classic point used to tonify kidneys including kidney yang xu, yin xu, Qi xu, and essence xu. BL 23 is also used for all kinds of reproductive problems.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Point</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Du 4</td>
<td>This is the Mingmen or “gate of life” point. The Mingmen is where Kidney essence and Qi are stored. Use this point to tonify kidneys for both impotence and male infertility. Also tonifies the Kidney Yang.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ba liao</td>
<td>Ba liao points are almost local points and are used to treat reproductive problems.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Spleen and Kidney Qi Deficiency

This is one of the chronic problems which cause impotence. Symptoms are listed in the left column while treatment principles and points are listed on the right.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qi Xu w/ SP &amp; KID Qi: Xu signs:</th>
<th><strong>Tonify SP &amp; KID Qi; Benefit/Strengthen External Kidneys</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| - Impotence, infertility  
- Fatigue; tiredness; poor appetite; loose stool or diarrhea; gas & bloating in the abdomen  
- Incontinence or profuse, frequent urination; low back pain; worse after orgasm  
- Sinking sensation in the lower abdomen  
- Pale face; may have SOB  
- “Palace therapy” – qigong to prevent loss of Qi | Basic +  
KID-3; SP-6; ST-36; UB-20, 21  
If impotence is predominant Sx:  
Use moxa for preventative tx  
[not for long term: if begin to feel: 1) thirsty, 2) have insomnia/poor sleep, 3) dark, yellow urination or constipation – stop moxa! B/c the PT is not Yang Xu yet!]  
UB-52; REN-17 |
| T: Pale, swollen w/ tm  
P: Deep, weak  
C: Thin, white |  

#### Discussion of Points

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<thead>
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| KI 3  | Yuan source of the KI channel, best and most common clinical application point to tonify and treat disharmony of the Kidney Zang.  
*Just for giggles, note that some works says that KI 3 is best related to Kidney Qi, KI 6 to Kidney Yin, and KI 17 (and/or Du 4) to Kidney Yang.* |
| SP 6  | This is the meeting point of Spleen (the source of Qi and Blood), Kidney (which stores Essence) and Liver (which stores Blood and moves Qi). It treats male infertility, impotence and nocturnal emissions by treating Kidney deficiency, Liver Qi stagnation and damp heat. |
| ST 36 | Treats Spleen deficiencies, which we’ve all heard about a million times at this point. |
| UB 20 | Back Shu of the Spleen. Don’t need to go over that one either, eh. |
| UB 21 | Back Shu of the Stomach. |
| UB 52 | Complementary point to BL 23, thus tonifying the Kidney. Jinggong is another name in Chinese for BL 52. This name has to do with this point’s ability to fortify Kidney Qi and Yang, control sexual function and discharge of semen, so it is used to treat impotence. |
| Ren 17 | As the Sea of Qi, this point regulates Qi flow in the body. |
### Spleen and Kidney Yang Xu

This is a problem of deficiency causing impotence. Symptoms are listed in the left column while treatment principles and points are listed on the right.

| - Worse than Qi Xu | Warm SP & KID Yang: |
| - Impotence, failure to achieve erection | - Benefit the external kidneys |
| - Premature ejaculation | - Basic + |
| - All of the above Qi Xu Sx, plus: | - Same points as above |
| - Cold extremities, cold pain in the lower back or abdominal, desire for warm drinks | - Add moxa (moxa box is very good on the lower back over DU-4, UB-23 area, or over the Bakao pts) |
| - Profuse, clear, frequent urination | SI-3 + UB-63 for the DU |
| - Morning diarrhea | May add: |
| - Incontinence (more severe) | SP-6; ST-36; REN-17; DU-20; REN-8 |
| - No desire or aversion to sexual intercourse | |
| - May have edema | |

#### T: Pale swollen tongue body

#### C: Wet/moist

#### P: Deep, weak, slow

### Discussion of Points

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>KI 3</strong></th>
<th><strong>SP 6</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Yuan source of the KI channel, best and most common clinical application point to tonify and treat disharmony of the Kidney Zang.</strong></td>
<td><strong>This is the meeting point of Spleen (the source of Qi and Blood), Kidney (which stores Essence) and Liver (which stores Blood and moves Qi). It treats male infertility, impotence and nocturnal emissions by treating Kidney deficiency, Liver Qi stagnation and damp heat.</strong></td>
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*Just for giggles, note that some works says that KI 3 is best related to Kidney Qi, KI 6 to Kidney Yin, and KI 7 (and/or Du 4) to Kidney Yang.*

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<th><strong>ST 36</strong></th>
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<td><strong>Treats Spleen deficiencies, which we’ve all heard about a million times at this point.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Back Shu of the Spleen. Don’t need to go over that one either, eh.</strong></td>
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<th><strong>UB 21</strong></th>
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<td><strong>Back Shu of the Stomach.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Complementary point to BL 23, thus tonifying the Kidney. Jinggong is another name in Chinese for BL 52. This name has to do with this point’s ability to fortify Kidney Qi and Yang, control sexual function and discharge of semen, so it is used to treat impotence.</strong></td>
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<th><strong>Ren 17</strong></th>
<th><strong>SI 3 + UB 63</strong></th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td><strong>As the Sea of Qi, this point regulates Qi flow in the body.</strong></td>
<td><strong>SI 3 is the confluent point of the Du channel…can’t remember how it connects to UB 63 and all the sources I have available right now are silent on the issue. Hmmm. Got any input? Send it to <a href="mailto:cat@catstcmnotes.com">cat@catstcmnotes.com</a> and thank you in advance.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Liver Qi Stagnation
This is an excess causing impotence. Symptoms are listed in the left column while treatment principles and points are listed on the right.

| - Hx of relationship or emotional disorder, or personality (introverted, scared) | Soothe LIV Qi; promote circulation; benefit the external kidneys |
| - Impotence, failure of erection | Basic + |
| - Stress & depression; prefers to be alone | 4 gates; GB-34 (hui of sinews) |
| - Sighing time to time | UB-18, 19 |
| - Distention of the hypochondriac region or breast | |
| - Distending sensation or pain (esp. after intercourse) at root of penis or scrotum & radiates to perineum, groin or hypochondriac region | |
| T: Normal | |
| P: Wiry | |

Discussion of Points

| Four Gates | LI 4 + LV 3 |
| GB 34 | Hui of Sinews. Main point to influence sinews. Soothes Liver. |
| UB 18 | Back Shu of the Liver |
| UB 19 | Back Shu of the Gallbladder |

Lower Pouring of Damp Heat
This is the acute stage of prostatitis and is another excess causing impotence. Symptoms are listed in the left column while treatment principles and points are listed on the right.

| - Related to UTI-type Sx: burning, urgent, frequent and/or painful urination; itchiness | Remove D-H from LI; benefit the external kidneys |
| - Impotence, failure of erection | Basic + |
| - Dark yellow/brown tea/may even be pink urine (if bleeding) | REN-3; UB-28, 22, 39 |
| - Wetness of the scrotum w/ itching or skin rash | ST-28; SP-9; SJ-5 |
| - Bitter taste | If more Heat: LI-11 |
| - If more H: thirsty; If more D: no desire to drink | |
| - May have temporal headaches; restlessness | |
| T: Red, w/ red spots, tm | |
| C: Yellow greasy, may be thick | |
| P: Slippery, wiry, fast | |
**Discussion of Points**

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<tr>
<td>Ren 3</td>
<td>Front Mu of the Bladder. Dispels stagnation and benefits the Lower Jiao, drains dampness and damp heat. Also fortifies the Kidneys. You can aim toward UB 18 and ST 28 when you treat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UB 28</td>
<td>Back Shu of the Bladder. You can aim toward Ren 3 when you needle for better effect. Regulates the Bladder and clears damp heat from the Lower Jiao.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UB 22</td>
<td>Back Shu of the San Jiao. Regulates water passage and promotes urination by regulating the San Jiao, thus regulating dampness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UB 39</td>
<td>Lower He Sea of the San Jiao. ‘Nuf said already.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST 28</td>
<td>This is the water passage point, assisting with damp drainage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP 9</td>
<td>He Sea point of the Spleen Channel. Best point in the body for damp retention and damp heat. All of the Yin He Sea points strongly drain damp (SP 9, KI 10, LV8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SJ 5</td>
<td>Luo of San Jiao and Confluent with Yang Linking. Drains heat, Dr. Luo indicates it for Damp and Heat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LI 11</td>
<td>He Sea of the LI channel. One of the best points to clear heat in the whole body. Cools the blood and helps to drain damp.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Impotence can be treated herbally by tonifying Yang:
- King’s Therapy or Spring Therapy. Spring is a very active and upward moving season. You can warm Yang temporarily, but bear in mind that longer term this can damage Yin. Would you believe animal penises soaked in alcohol for 6 months? Ew.
- Dong chong xia tiao formula
- Silk work cocoon soaked in alcohol…which sounds better than animal penises!

You can also treat with Qigong therapy called “Tie dan gong” which is Qigong and massage to treat infertility.
Wang, Male, Age 20

He suffers from erectile dysfunction, complicated with bitter taste in mouth, thirst, hot and dark red urine, soreness and weakness of lower extremities, wetness in the scrotum, burning and painful urination, slippery and rapid pulse.

1. Which kind of tongue would be inspected for this patient?
   a. Pale and swollen body with teethmarks, thin and moist coat
   b. Normal body with red spots in the tip and sides
   c. Small thin body with map coating
   d. Red tongue body with yellow, sticky coating

2. What is your diagnosis to this case:
   a. Impotence due to Kidney Yang xu
   b. Impotence due to Spleen Qi xu
   c. Disharmony between Heart and Kidney
   d. Impotence due to lower pouring of damp heat

3. Which group of the points is for this case?
   a. BL 23, DU 4, BL 52, RN 4, RN 6
   b. SP 6, ST 36, BL 20, BL 21
   c. KI 3, KI 6, BL 25, LV 3, LI 8, UB 62
   d. LI 11, SJ 5, GB 34, RN 3, BL 28, BL 31-34