

# An analysis of Liver and Kidney pathogenesis and treatment based on the theory of interpromotion and restraint of the five elements

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## Author contributions

Rui Xu designed and wrote the manuscript.

## Competing interests

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

## Abbreviations

TCM, traditional Chinese medicine.

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## Abstract

The interpromotion and restraint of the five elements is the self-regulation mechanism of the five elements system under normal conditions. For the human viscera, by comparing the images, deducing and classifying the attributes of things, the human viscera are connected with the five elements, and it is concluded that the Liver belongs to Wood and the Kidney belongs to Water. According to the law of mutual generation and restriction between the five elements, the pathogenic causes, pathogenesis and relationship with other viscera of the Liver and Kidney can be known, so as to establish corresponding treatment methods, such as "Nourishing Water and protecting Wood" (providing Kidney for the growth of Liver method), "Golden Water symbiosis" (generation between the Lung and Kidney), "Cultivating soil and generating gold" (warming the Kidney and benefited Spleen method), Supporting lung to suppress Liver, purging heart Fire to nourish renal Water method, etc. It is of referential significance for the treatment of Liver and Kidney diseases in the diagnosis and treatment of traditional Chinese medicine.

**Keywords:** five elements interpromote and restrain; similarities and differences between Chinese and Western Medicine; Pathogenesis; Liver and Kidney

## Background

The interpromotion and restraint of the five elements is one of the important philosophical foundations in traditional Chinese medicine (TCM). According to the five elements theory, it is divided according to the functional attributes of five kinds of things: the Liver has the physiological characteristics of ascending, which belongs to Wood; the Kidney has the physiological characteristics of governing storage and Water, which belongs to Water. It is a unique advantage of TCM to analyze its pathogenesis and treatment based on the "mother child" relationship between Liver and Kidney and the relationship between Liver and Kidney and other viscera. The Western medical system is based on anatomical physiology, histopathology, biochemistry and molecular biology. Besides, it is to study the disease status of specific parts; TCM is characterized by holistic concept and syndrome differentiation and treatment, emphasizing the integrity of the human body: the concept of the integration of the five internal organs, the concept of the integration of form and spirit, the concept of the integration of essence, "Qi" and "Spirit", etc. For example, the diagnosis and treatment of Liver and Kidney diseases in western medicine are only aimed at the viscera. A series of examinations, medication, surgery and other treatments are carried out, which lack the control of complications and cannot predict other viscera damage caused by treatment; TCM determines the pathogenesis of the Liver and Kidney by examining the five internal organs of the human body and treats them as a whole. From the law of health restraint of the five elements, the law of "deficiency replenishes its mother, and plethora reduces its son" and the law of subjugation or encroachment and violation or reverse restriction in five elements diagnose and treat Liver and Kidney diseases and establish corresponding treatment methods, which can systematically control the development law of the disease and achieve similar eradication results.

For TCM, the ancient book of Chinese medicine "Su Wen · Yu Ji Zhen Zang Lun" (91-32 B.C.E) said: "The five internal organs receive "Qi" from their birth, transmit it to their victory, give up "Qi" from their birth, and die from their invincibility... Disease is death". According to the law of the five elements, the five internal organs have the internal organs that are birth, restraint, conquest and invincibility, and the diseases of the five internal organs are born at the beginning and conquered at the end [1]. It roughly proves that the five internal organs of the human body can be taken as a whole, and there is a slight move in one part may affect the whole situation. Therefore, TCM treatment generally needs to affect the overall regulation of the viscera. From its "mother" to its "son", it has the conditions of causing the source of disease and meeting the conditions of curing the disease. For example, the mutual influence of the relationship between the five internal organs can be divided into "disorder of mother-organ involving its child-organ" and "child-organ disorder involving its mother-organ". If the Kidney essence is insufficient and cannot support the Liver blood, the deficiency of Liver and Kidney essence and blood is caused; "Kidney Yin" deficiency, involving "Liver Yin", Liver and Kidney Yin deficiency, can not nourish Liver Wood, resulting in Water does not contain Wood, all belong to disorder of mother-organ involving its child-organ. The disease of hyperactivity of Liver Fire, robbery of Kidney Yin and deficiency of Kidney Yin belongs to child-organ disorder involving its mother-organ. In addition to the mutual influence of disease situation and disease location, there is also the relationship between treatment and prevention. For western medicine, if an organ is damaged, the transformation of the disease can be controlled by surgical resection, drug control and other treatment methods. Taking the Liver as an example, western medicine generally carries out surgical resection in the treatment of liver disease, supplemented by a series of treatment measures such as drug control, chemotherapy, radiotherapy and targeting. Even if it is complex, it does not combine the organs and other organs of the human body as a whole, overall diagnosis and treatment.

From the above comparison between TCM and Western medicine to specific analysis, the relationship between the occurrence, development and cure of Liver and Kidney diseases is analyzed with the interpromotion and restraint of five elements. According to the basic theory of TCM, the treatment methods for Liver and Kidney diseases are generally summarized as the common treatment methods, such as reinforcing the Spleen to control

the Liver method, providing Water for the growth of Wood method, warming the Kidney and benefiting Spleen method [2].

## Providing Water for the growth of Wood method

According to the law of the five elements, Water creates Wood, then the Liver and Kidney are homologous. The two complement each other. Nourishing Water can contain Wood, tonifying Kidney Yang can conserve the Liver, which is suitable for Liver and Kidney Yin deficiency syndrome.

## Warming the Kidney and benefited Spleen method

According to the above relationship between the five elements of Liver, Kidney and Spleen. If the Liver disease lasts for a long time, it will lead to a deficiency of Spleen and Kidney Yang. Therefore, tonifying Spleen and Kidney Yang is very important.

Under the guidance of the holistic concept of human being as an organic whole and the interaction between human beings and the natural environment, analyzing the embodiment and function of the overall concept between Liver and Kidney, and applying the law of restraint five elements to the prevention and treatment of diseases in the viscera is the main embodiment of the overall concept mentioned in the philosophical basis of TCM, which is also the essential difference between TCM diagnosis and treatment and Western medicine diagnosis and treatment. The two have their own advantages, and should be supported and developed together in order to achieve the purpose of diagnosing and treating diseases with integrated traditional Chinese and Western medicine.

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