



Painful Menstruation

Have you noticed your father, brother, or partner acting strangely lately? Does he forget things, a bit moody, seem lethargic, or wake up sweating? If so, he may be suffering from male menopause. Male menopause, also called ANDROPAUSE, refers to a gradual decline in a man's testosterone levels. Testosterone is the male sex hormone that is responsible for creating and releasing sperm, initiating sex drive and providing muscular strength. Some men will see their testosterone levels drop significantly by the time they are 40. By age 50, half of all men will experience a significant reduction in testosterone levels, causing a variety of uncomfortable symptoms.

Dysmenorrhea is the leading cause of recurrent short-term school absence in adolescent girls and a common problem in women of reproductive age.

The term painful menstruation (dysmenorrhea) refers to pain that occurs before, during, or after the menstruation. As many as half of menstruating women are affected by dysmenorrhea, about 10% have severe dysmenorrhea, which greatly limits activities for one to three days each month.

The pain may occur in the lower abdomen, lower back, and may extend down to the legs. In severe cases, there may be nausea and vomiting or even fainting. Some women describe cramps as being sharp throbbing pains that come and go while others describe them to be dull and constant. Some people may think that having cramps is just simply part of the unfortunate things that women go through; however, according to traditional Chinese medicine, it reveals that there is an imbalance occurring in the body which can be resolved.

Studies show that primary dysmenorrhea is associated with uterine hyper contractibility: during contractions endometrial blood flow is reduced, and there is a correlation between minimal blood flow and maximal colicky pain - thus confirming that ischemia (lack of blood supply) due to hyper contractibility causes primary dysmenorrhea. This ties in with the TCM perspective that Qi and blood flow is stagnated in most cases of women suffering with dysmenorrhea.

In acupuncture, there are 14 meridian systems in the body. These meridians are pathways of communication. Each meridian corresponds with a particular organ. In painful menstruation, the liver meridian is the primary meridian that is focused on. The liver in traditional Chinese Medicine stores the blood and is considered the "woman's organ" that runs to the pelvic region. The liver also promotes the smooth flow of Qi and blood throughout the body. When the liver is not working properly, or is "stagnant", the Qi and blood will not flow through the body properly and pain will result. The other organs that can be involved in painful menstruation are the spleen and kidneys.

From a traditional Chinese Medicine point of view, for a normal period to occur, blood must be abundant and move adequately. Proper movement of blood relies on the free flow of liver Qi (energy). If liver Qi is



Acupuncture Care Holistic Centre

#119, 52 Sioux Road Sherwood Park, AB T8A 4X1 Tel: (780) 416-2828 www.acucare.ca

stagnant, it causes pain especially before the period. If liver-blood is stagnant, it causes pain during the period. Stagnation is the most important thing to treat when dealing with painful menstruation.

There are several patterns and conditions in dysmenorrhoea. Qi Stagnation & Blood stasis, Cold in the uterus due to yang deficiency, cold –dampness in uterus, Qi and blood deficiency, Liver and kidney-yin deficiency. Different pattern follows different symptoms. Patient suffers from different symptoms according to each individual constitution.

The acupuncturist does a thorough consultation with the patient and then concludes as to the specific TCM pattern. Very often, the patient will not only exhibit one pattern but rather many patterns complicated into each other. Treatments will consist of acupuncture and/or herbal medicine. Nutrition and lifestyle changes will be addressed as well. With treatments for painful menstruation, the patient should expect significant improvements within three to six months of treatment.