

## **Fibromyalgia**

By Heidi Hawkins, MAc, LAc

In terms of traditional Chinese medicine (TCM), fibromyalgia is primarily a liver disease. The liver is in charge of keeping *qi* moving throughout the body, and when it fails to do so, pain results.

Fibromyalgia is characterized by a combination of symptoms, including pain and tenderness of acupuncture points, and often involves fatigue. Fibromyalgia is often discussed alongside chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS). Some, but not all, people suffer from both. (It is a curious aside that acupuncture points are used by Western allopathic doctors to diagnose this condition.)

Though the liver is the primary organ involved in fibromyalgia, the symptoms are systemic. Pain can occur anywhere in the body, and can move around. Diagnostically in TCM terms, fibromyalgia usually presents as some combination of liver *qi* stasis, liver blood stasis, liver blood deficiency, liver wind, and liver toxicity.

In my observations, fibromyalgia presents as an aspect of multiple chemical sensitivity (MCS). (Please see my previous articles on MCS, which are available on [www.acupuncturetoday.com](http://www.acupuncturetoday.com).) Toxicity of the liver tends to involve petrochemicals, as the liver usually detoxifies fat-soluble toxins. (The kidneys usually detoxify water-soluble toxins). These are not hard and fast rules.

As our environment becomes more toxic, especially indoor environments, many people experience symptoms of clogged up detoxification systems. It is not often obvious to people what is causing their symptoms. Toxins are coming in faster than they are going out, and the liver and kidneys become chronically overwhelmed. Allergies and sensitivities result when the toxicity becomes unmanageable. MCS is difficult to diagnose yourself, and many doctors simply don't believe MCS exists. Furthermore, the folly of treating chemical overload with chemical medicines should be obvious.

Toxins take up space as they occupy yin (*zang*) organs, which are meant to be solid, as opposed to the yang (*fu*) organs, which are intended to be hollow, like the bladder, stomach and intestines. Toxin storage causes

a hollowing-out of the yin organs to make room for toxins. Detoxification, therefore, is only one part of the solution, and must be done skillfully and with care. To detoxify these organs creates emptiness in them, and can be problematic if it is advanced. Emptiness in the liver and kidneys can be very serious, with upward-rising yang, *qi*, phlegm, and wind.

Symptoms typical of these upward-rising energies include cerebrovascular accident (stroke), tremors and twitching (such as Parkinson's), brain deficiency syndromes (such as Alzheimer's, foggy thinking, and forgetfulness), visual symptoms (including decreasing eyesight, fogginess and blurriness), eye pressure (such as glaucoma), headache, poor sleep, fits of anger, irritability, and other symptoms. Typical menopausal and perimenopausal symptoms, for example, are classic signs of emptiness in yin organs. Chemical toxicity greatly aggravates and contributes to these problems. The endocrine system is particularly vulnerable to chemical overload, and is intimately tied to the liver *zang*.

Toxins must be detoxified from the organs, yet tonifying and strengthening these organs cannot be ignored, or emptiness is a serious risk. Clients detoxified without proper attention to tonification are very likely to feel far worse when the detoxification process is begun, typically don't feel better afterwards, and may even continue to feel worse if the toxicity is severe enough. Tonifying a condition with such excess symptoms as stagnation and pain can also make the client worse if not done skillfully.

This complex interweaving of detoxification and strengthening to resolve the emptiness is very difficult to accomplish with acupuncture, herbs, or naturopathic methods. For this reason, I have devised methods using *Tao Fa Wu* medical *qigong* to resolve this complex modern problem.

Having been trained in (and having practiced) a variety of alternative methods for treating allergies, MCS and fibromyalgia, I eventually found every method I had learned to be insufficient. Precision and accuracy are of utmost importance with such complex and delicate conditions as severe fibromyalgia, and in this modern plague era of chemical poisoning, new levels of precision and accuracy must be attained. I found no previously existing method to be sufficiently precise and accurate for the more difficult cases I have seen.

I had no desire to create a new method for applying TCM theory, come up with a new technique I could name after myself, or to tamper in any way with TCM. I even considered it arrogant to do so. However, I felt challenged by my clients who had been referred to me after having tried a great variety of practitioners, treatments and methods. I felt challenged by their desperation to learn how to help them, and *Tao Fa Wu* medical *qigong* developed out of this need. *Tao Fa Wu* developed from allergy relief systems, an earlier

hybrid technique I was using.

I am grateful to my teacher who co-created *Tao Fa Wu* with me, and challenged me to move beyond the dogma of TCM to work with modern problems more effectively. It has given me hope for effectively treating fibromyalgia and other difficult or severe MCS and allergic conditions. I am convinced that this modern problem is spreading rapidly and that we are all challenged to manage our current environmental crisis on an individual and personal basis, as well as collectively. We must simultaneously learn to see the truth of the state of our environment, to stop creating these problems by living sustainably, and to learn to live and thrive in the environment exactly as it is and as it is becoming. The survival of all living beings depends upon it.

#### *Reference*

- [http://content.health.msn.com/condition\\_center/fibromyalgia/default.htm](http://content.health.msn.com/condition_center/fibromyalgia/default.htm)
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