Epilepsy

“Dian Xian”

Epilepsy is “Dian Xian” in Chinese. Something like 2.3 million people suffer from it in the US which is a fairly small percentage of the population.

Biomedically, it’s a type of seizure, a transient disturbance of cerebral function due to abnormal paroxysmal neuronal discharge in the brain. In TCM this is related to a Wei Qi disorder. Wei Qi is the carrier of Shen.

There are, generally speaking, 2 types of epilepsy.

- **Partial/Focal Epilepsy**
  The abnormal discharge begins at a specific point and spreads to the rest of the brain. Only a small area of the brain involved in the initial neuronal discharge. Experiences include:
  - Abnormal sensations
  - Movements of the extremities
  - Patient doesn’t lose consciousness.
  - Symptoms vary depending upon what parts of the brain are involved.

- **Generalized Epilepsy**
  This involves the whole cortex, spreads quickly and affects the whole brain at once. Symptoms are more severe and patient loses consciousness. There are 2 sub-types under Generalized Epilepsy.
  - **Grand Mal Seizures**
    Also called tonic-clonic seizures. Very severe condition. Symptoms include:
    - **Tonic stage:**
      - Headache
      - Dizziness
      - Vertigo
      - chest tightness.
    - **Clonic stage:**
      - Sudden strong contractions of the back which may last for just a few seconds
      - falling down and loss of consciousness for a few seconds to a few minutes.
      - Teeth and jaw are clenched, fists clench, tetany, convulsions, upward staring eyes, screaming like a pig or sheep. Might be foaming at the mouth (phlegm - this is due to rebellious Qi passing through retention of dampness/phlegm).
Any seizure lasting more than 5 minutes: call 911.

- Petit Mal Seizures
  Often occurs in kids less than 5 years old. Not as severe as grand mal, lasting about 20-30 seconds. Signs include: eye twitching and staring, etc. for short periods of time. There is no falling down, no loss of consciousness.

Epilepsy is often treated by anti-seizure medications…which often cause permanent disabilities, have a lot of side effects often causing Liver and other organ problems. Sometimes treated with surgery.

Can also be treated by prevention by avoiding known/identified triggers such as lack of sleep, flickering/strobe lights, physical and mental exhaustion, emotional disorder triggering, heat, drugs/alcohol, etc.

### TCM Etiology

Relates to brain and extra channels (yin qiao/yang qiao) and marrow. Don’t do e-stim for epilepsy patients! Tends to induce seizure.

- Emotional Disorder
  Liver Qi stagnation causes the heat to rise.

- Irregular diet
  Causes dampness and phlegm – the foaming at the mouth and noisy symptoms are a reflection of this.

- Overworking
  Physical and mental exhaustion causes LV/KI yin xu, which causes Yang to rise, stimulating the seizures.

### TCM Mechanism

**Rebellious Wei Qi with Retention of Phlegm and Inner Wind**

- Seizures are a release of the abnormal buildup of energy.
- The eyes staring upward is a sign of the rebellion of Wei Qi.
- The foaming at the mouth and chest stuffiness are a reflection of the phlegm retention which the Wei Qi pushes upwards. The tetany is a reflection of the inner wind.
- Clenched teeth/jaw is a manifestation of closing/tense syndrome.
- Fatigue/poor app/poor sleep/pale face
  Qi xu after seizure

Know the highlighted stuff for a fill in the blank!!!
Wei Qi and it’s role in Epilepsy

Wei qi and ying qi are the carriers of the mind. The tetany and tonic signs are a reflection of hyperactivity or rebellious wei qi. A Wei Qi xu causes dysfunction of the extremities. A Ying Qi xu causes numbness of the skin and muscles.

Abnormal flow of Wei Qi in the Yin and Yang Qiao’s affects the eyes (UB 1 is the meeting of Yin and Yang Qiaos and UB channel). Think about the eye twitching, eye staring, eyes rolling upward signs you see in the general list above…

Comparing Epilepsy and Wind-Stroke from Class 7 you’ll see the following:
- Wind-stroke is a blood disorder as well as in epilepsy. The loss of consciousness (often abbreviated LOC) self-recovers quickly in epilepsy, but not necessarily in wind stroke.
- The only extra meridians to enter the brain are the Du channel, Yin Qiao, and Yang Qiao. Since the brain is an “extraordinary organ” it is accessed by the extraordinary vessels. Always think about these channels for both wind stroke and epilepsy. Think about yin and yang qiao for eyes.

Now look at how the Wei Qi circulates through these meridians:
- At night the Wei Qi makes 25 cycles through the Heart, Lung, Liver, Spleen, then Kidney channels…the control cycle. Yin Qiao gathers the Wei Qi from the internal organs and sends it to the superficial layers when one awakes.

- During the daytime, the Wei Qi makes 25 cycles through the 6 Yang channels and the Du channel. The Yang Qiao gathers Wei Qi from the superficial areas and sends it inward to the internal organs as Bladder 62. This is the origin point of the Yang Qiao. If during this circulation the patient has an epileptic attack, i.e. daytime type epilepsy, this is due to a rebellion of Wei Qi…which is excess. You don’t want to tonify Wei Qi at this time and add more of it. Rather, you want less Wei Qi. Thus, you tonify the Yang Qiao Channel at BL 62 in order to help the Yang Qiao better handle the excess energy.
Nighttime Epilepsy:
Tonify the Yin Qiao Channel. Why? Patients that have night time epilepsy have too much Wei Qi in the Yin Qiao Channel. You need to help the Yin Qiao Channel carry the Wei Qi instead of it getting stuck, accumulating, then blasting thru in the form of a seizure. You could also tonify the appropriate Qiao channel and reduce the mirror Qiao channel. For instance, for nighttime epilepsy, tonify KI 6, but reduce BL 62.

Thus: **tonify the Yin Qiao channel by tonifying KI 6 and reduce BL 62**, the beginning point of the Yin Qiao.

Daytime Epilepsy:
Daytime epilepsy is due to too much Wei Qi in the YangQiao Channel. Tonify the Yang Qiao channel by tonifying the BL 62 point, the origin point for the Yang Qiao Channel.

Thus: **tonify the Yang Qiao channel by tonifying BL 62 and reduce KI 6**.

Either way, you don’t tonify the Wei Qi, but the channel that is carrying it.

(This is the usual logic for insomnia…but really not good for all kinds of insomnia, mostly those type due to heat waking a patient a lot.)

**Basic Points**

- BL 62
- KI 6
- P 4 – emergency point for epilepsy
- P 6 – calm shen and help the phlegm.
- GB 34 – release tension in the tendons and muscles
- SI 3 – reduce to reduce the Du channel
- Yao Qi -
Treat according to stages of the disease.

Early Signs

If patient comes to you with these signs, Wei Qi is rebelling and the phlegm is being retained.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Headaches, dizziness = Qi and Yang \</th>
<th>Descend Rebellious Qi, Remove Phlegm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chest tightness = Ph retention</td>
<td>REN-17; P-6; GB-34; SI-3; P-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenish tinge between eyebrows</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P: Wiry (inner wind), superficial/ floating (tells location of seizure: seizure may be coming)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ren 17 is to help the Qi descend as is P 6.
P5 is an experiential point with a long history of use for epilepsy.

Seizure

This is during the seizure or at the onset of it. Loss of consciousness is due to blockage of the meridian either by phlegm or other pathogenic features. Noises/screaming due to the Qi passing over the phlegm.

The clenching signs are reminiscent of Bi, but not the joint pain type – this is the Closing syndrome. Different Chinese characters. All of the energy is blocked.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inner Wind Sx w/ retention of Phlegm and rebellious Wei Qi</th>
<th>Sedate Rebellious Qi, Remove Phlegm, Calm the Shen, Dispel Inner Wind</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Suddenly falls down, loss of consciousness, screams, clenched face/jaw/teeth, incontinence</td>
<td>DU-26; GB-20; DU-16; P-4, 5, 6; ST-40; GB-34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PC 5 as above – experiential point</td>
<td>Yao qi (2 cm above coccyx bone on the DU Channel – specifically for epilepsy, headaches)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P: Wiry, uneven</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It’s very challenging to use needles at this time – the clenching is so tight it can break the needle. Du 26 might be the most important point. Could use digital acupuncture, pressure. Stick with easy to get to.

- Yaoqi – hard to get to
- Ren 15 – for heart
- PC 5 as above – experiential point
- ST 40 – phlegm
- GB 34 - for the tendons

After the Seizure

Patients are tired and exhausted afterwards, poor appetite.
Indicates spleen or lung qi xu, depends on what they feel. Wei Qi rebellion causes a lot of Qi to be burned up during a seizure.

Ren 4 nourishes the Yin
Ren 6 is the Qi ocean
Ren 17 helps to tonify the Qi, but really better before the seizure.
ST 36 tonifies Qi plus SP/ST qi and helps appetite
LU 9 – tonifies Lu Yin and Qi
UB 13 – LU tonification
UB 20 – tonify SP
UB 23 – tonify KI

Treatment according to Differentiation

Liver Fire with Phlegm Heat
This is also a “before the seizure” stage.

- Infrequent yang seizures induced by anger, anxiety or emotional stress
- Irritable & restless after seizures; insomnia;
- Bitter taste in mouth; thirst or dry mouth; constipation
T: Red with yellow coat
P: Wiry & rapid

GB 13 - and others around the gallbladder to calm down the Shen. This is at the root of the spirit.
Ren 14 - Front Mu point of the Heart
Liver 2 and GB 42 both very helpful for heat.
P 8 deletes the heart fire.
ST 40 reduces phlegm causing blockage.
Liver Kidney Yin Xu
Before the Seizure stage.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symptoms</th>
<th>Treatments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Infrequent seizures; long hx of seizures</td>
<td>Nourish &amp; tonify LIV &amp; KID</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Vague or trance-like mental state</td>
<td>UB-23, 18; KID-3, 6; LIV-3; REN-4;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Dark complexion; tinnitus; dry, sore eyes; withered ears; insomnia or</td>
<td>An mian: Si Shen cong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>restless sleep; forgetfulness; low back &amp; knee soreness/weakness; dry</td>
<td>Also: SP-6; HT-7; DU-14; GB-13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stool/constipation</td>
<td>&gt; Da Bu Yuan Jian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T: Red w/ little or no coat</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P: Thready, rapid</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thin fast pulse = older patients with a chronic history. Use the LV, KI back shu points. All good ways to clear the heat here.

Du 14 and LIV 14 would be good choices. LIV 14 with cupping is good for acute pre-seizure treatment. Du 14 with bleeding will quickly regulate the energy.

Blood Stasis
Another before the seizure stage.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symptoms</th>
<th>Treatments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Seizures w/ hx of trauma or brain lesions</td>
<td>Invigorate Blood; Eliminate Stasis; Soothe Qi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Insomnia or restless sleep; irritable or anger; depression or mood</td>
<td>UB-17; LI-4; SP-5, 10; LIV-4, 3; SI-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>swings</td>
<td>Si Shen cong; GB-20; DU-20; Yintang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Low grade fever at night; fixed sharp pains; dry, scaly skin; broken</td>
<td>&gt; Xue Fu Zhu Yu Tang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vessels on face, trunk, inner knee or ankle; purplish lips, sclera,</td>
<td>&gt; Tong Qiao Hua Xue Tang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conjunctiva, nail beds</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T: Dark or purple or w/ purple spots</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C: Thin white</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P: Choppy or wiry; thready</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Often have this from very young age due to trauma or brain lesion. Not unusual to get seizures later in life from early head trauma. (Great. Something else to look forward to.) Headaches will be fixed, worse at night. Might also see a lot of scarring with epilepsy because hurt themselves during seizure. Causes yet more blood stasis.

UB 17/SP 10 for blood – bleeding therapy is the best choice. Cupping is great too. Gets rid of anger/clears heat.
SI 6 sometimes used – Xi cleft point. This is done in emergency. SI 3 is better.

Uncontrolled Yang Seizures
Excess type, happens during a seizure. This is a tonic-clonic or grandmal type seizure. Patients report hallucinations, not just visual but sometimes smell stuff too. This happens right before the seizure. Post seizure will be really tired.

Don’t recommend needles, but digital pressure.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Simple Tonic - clonic or grand-mal seizures</th>
<th>Clear &amp; Transform phlegm; Extinguise wind; Stop seizures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Frequent or uncontrolled seizures w/signs of excess</td>
<td>DU-12, 20; GB-13; REN-15, 14, 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Before seizure (hrs or days): irritable; mood alteration; uneasiness</td>
<td>ST-40; LIV-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Before (immediately before): aura; hallucinations; jerking of limbs</td>
<td>KID-6 – if at night</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- During: sudden collapse &amp; loss of consciousness w/tonic contraction of all muscles (arms flexed &amp; adducted; legs extended; jaw clenched); spasms of diaphragm result in cry; spasmodic contractions of muscles w/jerky movements; possible incontinence</td>
<td>UB-62 – if during day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- After seizure: loss of consciousness may continue for a time; drowsiness; headache; muscle pain; weakness</td>
<td>P-6, 5; DU-14, 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T: Greasy, white or yellow coat</td>
<td>YAO qí (2 cm above coccyx)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P: Wiry &amp; rapid, or wiry &amp; slippery</td>
<td>&gt; <em>Ding Xian Wan</em> (caution use – harsh ingredients)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Du 12 – clears off the heat  
GB 20 – wind  
GB 30 – shen spirit  
Ren 15 – Luo of the the Ren channel which helps siphon off heat  
Ren 14 – heart and calm shen.  
Ren 12 – stomach point – often nausea before the seizure and will help with the contraction during, the foaming and phlegm during the seizure.  
ST 40 for damp heat and phlegm  
YAO qí – very important point!

**Uncontrolled Yin Seizures**  
This is deficient type and during the seizure. May not lose consciousness and may be a shorter seizure – less than a minutes usually. These are partial seizures of petit mals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>- Partial, “petit-mal” or chronic seizures</th>
<th>Warm Yang &amp; Transform Phlegm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Frequent or uncontrolled seizures w/signs of deficiency</td>
<td>DU-12, 29; GB-13; REN-15, 14, 12, 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Hx of long term yang seizures in adults; may have seizure or absence seizure (very brief seizure)</td>
<td>ST-40; LIV-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- During: dark or sallow face; cold extremities; eyes half open; LOC with initial rigidity then twitching; drooling; no cry or weak cry</td>
<td>KID-6 – if at night</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- During absence: sudden blank; expressionless stare; upwards rolling of eyes; unresponsive to sound; usually last only a few seconds; may occur many times a day</td>
<td>UB-62 – if during day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T: Pale with thick greasy white coat</td>
<td>UB-15; ST-36; SP-6; HT-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; <em>Ding Xian Wan</em> (use w/ caution – contains harsh herbs)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pay attention to what point to use for day/night. Can use a lot of wind points, yin nourishing points such as HT 7, KI 6, LV 3
Spleen Xu with Phlegm
After the seizures.

| - Long hx of seizures or medication for epilepsy  
  - Lethargy & fatigue; emaciation or poor appetite;  
  - Nausea & vomiting  
  - Loose stool or diarrhea; pale or sallow complexion;  
  - Fullness & stiffness in chest & abdomen  
  - Pale w/ greasy white coat  
  - Soft & slippery; or thready, wiry, slippery |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strengthen SP; Transform Phlegm</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Moxa: ST-40, 36; UB-23; SP-6; DU-8; REN-12  
  HT-5; DU-20, 26; GB-34; Sishencong  
  UB-20, 21; P-6; SP-4; LIV-13  
  > *Liu Jun Zi Tang*  
  > *An Shen Ding Zhi Wan* |