

消渴小便利淋病脉证治第十三

CHAPTER 13

Dispersion-Thirst, Inhibited Urination, and Strangury

Pulses, Signs, Treatments

† OVERVIEW

This chapter discusses the pulses, signs, and treatments of the three diseases dispersion-thirst, inhibited urination, and strangury. Note that the Chinese title does not list “inhibited urination” (小便不利 *xiǎo biàn bù lì*), but rather “uninhibited urination” (小便利 *xiǎo biàn lì*). However the content clearly proves that this is merely a mistranscription of “inhibited urination.”

DISPERSION-THIRST

Dispersion-thirst, inhibited urination, and strangury disease are all characterized by changes in thirst and urination. In addition, the main pathological changes in all three diseases relate to the kidney and bladder. Therefore, the formulas used to treat them are broadly similar in nature and these three conditions are placed together in one chapter. Altogether, this chapter offers such a short treatment of an important area of disease that most scholars believe that some of the text has been lost.

The name dispersion-thirst is first mentioned in the “Treatise on Strange Diseases” in the *Sù Wèn* (“Plain Questions”): “Fatty [foods] cause internal heat in a person. Sweet [foods] cause center fullness in a person. Because of this, their qì spills upward and transforms into dispersion-thirst.” Dispersion-thirst is a chronic disease of internal damage that is mainly characterized by thirst with immoderate fluid intake. It can take the form of upper, center, or lower dispersion, depending on the focus of the disease.

INHIBITED URINATION

Inhibited urination is a symptom that can manifest as a result of a number of diseases. It refers to short and scant voidings of urine and inhibition in the flow of urine. According to the *Nèi Jīng* (“Inner Canon”), it is caused by kidney vacuity and inhibited qì transformation by the bladder.

STRANGURY

Strangury is a condition whose main symptom is dribbling, rough, and painful urination. It is first described in the *Sù Wèn* (“Plain Questions”) in the “Great Treatise on the Regular Principles of the Six Origins” in this way: “When the spleen contracts the qì of accumulated dampness, urine will be yellow or reddish, and in severe cases there will be strangury.” The pathomechanism of strangury is also quite complex, but generally related to kidney vacuity and heat bind in the bladder. Based on the clinical manifestations, contemporary medicine distinguishes between stone strangury, qì strangury, unctuous strangury, taxation strangury, and blood strangury. The present chapter, however, is not comprehensive and only refers to blood strangury and stone strangury.

† SCHEMATIC OVERVIEW

DISPERSION-THIRST

1. Upper dispersion-thirst

- a) *Signs*: Thirst with desire to drink water; dry mouth and tongue.
- b) *Treatment*: Clear heat, boost qì, engender liquid, and allay thirst using White Tiger Decoction Plus Ginseng (*bái hǔ jiā rén shēn tāng*).

2. Center dispersion-thirst

- Signs*: Hard stool, frequent urination, swift digestion, and thirst with intake of fluids.
Treatment: Free the bowels and discharge heat using Stomach-Regulating Qì-Coordinating Decoction (*tiáo wèi chéng qì tāng*). This is not mentioned in the original text, but is the general opinion of later scholars.

3. Lower dispersion-thirst (kidney vacuity)

- Signs*: Passing of as much fluid as is drunk.
Treatment: Warm yáng and promote qì to steam liquid and retain water.

INHIBITED URINATION

1. Water and cold binding together (greater yáng water amassment pattern)

- Signs*: Floating pulse; inhibited urination; slight heat effusion; dispersion-thirst
Treatment: Promote qì transformation and move water, while freeing yáng and resolving the exterior with Poria Five Powder (*wǔ líng sǎn*).

2. Water and heat binding together, with depressed heat damaging yīn

- Signs*: Floating pulse, heat effusion; thirst with desire to drink; inhibited urination.

Treatment: Disinhibit water and clear heat, while enriching yīn and moistening dryness using Polyporus Decoction (*zhū líng tāng*).

3. Insufficiency of kidney yáng with lower body cold and upper body dryness:

Signs: Inhibited urination; water qì; bitter taste in the mouth; thirst.

Treatment: Warm yáng and promote qì transformation, while engendering liquid and moistening dryness using Trichosanthes and Dianthus Pill (*guā lóu qū mài wán*).

4. Lower-burner damp-heat binding with blood stasis impeding bladder qì transformation:

Signs: Inhibited urination in some cases with short voidings of reddish urine or bloody urine, pain on urination, tension in the lesser abdomen.

Treatment: Clear heat and disinhibit dampness, while cooling the blood and transforming stasis with Charred Dandelion Powder (*pú huī sǎn*).

5. Lower-burner damp-heat with blood stasis damaging the network vessels:

Signs: Inhibited urination with bloody urine, pain on urination, tension in the lesser abdomen.

Treatment: Clear heat and disinhibit dampness, transforming stasis and stanching bleeding with Talcum and Silverfish Powder (*huá shí bái yú sǎn*).

6. Spleen vacuity in the center burner with damp congealing in the lower burner: Fortify the spleen and percolate dampness with Poria and Halite Decoction (*fú líng róng yán tāng*).

7. Stone strangury: Described as urine with millet-like particles, accompanied by inhibited urination with difficult voiding, tension in the smaller abdomen, and pain stretching into the umbilicus.

Line 13.1

厥阴之为病，消渴，气上冲心，心中
疼热，饥而不欲食，食即吐蚘，下之
不肯止。

*Jué yīn zhī wéi bìng, xiāo kě, qì shàng
chōng xīn, xīn zhōng téng rè, jī ér bù yù
shí, shí jí tù huí, xià zhī bù kěn zhǐ.*

Disease of reverting yīn [manifests in]
dispersion-thirst, qì surging upward into
the heart, pain and heat in the heart,
hunger but no desire to eat, and vomiting
of roundworm upon eating. If you precipi-
tate, [the resulting diarrhea] will not stop.

SYNOPSIS, LINE 13.1

This line describes a reverting yīn pattern
of upper body heat and lower body cold,
giving a contraindication for its treatment.

COMMENTARY, LINE 13.1

Reverting yīn disease falls into two kinds.
One is alternating reversal and heat effu-
sion; the other is a cold-heat complex.
The condition described in this line ap-
pears to be upper body heat and lower
body cold, with dispersion-thirst being
caused by internal heat scorching the
fluids. The foot reverting yīn channel
reaches the smaller abdomen and clasps
the stomach; hence counterflow ascent of
liver qì causes qì to surge into the heart.
When heat evil is in the upper body,

there is pain and heat in the heart. Be-
cause the stomach is cold, it cannot di-
gest food. The result is hunger but no
desire to eat, and vomiting after eating. If
a patient with this condition is treated
inappropriately with precipitation, this
will severely damage the spleen and
stomach without eliminating the upper
body heat. Furthermore, it will exacer-
bate the lower body cold. The result will
be incessant diarrhea.

Line 13.2

(1) 寸口脉浮而迟，浮即为虚，迟即为
劳，虚则卫气不足，劳则荣气竭。

(2) 趺阳脉浮而数，浮即为气，数即消
谷而大坚。气盛则溲数，溲数即坚，
坚数相搏，即为消渴。

*(1) Cùn kǒu mài fú ér chí, fú jí wéi xū,
chí jí wéi láo, xū zé wèi qì bù zú, láo zé
róng qì jié.*

*(2) Fū yáng mài fú ér shuò, fú jí wéi qì,
shù jí xiāo gǔ ér dà jiān. Qì shèng zé sōu
shù, sōu shuò jí jiān, jiān shuò xiāng bó,
jí wéi xiāo kě.*

(1) When the inch opening pulse is float-
ing and slow, floating means vacuity and
slow means taxation. Vacuity results in
insufficiency of defense qì, while taxation
results in depletion of construction qì.

(2) When the instep yáng pulse is floating and rapid, floating means qì, while rapid means dispersion of grain¹ and great hardness.² Exuberance of qì results in

frequent urination, and frequent urination results in hard stool. Hard [stool] and frequent [urination] contend with each other, and this constitutes dispersion-thirst.

TEXT NOTES, LINE 13.2

¹ Dispersion of grain 消谷 *xiāo gǔ*: That is, swift digestion.

² Hardness 坚 *jiān*: An alternative version of this text has “tightness” (紧 *jǐn*) instead.

SYNOPSIS, LINE 13.2

This line describes the key pathomechanisms and signs of upper dispersion and center dispersion.

COMMENTARY, LINE 13.2

Dispersion-thirst disease develops gradually. The inch position of the pulse is the indicator of the heart and lung. The heart governs blood and is associated with construction, while the lung governs qì and is associated with defense. When the inch pulse is at the same time slow and floating, the floating quality indicates yáng vacuity and floating qì, which is a sign that defense qì is insufficient. The slowness of the pulse indicates that the vessels are not full and is therefore evidence of construction qì vacuity. As reflected in this pulse, dual vacuity of construction and defense is the cause of the disease described in the first line. When construction qì is insufficient, dryness-heat arises in the inner body, whereupon dispersion-thirst begins to develop.

When the instep yáng pulse is floating and rapid, the floating quality indicates a

superabundance of stomach qì, while the rapidness means exuberant stomach heat. When stomach heat and qì are exuberant, the result is swift digestion, rapid hungering, and thirst with desire to drink water. Superabundant qì becomes fire, which distresses water. As a result, water percolates quickly down to the bladder, giving rise to frequent urination. Exuberant heat consumes liquid and exacerbates the vacuity of fluids that results from increased urination. Hence, the intestinal tract is deprived of moisture and the stool is hard. When stomach heat with hard stool, and exuberant qì with frequent urination exacerbate each other, dispersion-thirst arises. This kind of dispersion-thirst is now referred to as center dispersion.

Line 13.3

男子消渴，小便反多，以饮一斗，小便一斗，肾气丸主之。

Nán zǐ xiāo kě, xiǎo biàn fǎn duō, yǐ yǐn yī dòu, xiǎo biàn yī dòu, shèn qì wán zhǔ zhī.

Dispersion-thirst in male [patients manifest in] exceptionally profuse urine, so that drinking one *dǒu* results in urinating

one *dǒu*. Kidney Qì Pill (*shèn qì wán*) governs.¹

TEXT NOTE, LINE 13.3

¹ The commentary adds here: “For the formula, see the chapter on Women’s

Miscellaneous Diseases.” The formula is found in Chapter 22, line 22.19.

SYNOPSIS, LINE 13.3

This line describes lower dispersion due to debilitation of kidney qì.

COMMENTARY, LINE 13.3

As mentioned in the chapter introduction, dispersion-thirst can be divided into upper, center, and lower dispersion. Upper dispersion is focused in the lung, center dispersion in the stomach, and lower dispersion in the kidney. While upper and center dispersion are always due to dryness-heat, lower dispersion can be caused either by cold or heat. The kidney is the viscus of water and fire; it contains true yīn and true yáng. Kidney yáng vacuity, kidney yīn vacuity, and dual vacuity of kidney yīn and kidney yáng may all give rise to lower dispersion. The present line describes a condition of lower dispersion due to kidney yáng vacuity.

The subject of the present line is “males.” Although both genders are prone to lower dispersion due to kidney yáng vacuity, males specifically are mentioned here because they are associated with yáng, and male sexual matters are related to the kidney. If a male engages excessively in sexual activity, the consumption of essence will inevitably cause damage to yáng. The specification of male here may be nothing more than the inference of kidney vacuity as the cause of lower dispersion.

Copious urine is the main symptom of dispersion-thirst disease. The extraor-

dinary copiousness that is characteristic of lower dispersion in particular can be emphasized by a rough, subjective quantitative datum: urine is the same in volume as fluids ingested. The kidney governs water, and when kidney yáng is debilitated, it fails to “distill” the fluids and return some of the water that goes to the kidney back to the body; hence there is severe thirst. Because kidney yáng cannot perform qì transformation to contain bodily fluids, imbibed fluids largely descend directly to the bladder to be discharged from the body; hence there is copious urination.

The treatment for this condition is to warm and supplement the yáng qì of the kidney, and to restore normal distillation of liquid and qì transformation, using Kidney Qì Pill (肾气丸 *shèn qì wán*). In this formula, rehmannia (*dì huáng*), dioscorea (*shān yào*), and cornus (*shān zhū yú*) enrich kidney yīn, since when yīn is engendered, yáng can grow. Aconite (*fū zǐ*) and cinnamon twig (*guì zhī*) warm kidney yáng and thereby supplement fire within water to rally kidney qì. The formula encourages water and fire to help each other and to coordinate yīn and yáng. In this way, yáng qì is vitalized and the dispersion-thirst resolved.

Kidney Qi Pill (*shèn qì wán*) also contains blood-quickening moutan (*mǔ dān pí*) and water-disinhibiting alisma (*zé xiè*) and poria (*fú líng*) as assistants, which at first sight is surprising, given that profuse urination is the main symp-

tom of this condition. Nevertheless, the urination-disinhibiting and blood-quickening action of these medicinals assists the yīn-enriching yáng-supplementing action of the other medicinals.

Line 13.4

脉浮小便不利，微热消渴者，宜利小便，发汗，五苓散主之。

Mài fú xiǎo biàn bù lì, wēi rè xiāo kě zhě, yí lì xiǎo biàn, fā hàn, wǔ líng sǎn zhǔ zhī.

For a floating pulse, inhibited urination, slight heat [effusion], and dispersion-thirst,¹ it is appropriate to disinhibit urine and effuse sweat. Poria Five Powder (*wǔ líng sǎn*) governs.²

TEXT NOTES, LINE 13.4

¹ Dispersion-thirst 消渴 *xiāo kě*: In this context, dispersion-thirst refers to the symptom rather than the disease, i.e., thirst with ingestion of large amounts of fluid.

² The commentary adds: “For the formula, see above.” This refers to line 12.31 above.

SYNOPSIS, LINE 13.4

This line describes the signs and treatment of inhibited urination due to cold

and water binding together and obstructing bladder qì transformation.

COMMENTARY, LINE 13.4

In the context of the present line, a floating pulse signifies the presence of wind-cold fettering the exterior, which normally gives rise to a tight floating pulse. The triple burner and bladder are related to the insterstices and fine body hair. The bladder is the house of the fluids. When its function of qì transformation is normal, fluid flows down to the bladder, and urination is uninhibited; fluid also reaches upward to keep the body hair and the orifices moist and in harmony. However, when cold evil strikes the greater yáng channel and enters the interior, as in the present line, bladder qì transformation is obstructed, and water collects in

the lower body, causing inhibited urination. Since qì fails to transform liquid, the fluids are not distilled, so insufficient fluid is returned to the body; hence there is thirst. This kind of thirst is due to cold and water binding together in the bladder. Thus we see thirst without large intake of water or immediate vomiting of ingested fluids. This is a disease that affects both the greater yáng channel and bowel, with emphasis on the bowel.

The treatment offered is Poria Five Powder (*wǔ líng sǎn*), which disinhibits urine and also promotes sweating. For an explanation of this formula, see the commentary to line 12.31 above.

Line 13.5

渴欲饮水，水入则吐者，名曰水逆，
五苓散主之。

*Kě yù yǐn shuǐ, shuǐ rù zé tǔ zhě, míng
yūē shuǐ nì, wǔ líng sǎn zhǔ zhī.*

Thirst with desire for fluid, and vomiting
upon drinking water is called water coun-
terflow.¹ Poria Five Powder (*wǔ líng sǎn*)
governs.²

TEXT NOTES, LINE 13.5

¹ Water counterflow 水逆 *shuǐ nì*: A se-
vere form of water amassment in the
bladder, which is characterized not only
by inhibited urination, but also by thirst,

large intake of fluids, and immediate
vomiting of ingested fluids.

² Here the commentary adds: “For the
formula, see above.” The formula is
found in line 12.31.

SYNOPSIS, LINE 13.5

This line continues the discussion of in-
hibited urination due to cold and water
binding together and obstructing bladder
qì transformation.

causing inhibited bladder qì transforma-
tion. As a result, liquid fails to bear up-
ward, giving rise to thirst. When water
amasses in the lower burner in excessive
quantities, it ascends to affect the stom-
ach. This impairs the harmonious down-
bearing of stomach qì and causes in-
gested fluid to be rejected. Here, there is
immediate vomiting of ingested fluid.
This pathomechanism is called “water
counterflow.” Again the text recom-
mends Poria Five Powder (*wǔ líng sǎn*)
to treat this condition.

COMMENTARY, LINE 13.5

The present line continues to describe the
process of cold and water binding and
causing inhibited urination that gives rise
to a pattern of water counterflow. When
wind-cold evil passes along the foot
greater yáng bladder channel into the
greater yáng bowel, cold binds with water,

Line 13.6

渴欲饮水不止者，文蛤散主之。

文蛤五两

右一味，杵为散，以沸汤五合，和服
方寸匕。

*Kě yù yǐn shuǐ bù zhǐ zhě, wén gé sǎn zhǔ
zhī.*

Wén gé wǔ liǎng

*Yòu yī wèi, chǔ wéi sǎn, yǐ fèi tāng wǔ gě,
huó fū fāng cùn bǐ.*

For thirst and incessant desire to drink
water, Meretrix Clam Shell Powder (*wén
gé sǎn*) governs.

Meretrix Clam Shell Powder (*wén gé sǎn*)

meretrix clam shell (文蛤 *wén gé*,
Meretricis Concha) 5 *liǎng*

Pestle the single above ingredient into a
powder and mix into five *gě* of boiling
water. Take a square-inch-spoonful [per
dose].