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Polycystic ovary syndrome

Polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) affects 5% to 7% of women of reproductive age and is the most common cause of anovulatory infertility. It is characterized by long or irregular cycles, infrequent ovulations, signs of hyperandrogenism like excess body hair or acne, and the ovaries appear polycystic on ultrasound (likened poetically to a string of pearls). At least half of all patients with PCOS are obese. Several mechanisms have been offered to explain the pathomechanism of the syndrome. The most widely accepted explanation is the insulin resistance theory. According to this theory, women with PCOS possess a selective resistance to insulin (within the liver or muscle tissue), whereas other organs, such as the ovaries, maintain their response. Insulin stimulates theca cell androgen production within the ovary, and the excess androgen is responsible for the clinical signs of PCOS as well as the arrest of follicular development and ovulation. Blood tests often reveal raised levels of Luteinising hormone (LH), testosterone and insulin.

Metformin (glucophage), which is an insulin lowering drug, either alone or in combination with Clomiphene, is the standard medical treatment for anovulation in PCOS patients who wish to conceive.

Some PCOS patients do not want to conceive (for example, they may already have the children they want) however they may still benefit from treatment for the metabolic risks associated with the disease such as increased risk of heart disease or diabetes.

Statins, which help all measurable parameters like lipid profile, testosterone and LH are also recently being used to treat the metabolic aspects of the disease.

In some cases a surgical solution is attempted in the form of ovarian drilling or a wedge section removed from the ovary to reduce the number of arrested follicles. This measure sometimes kick starts ovarian activity again for a while.

Chinese herbs have been found to be effective in altering many of the measurable parameters typical of PCOS like increased LH and androgen levels, however they do not reduce insulin levels as effectively as medication like Metformin (glucophage). Hence exercise is a particularly important component of a treatment plan.

While the Jade Pearl formulas are useful in treating these metabolic concerns, our discussion here focuses on their use in promoting ovarian activity and fertility.

While lack of regular and predictable release of eggs makes it harder to fall pregnant, the good news is that women with PCOS seem to retain their fertile potential for longer than other women. Women with PCOS in their 40s will usually have a greater ovarian reserve than other women of the same age and it is possible that they may actually be endowed with a larger ovarian reserve at birth. However none of this is helpful if the ovaries are not prepared to ripen and release the reserved eggs!

Here is where Chinese Medicine steps in.

First up we need to try and promote a regular cycle. This is what acupuncturists do when they regulate the Chong and Ren channels and some PCOS patients have been found to ovulate more frequently when treated with electro acupuncture.

But it is not only producing an ovulation or two that is required we want the ovaries to cycle regularly. The most consistent clinical symptom in women with PCOS is the irregular or infrequent nature of their ovulation. This may be mild, ie a tendency to menstrual cycles which go for 5 weeks or so, or more severe with long periods of amenorrhoea.

To persuade the ovaries to cycle regularly and efficiently we need some basic requirements. Firstly by definition the Kidney jing must be adequate and the Kidney yin and yang must be balanced and flourishing. Next the qi and the blood must be adequate and moving without obstruction in the Chong and the Ren channels.

The Chong and Ren channels in PCOS cases are blocked because of Liver qi stagnation or by Damp Phlegm.

Many women with PCOS present with a damp phlegm accumulation in the form of excess weight or history of weight gain at same time that periods became irregular.

However there are many young women diagnosed with PCOS, including hyperinsulinaemia, who are thin. The cause of the obstruction to Chong and Ren activity in these cases is Liver qi stagnation.

Our therapeutic aim is to unblock the Chong and the Ren - by clearing damp phlegm or by resolving Liver qi stagnation. In both cases we must also treat the Kidneys to improve ovary function and promote the movement of Blood in the Chong channel.

Jade Pearl 1

PCOS with weight gain.

PCOS may confer a predisposition to obesity and conversely obesity may worsen the presentation of PCOS. The increased levels of androgens in women with PCOS can contribute to cravings for carbohydrate and a tendency to put weight on around the middle. Additionally these patients may show abnormal regulation of some hormones which control appetite.

Jade Pearl 1 is specific for PCOS patients with weight gain. Note however that weight gain does not necessarily mean obesity. There may be a recent increase of only 5 kg and overall physical appearance may be fairly normal.

Often the menstrual cycle is very irregular or infrequent.

Cang zhu (Atractylodis Rhizoma)

Fu ling (Sclerotium Poriae Cocos)

Fa Ban xia (Pinellia Ternata)

Sha ren (Amomi Fructus)

Fo shou (Fructus Citri Sarcodactylis)

Chen pi (citri reticulatae pericarpium)

Dan nan xing (Arisaema Cum Bile)
Zhe bei mu (Fritillariae thunbergii Bulbus)
Zao jiao ci (Gleditsiae Spina)
Bu gu zhi (Psoralea Fructus)
Yin yang huo (Epimedii Herba)
Shan yao (dioscoreae rhizoma)
Shu di (rehmanniae radix preparata)
Dan shen (salviae miltiorrhizae)
Gui zhi (Cinnamomi Ramulus)

Focus of treatment

- Tonify Kidney and Spleen function to resolve Damp
- Expel Phlegm Damp accumulation
- Clear Chong Ren obstruction

Formula construction and therapeutic strategy

The formula aims to resolve damp and expel phlegm, support Spleen function, restore the Kidney function and regulate Chong and Ren channels. We want these herbs to dig into the shiny thickened ovarian capsule and provoke some activity in the sluggish or gummed up ovaries (in other words the herbal version of a wedge section). It is also hoped that by antagonizing androgens with the action of these herbs, we may reverse the follicular atresia.

This formula combines the famous Er Chen tang (Two Old ingredients decoction) a well known formula used to mobilise phlegm with elements of Cang Fu Dao Tan tang (Atractylodes and Cyperus Guide out Phlegm decoction) which also mobilises phlegm but more strongly, and elements of a modern formula Bu Shen Hua Tan tang (Decoction for Restoring the Kidney and Removing phlegm).

We start with 3 herbs which clear Damp, Cang zhu, Fu ling and Sha ren.

Cang Zhu strengthens the Spleen to clear dampness which might be obstructing the lower jiao. Fu ling has a similar action in promoting Spleen function to clear damp. It also unblocks orifices and facilitates water pathways so that damp can be eliminated.

Sha ren augments their action by warming the Middle, transforming Damp and moving the qi.

Chen pi dries damp and moves the qi to facilitate clearing of internal damp obstructions.

Fo shou gently supports the smooth movement of qi and the function of the Spleen in clearing damp and phlegm.

Then we add some stronger phlegm mobilising herbs in the form of Fa Ban xia, Zhe Bei mu, Zao Jiao Ci and Dan Nan Xing.

Fa Ban xia is employed to free obstruction caused by phlegm. It mobilizes Qi to transform phlegm. We use Zhi bei mu to transform phlegm and to dissipate the multiple cysts on the ovaries.

Zao jiao ci helps this function, with its ability to dispel stubborn accumulated phlegm (in this case in the form of swollen theca cells and arrested follicles).

Fourthly, Dan nan xing facilitates the removal of phlegm which is being broken up or mobilized, by clearing phlegm obstruction from the channels.

Our next group of herbs are the Kidney yin and yang tonics which will promote renewed ovarian activity.

Bu gu zhi strengthens Spleen and Kidney function and at the same time strongly dries damp. Yin yang huo boosts Kidney yang function and stokes the fire of Ming Men to promote maturation of ovarian follicles.

Shu di enriches the Kidney yin and jing to provide the essential basis for the growth and development of mature eggs in the follicles.

Shan yao reinforces the yin of the Spleen and the Kidneys further building this basis.

Finally we add 2 more herbs;

Dan shen reinforces and moves the blood to promote activity in the Chong channel. It also supplements Heart blood and calms the shen, enabling smoother Bao Mai function so that hormonal stimulation of the ovary is facilitated.

And Gui Zhi helps to unblock the Chong and Ren channels to encourage regular menstruation. Gui Zhi has been found to improve insulin resistance in clinical trials.

Herbs; Flavour, nature and site of action

Herbs used to dispel Damp

Cang zhu (Atractylodis Rhizoma)

Bitter and acrid, warm. Spleen and Stomach channels.

Sha ren (Amomi Fructus)

Acrid, warm. Spleen, Stomach and Kidney channels.

Fu ling (Sclerotium Poriae Cocos)

Sweet and bland, neutral. Lungs, Spleen, Heart and Bladder channels.

Herbs used to transform Phlegm

Fa Ban xia (Pinellia Ternata)

Acrid, warm. Spleen, Stomach and Lung channels.

Dan nan xing (Arisaema Cum Bile)

Bitter, cool. Lungs, Liver and Spleen channels. Check

Zhe bei mu (Fritillariae thunbergii Bulbus)

Bitter, cold. Lung and Heart channels.

Zao jiao ci (Gleditsiae Spina)

Acrid, warm. Liver and Stomach channels.

Herbs used to warm yang and unblock the Chong and Ren channels

Gui zhi (Cinnamomi Ramulus) (from Relieve Exterior category)

Acrid and sweet, warm. Heart, Lung and Bladder channels.

Herbs used to regulate Qi

Chen pi (citri reticulatae pericarpium)

Acrid, bitter, warm. Spleen and Lung channels.

Fo shou (Fructus Citri Sarcodactylis)

Acrid, bitter, warm. Liver, Stomach, Spleen and Lung channels.

Herbs used to supplement Kidney yang.

Bu gu zhi (Psoralea Fructus)

Bitter, acrid, very hot. Kidney and Spleen channels.

Yin yang huo (Epimedii Herba)

Acrid, hot. Kidney and Liver channels.

Herbs used to reinforce the qi

Shan yao (dioscoreae rhizoma)

Sweet, neutral. Spleen, Lung and Kidney channels.

Herbs used to nourish the Blood

Shu di (*rehmanniae radix preparata*)

Sweet, slightly warm. Liver, Kidney and Heart channels.

Herbs used to regulate the Blood

Dan shen (*salviae miltiorrhizae*)

Bitter, slightly cold. Heart and Liver channels.

Prescribing Jade Pearl 1

There are a number of different reasons a PCOS patient may seek treatment and your treatment strategy will be different in different circumstances.

Commonly it is because she wishes to become pregnant but has been unable to. This is usually because she is ovulating too infrequently rather than because her eggs are of poor quality or because there are issues with her tubes. In this case we want to activate the Chong and Ren activity. The constitution of your patient will determine whether you choose Jade Pearl 1 or 2.

If becoming pregnant is the primary outcome desired then promoting the release of eggs is our main aim. As you saw above, the ovarian reserve of the PCOS patient is usually excellent and all we need to do is encourage the maturation and release of some of these eggs. Electro acupuncture is one of the best tools to achieve this, combined with daily consumption of herbs. Jade Pearl may need to be taken for several months.

For these patients a positive pregnancy test is more desirable than a regular cycle and usually easier to achieve.

For other PCOS patients it is the metabolic imbalances and general health concerns that make them seek treatment. Or the difficulty they have losing weight or the condition of their skin. For these women long term administration of herbal medicine combined with lifestyle changes is the appropriate approach. Chinese herbs have been shown to be effective in influencing ovarian activity but not necessarily in reducing insulin resistance. Hence exercise is an important part of the treatment plan.

The Jade Pearl formulas can be combined with the use of insulin lowering drugs and ovulation stimulating drugs such as Clomiphene.

Prescribe Jade Pearl 1 for 3 – 6 months (or longer if necessary). If your patient is trying to conceive and menstrual cycles improve in regularity, then combine with Jade Moon Phase treatments. The full dose of Jade Pearl 1 can be taken alongside the full dose of the appropriate Jade Moon Phase formula.

Jade Pearl 1 should not be used for too long in Yin deficient patients without the addition of supplementary formulas. This could be the Jade Moon Phase 2 formula or another formula based on Liu wei Di Huang wan.

Defer use of this formula during the acute phase of an infection or attack by an external pathogen.

Jade Pearl 2

without weight gain

Young thin women are presenting with the diagnosis of PCOS in increasing numbers. Sometimes this disorder manifests after taking hormonal contraceptives. Some researchers think it may have to do with the stressful lifestyle of young women, especially students. Or that it may relate to conditions they were exposed to in utero. If menstrual cycles are irregular or ovarian function is compromised then we know the function of the Chong and Ren channels is affected. In cases where there is no obvious systemic accumulation of phlegm and damp (ie no weight gain) then it is the Liver qi that will be the focus of our treatment. If qi stagnation of the Liver channel has persisted for a while then the conditions are created for localized accumulations of a cystic or phlegm nature (seen on the ultrasound as thickened and polycystic ovaries) , and our approach to treatment will need to take this into account as well.

Bai shao (Paeoniae Radix alba)
Dang gui (Angelicae sinensis Radix)
Chuan xiong (Chuanxiong Rhizoma)
Chuan Niu xi (cyathula radix)
Shan zha (Crataegi Fructus)
Gou qi zi (Fructus Lycii Chinensis)
Chai hu (Bupleuri radix)
Xiang fu (Cypero Rhizoma)
Li zhi he (Litchi semen)
Xia ku cao (Prunellae Spica)
Zao jiao ci (Gleditsiae Spina)
He huan pi (Albiziae cortex)
Tu si zi (Semen Cuscatae)
Yin yang huo (Epimedii Herba)
Shan zhu yu (Corni fructus)
Shu di (Rehmanniae radix preparata)

Treatment focus

- Regulate Liver qi, clear constraint

- Resolve Phlegm Damp accumulation
- Regulate the Blood, and the Chong and Ren channels
- Tonify the Kidneys

Formula construction and therapeutic strategy

In Jade Pearl 2 we take some elements of Xiao yao san (Free and Easy powder) and augment them by adding Liver soothing and regulating herbs and blood moving herbs. We also take some elements of the formula Bu Shen Hua Tan tang (Decoction for restoring the Kidney and removing phlegm) as we did for Jade Pearl 1, but focusing somewhat less on the phlegm clearing aspect and more on the Kidney tonic aspect.

The first group of herbs in this formula build the Blood and encourage its movement in the Chong channel.

Bai shao nourishes the blood and softens the Liver. Dang gui harmonises the blood both nourishing and moving it. Chuan xiong promotes movement of both blood and qi in the Chong channel. Chuan Niu xi invigorates the blood and unblocks the Chong and Ren channels. Shan zha also invigorates the blood and helps to dissipate accumulations like multiple cysts.

Next we employ herbs to strongly move and unblock the qi in the Liver channel.

Chai hu clears stagnation of qi in the Liver channel. It is supported in this by Xiang fu which also regulates the flow of qi in the Liver channel and is useful for clearing obstructions associated with the reproductive system especially around the ovaries.

Li zhe he is used to mobilize qi in the Liver channel and is used here to help resolve ovarian cysts and masses.

We add Xia Ku Cao to aid removal of obstructed qi (and associated phlegm, including cysts), and to clear any heat which has been caused by a longterm obstruction. Zao jiao ci supports the removal of stubborn phlegm in the form of cysts.

He huan pi, while primarily calming the mind and relieving stress, also relieves constraint in the Liver channel.

The final 4 herbs of the formula focus on promoting Kidneys to encourage normal ovary function.

Yin yang huo boosts Kidney yang function to promote maturation of ovarian follicles and

Tu Si zi supports both Kidney yin and yang.

Shu di enriches the Kidney yin and jing to provide the essential basis for the growth and development of mature eggs in the follicles.

With so much emphasis on movement of qi in the Liver channel we need to stabilize the Liver blood and yin. Gou qi zi and Shan zhu yu will both perform this role while also benefiting the Kidneys.

Herbs, Flavour, nature and site of action

Herbs used to regulate qi

Chai hu (Bupleuri radix) (from Release the Exterior category)

Bitter and slightly cold. Pericardium, Liver, Triple Burner and Gall-Bladder channels.

Xiang fu (Cyperi Rhizoma)

Acrid and slightly bitter, neutral. Liver and Stomach channels.

Li zhi he (Litchi semen)

Sweet and astringent, warm. Liver and Stomach channels.

Herbs used to transform Phlegm

Zao jiao ci (Gleditsiae Spina)

Acrid, warm. Liver and Stomach channels.

Herbs used to invigorate the Blood

Chuan xiong (Chuanxiong Rhizoma)

Acrid, warm. Liver, Gall-Bladder and Pericardium channels.

Chuan Niu xi (cyathula radix)

Acid, slightly bitter, Neutral. Liver and Kidney channels.

Shan zha (Crataegi Fructus) (from Clear Food stagnation category)

Acid, sweet, slightly warm. Spleen, Stomach and Liver channels.

Herbs used to supplement Blood

Bai shao (Paeoniae Radix alba)

Bitter and acid, slightly cold. Liver and Spleen channels.

Dang gui (Angelicae sinensis Radix) 9

Sweet and acrid, warm. Liver, Heart and Spleen channels.

Herbs used to clear Heat

Xia ku cao (Prunellae Spica) (from Clear Heat category)
Bitter and acrid, cold. Liver and Gall-Bladder channels.

Herbs used to calm the mind

He huan pi (Albiziae cortex)
Sweet, neutral. Heart and Liver channels.

Herbs used to supplement Yin

Gou qi zi (Fructus Lycii Chinensis)
Sweet, neutral. Liver, Kidney and Lung channels.
Shan zhu yu (Corni fructus) (from Astringent category).
Acid and astringent, Slightly warm. Liver and Kidney channels.
Shu di (Rehmanniae radix preparata) (from Blood tonic category)
Sweet, slightly warm. Liver, Kidney and Heart channels.

Herbs used to boost the Yang

Yin yang huo (Epimedii Herba)
Acrid, hot. Kidney and Liver channels.
Tu si zi (Semen Cuscatae)
Acrid, sweet, neutral. Liver and Kidney channels.

Prescribing Jade Pearl 2

Jade Pearl 2 is prescribed for women diagnosed with PCOS who have not put on weight. Ideally treatment should continue for 3 - 6 months. If cycles improve in regularity and conception is being attempted, then combine Jade Pearl 2 with Jade Moon Phase treatments particularly during Phase 2 and 3. Half of the maximum recommended dose of each of Jade Pearl and Jade Moon can be taken at the same time. For general advice please see Prescribing Jade Pearl 1 above.

Defer use of this formula during the acute phase of an infection or attack by an external pathogen.

Heavy periods

Menorrhagia is a not uncommon condition in which excessive blood loss during the period puts a woman at risk of anaemia. The period flow may be unusually heavy or it may last for longer than usual with the same result that too much blood is lost.

Feeling depleted and drained from blood loss is a debilitating problem for a significant number of women. Medical treatment offered to these women includes endometrial ablation, insertion of an IUD containing progesterone or the administration of prostaglandin inhibitors. Or in some cases surgery, to remove an obvious cause of the bleeding.

However menorrhagia can also often be treated successfully with chinese medicine.

It is important to determine the cause of the excessive blood loss and in this case an ultrasound is useful. It will determine if there are fibroids, polyps or adenomyosis present. If fibroids are submucosal, ie if they are located in the inner lining and create an extended area of endometrium then these can be the cause of excess bleeding. Jade Control is the formula of choice in this instance to control heavy bleeding.

If an ultrasound determines another cause of heavy bleeding like adenomyosis (in which the endometrial cells grow in the muscle layer of the uterus) then Jade Control is also applicable.

A vaginal ultrasound may reveal a polyp or polyps. Like fibroids, endometrial polyps are usually benign. Polyps, which may interfere with implantation or increase the risk of miscarriage, can also cause general bleeding irregularities like spotting and sometimes, menorrhagia. Jade Control is applicable in this case also, although see the prescribing notes at the end.

In all other cases where there is no obvious physical cause of the heavy bleeding a hormone imbalance is the likely cause. It is a result of an imbalance in estrogen and progesterone. In these cases Jade Restraint should be prescribed.

Jade Restraint

Heavy periods from Hormonal imbalance

Heavy bleeding from hormone imbalance can occur at any stage of reproductive life but is more commonly seen in perimenopausal women or young women who have started menstruating recently. In some cases it is caused by inappropriate hormone therapy in which case this should be ceased.

It can be treated by tackling the 3 causes of pathological bleeding according to TCM, namely bleeding of a Qi deficient nature, or that caused by Blood stasis or by Heat in the Blood

Jade Restraint for heavy periods is a simple formula which addresses all of these causes, which often present in combination.

Huang qi (Radix Astragali)
Yi mu cao (Leonuri Herba)
Sheng di (Radix Rehmanniae Glutinosae)
San qi (Notoginseng Radix)
He shou wu (Radix Polygoni Multiflori)
Pu huang (tan) (Pollen Typhae)
Dang gui (Angelicae sinensis Radix)
Mu xiang (aucklandia radix)

Focus of treatment

- dispel blood stasis,
- clear heat in the blood
- support the Spleen to hold the blood in the vessels and
- reinforce blood to make good the loss.

Formula construction and therapeutic strategy

Here we take key herbs from a number of different formulas which are commonly used to stop excessive bleeding; Shi Xiao San (Return the Smile powder) and Fu ke Zhong Zi wan (Women's Planting the Seed pill) to remove Blood stasis, Bao Yin Jian (Protecting the Yin decoction) to clear Heat from the Blood, and Gui Pi Tang (Restore the Spleen Decoction) to support the Spleen.

San qi, Pu Huang, Yi mu cao and Dang gui are all used to remove stasis.

San qi and Pu huang achieve this at the same time as stopping bleeding. Both these herbs have potent stop bleeding qualities but do not allow subsequent blood stasis to form. Yi mu cao removes stasis especially when related to heat in the blood and Dang gui both moves and tonifies the blood.

Next we clear heat from the blood with Sheng Di to stem bleeding and then add Huang qi to support the Spleen to hold blood in the vessels. Mu xiang aids in supporting Spleen function, and helps it to digest the herbs.

Finally He shou wu and Dang Gui help the body replace the blood it has lost.

He Shou wu is a powerful blood tonic and not only helps the body rebuild its blood stores but also aids our cause here by being slightly astringent.

Herbs; Flavour, nature and site of action

Herbs used to clear Blood stasis

Yi mu cao (Leonuri Herba)

Acrid and bitter, cool. Heart, Liver and Bladder channels.

Herbs used to stop bleeding

San qi (Notoginseng Radix)

Sweet and slightly bitter, warm. Liver and Stomach channels.

Pu huang (tan) (Pollen Typhae)

Sweet, neutral. Liver and Pericardium channels

Herbs used to supplement the Blood

He shou wu (Radix Polygoni Multiflori)

Bitter, sweet and astringent, slightly warm. Liver and Kidney channels.

Dang gui (Angelicae sinensis Radix)

Sweet and acrid, warm. Liver, Heart and Spleen channels.

Herbs used to cool the Blood

Sheng di (Radix Rehmanniae Glutinosae)

Sweet and bitter, cold. Heart, Liver and Kidney channels.

Herbs used to reinforce the qi

Huang qi (Radix Astragali)

Sweet, slightly warm. Spleen and Lung channels.

Herbs used to regulate the qi

Mu xiang (Aucklandia radix)

Acrid and bitter, warm. Spleen, Stomach, Liver and Gall-Bladder channels.

Prescribing Jade Restraint

This formula can be used all month or just in the week before the period and during the period. Once the bleeding is controlled and the periods are not too heavy there should be a switch to other formulas matching the constitutional. If Jade Restraint is used before and during the period only, then extended use is acceptable and can be combined with other constitutional formulas at other times of the cycle.

Defer use of this formula during the acute phase of an infection or attack by an external pathogen.

Jade Control

Heavy periods with fibroids or other obstructions

If an ultrasound reveals that heavy bleeding is due to sub mucosal fibroids (or other obstruction) these will require quite a different approach to that taken for hormonal imbalance causing heavy bleeding. Here the blood stasis is significantly more substantial and will require stronger treatment to achieve a result. Many fibroids can be reduced with treatment, but success is more likely if the fibroids are not too large.

This formula can also be applied if the heavy bleeding is due to another sort of substantial blood stagnation eg cysts, polyps, adenomyosis or endometriosis.

Dang gui (Angelicae sinensis Radix)

Chi shao (Paeoniae Radix rubra)

Chuan xiong (Chuanxiong rhizoma)

Yi mu cao (Leonuri Herba)

(Cu) San leng (Sparganii Rizoma)

E zhu (Curcumae Rizoma)

Tao ren (Persicae Semen)

Gui zhi (Cinnamomi Ramulus)

Fu ling (Poria)

San qi (Notoginseng Radix)

Focus of treatment

- Break up blood stasis and reduce excessive bleeding.
- Clear damp and phlegm accumulation.
- Reinforce blood to make good the loss.

Formula construction and therapeutic strategy

Jade Control is derived from Gui Zhi Fu Ling wan (Cinnamon Twig and Poria Pill) with some elements of Shao Fu Zhu Yu tang (Drive Out Blood Stasis in the Lower Abdomen Decoction) both of which are famous for treating abdominal masses. The idea is to clear stasis such that masses which are contributing to excessive blood loss are reduced or

eliminated.

Gui Zhi Fu Ling wan which has a long history of being used to treat fibroids, is a gentle and well balanced formula which moves the blood and gradually disperses stasis at the same time as dispersing damp and phlegm. It uses the warmth of Gui zhi to unblock the blood vessels and and with Tao ren it promotes circulation to clear blood stasis. Chi Shao (replacing the Bai shao in this version) also promotes movement of blood while cooling any heat associated with the stagnation. Fu Ling supports the qi and transforms damp and phlegm which contribute to the formation of masses.

We enhance the blood moving capacity of this formula with the addition of Yi mu cao, another herb which clears stasis associated with fixed masses. Because it cools the blood (along with Chi shao) it is useful in cases where there might be inflammation (such as is the case with some adenomyosis or polyps).

E zhu and San leng are two particularly powerful herbs with the capacity to reduce substantial masses like fibroids. E zhu is the main herb in this formula used to break up the accumulation in the uterus. It breaks up qi and blood stagnation and expels phlegm masses. It also drives out congealed cold. With San leng, which also has potent stagnation clearing qualities, lumps and masses can be whittled away over time.

San qi is also used here to treat masses, but it has the added attribute of stemming excess bleeding. It clears blood stasis at the blood level and is complemented in this formula by Chuan Xiong which clears qi stagnation at the blood level.

Finally to safeguard the blood from damage by the large number of blood moving herbs Dang gui is added. It reinforces, warms and harmonises the blood.

Herbs; Flavour, nature and site of action

Herbs used to clear Blood stasis

Chuan xiong (Chuanxiong rhizoma)

Pungent, warm. Liver, Gall-Bladder and Pericardium channels.

Yi mu cao (Leonuri Herba)

Acrid and bitter, cool. Heart, Liver and Bladder channels.

(Cu) San leng (Sparganii Rizoma)

Bitter, neutral. Liver and Spleen channels.

E zhu (Curcumae Rizoma)

Acrid and bitter, warm. Liver and Spleen channels.

Tao ren (Persicae Semen)

Bitter and sweet, neutral. Liver, Lungs and Large Intestine channels.

Chi shao (Paeoniae Radix rubra) (from Clear Heat category)

Bitter and acid, slightly cold. Liver and Spleen channels.

Gui zhi (Cinnamomi Ramulus) (from Release the Exterior category).

Acrid and sweet, warm. Heart, Lungs and Bladder channels.

Herbs used to supplement the Blood

Dang gui (Angelicae sinensis Radix)

Sweet and acrid, warm. Liver, Heart and Spleen channels.

Herbs used to stop bleeding

San qi (Notoginseng Radix)

Sweet and slightly bitter, warm. Liver and Stomach channels.

Herbs used to clear Damp and Phlegm

Fu ling (Poria)

Sweet and bland, neutral. Lungs, Spleen, Heart and Bladder channels.

Prescribing Jade Control

Jade Control can be prescribed for use all month or just before and during the period. Where there is some constitutional weakness it is a good idea to use tonic formulas during the cycle and then Jade Control in the week before and during the period. In someone trying to conceive, this formula should only be used during the period or in cycles where conception is not attempted. It should be discontinued once heavy bleeding is contained.

It is not necessarily our aim with Jade Control to remove completely all physical evidence of abdominal masses. It is sufficient to reduce them such that they do not cause a debilitating level of bleeding.

In perimenopausal women this strategy only has to hold until menopause comes and the periods stop.

However when fibroids are large and your patient is losing critical amounts of blood then surgery is an option that must be considered. Surgery to remove fibroids is much less invasive than it used to be, and surgery to remove polyps is a simple

procedure.

It is worth noting that treatment of polyps with a formula designed to expel blood stasis can in some cases exacerbate the bleeding. This happens if the body tries to expel the polyp (especially if it is a pedunculated one ie is on a stalk and is near the cervical opening) in response to the treatment. In this case surgery is the recommended solution.

Jade Restraint is another option for heavy bleeding caused by adenomyosis depending on the presentation and the constitution of the patient.

Defer use of this formula during the acute phase of an infection or attack by an external pathogen.

Premenstrual syndrome

PMS tends to manifest in one of two ways depending on whether Liver qi stagnation is the predominant pathology or whether Spleen qi deficiency is predominant. The symptoms will tell us which is the case. Sometimes Liver qi is obstructed but the Spleen function is not (or not yet) compromised.

In both cases we need to move qi to relieve Liver qi stagnation and support Spleen function but we differentiate the formulas, one focusing more on moving the Liver qi and one more on supporting the Spleen. Kidney function can be compromised in either case.

To treat premenstrual symptoms we adopt strategies from the formula famous for relieving Liver constraint, Xiao Yao san, variously called Free and Easy Wandering powder, or Rambling powder or Relax powder – you get the idea.

This major formula for harmonizing Spleen and Liver and qi and the blood, addresses all the main considerations in the premenstrual phase when symptoms of Spleen and Liver imbalance are common.

Jade Calm

Premenstrual syndrome with breast pain

When Liver qi is obstructed not only will breast pain or swelling likely manifest before the period but also moodiness and irritability and possibly abdomen cramping or discomfort. The formula aims to relieve breast and abdomen soreness or swelling, primarily by easing the movement of qi which has been constrained. However for many women, more disturbing than the discomfort of breast swelling, or abdominal cramping,

is the mood changes they experience. Irritability or a sense of frustration is common, sometimes accompanied by teariness and a feeling of hopelessness or depression. Insomnia can accompany these symptoms. When the Liver qi moves without obstruction many of these emotional symptoms are alleviated.

Heat often develops in the Liver as a result of obstructed qi. It is this heat which can cause headaches as Liver qi rises, and can also affect the Heart, leading to agitation and disturbed emotions, on top of the frustration already caused by the obstructed Liver qi. This constrained heat is why many women complain about feeling more flushed or hot before their period, and more restless at night.

Chai hu (Bupleuri Radix)

Bai shao (Paeoniae radix alba)

Chi shao (Paeoniae Radix rubra)

Dang gui (Angelicae sinensis Radix)

He huan pi (Albiziae Cortex)

Chuan xiong (Chuan xiong rhizoma)

Dan pi (Moutan Cortex)

Dan shen (Salviae miltiorrhizae)

Qing pi (Citri reticulatae viride Pericarpium)

(Cu) Xiang fu (Cyperi Rhizoma)

Xu duan (Dipsaci Radix)

Bo he (Menthae haplocalycis herba)

The focus of treatment

- Relieve constrained Liver qi
- Calm the mind
- Cool heat in the Liver
- Nourish and regulate the blood
- Support the Spleen and Kidney

Formula construction and therapeutic strategy

The aim of our guiding formula Xiao Yao San (or its extension Jia Wei Xiao Yao San) is to open up movement of qi where it has been constrained. Chai hu is our primary herb for achieving this, but it is supported by other qi regulating herbs such as Xiang fu and Qing pi which will ensure that qi moves smoothly in the abdomen (to relieve cramping) as well as the upper body (to ease breast soreness). Bo he is one of Xiao Yao San's envoys which enhances Chai Hu's ability to relieve (and cool) constrained Liver qi. Bai Shao and Dang gui are crucial additions to the qi regulating herbs, for softening the Liver and protecting the Blood.

Dan pi (an important ingredient of Jia Wei Xiao Yao San) is included to cool heat and prevent Liver fire from rising to the head causing headaches. We add Chi Shao to enhance this cooling function and to promote circulation of the Blood.

As mentioned above, one of the most unsettling aspects of PMS for many women is the emotional volatility they experience.

But once the Liver qi is successfully relieved from any constraint and is unfettered in its movement the emotions tend to calm. To aid this, herbs which have the action of calming the shen such as He huan pi and Dan shen are added.

He Huan Pi has the fortunate attribute (for our purposes here) of regulating Liver qi to lift constraint and relieve stress at the same time as it harmonizes Heart qi. It is particularly helpful in clearing qi which has stuck in the chest and breast area. It relieves both irritability or anger, and its flip side, depression. He Huan Pi also has a blood regulating quality which helps to relieve any pain or discomfort felt in the breasts or the abdomen. Dan shen settles the emotions and soothes irritability by clearing heat in nutritive level. It will help with premenstrual insomnia or restlessness.

Some key elements of another famous formula for relieving qi constraint, Yue Ju wan (Escape restraint Pill) are used in this formula to enhance qi movement.

Xiang fu and Chuan Xiong are an important combination – both used in significant doses in Jade Calm. They work synergistically to move the qi in the blood (Xiang fu) and the blood in the qi (Chuan xiong). Thus they move stagnation in many levels and at many sites in the body, both lower and upper body. This suits our purpose well since we need to address breast soreness (and possibly head aches) in the upper body and abdominal

cramping or discomfort in the lower body. While Chuan xiong is active in the upper body and head, Xiang fu mostly clears obstruction to qi and blood in the lower body since it is heavy and moves down. With Qing Pi it will address abdominal discomfort. Use of the Cu form (vinegar fried) of Xiang fu mitigates any risk of drying and damage to the yin or qi, and also reduces pain. Xiang fu has long been considered an important herb for treating stagnation with emotional depression or volatility.

Dan Shen adds more blood movement to the formula.

Finally we add Xu duan to cover the possibility of lower back pain that sometimes occurs in women premenstrually if their Kidney qi is weak.

Herbs; Flavour, nature and site of action

Herbs used to regulate the qi

Chai hu (Bupleuri Radix) (from Release the exterior category)

Bitter, slightly cold. Pericardium, Liver, Triple Burner and Gall-Bladder channels.

(Cu) Xiang fu (Cyperii Rhizoma)

Acrid, slightly bitter, neutral. Liver and Stomach channels.

Qing pi (Citri reticulatae viride Pericarpium)

Bitter and acrid, warm. Liver, Gall-Bladder and Stomach channels.

Bo he (Menthae haplocalycis herba) (from Release the exterior category)

Acrid, cool. Liver and Lung channels.

Herbs used to calm the mind

He huan pi (Albiziae Cortex)

Sweet, neutral. Heart and Liver channels.

Herbs used to supplement the Blood

Dang gui (Angelicae sinensis Radix)

Sweet and acrid, warm. Liver, Heart and Spleen channels.

Bai shao (Paeoniae radix alba)

Bitter and acid, slightly cold. Liver and Spleen channels.

Herbs used to invigorate the Blood

Chuan xiong (Chuanxiong rhizoma)

Pungent, warm. Liver, Gall-Bladder and Pericardium channels.

Dan shen (Salviae miltiorrhizae)

Bitter, slightly cold. Heart and Liver channels.

Herbs used to cool the Blood

Chi shao (Paeoniae Radix rubra)

Bitter and acid, slightly cold. Liver and Spleen channels.

Dan pi (Moutan Cortex)

Bitter and acrid, slightly cold. Heart, Liver and Kidney channels.

Herbs used to supplement the Kidney yang

Xu duan (Dipsaci Radix)

Bitter, sweet and acrid, warm. Liver and Kidney channels.

Prescribing Jade Calm

In women with stressful lives and marked Liver qi stagnation this is a useful formula to take on an ongoing basis. Once premenstrual symptoms are improved the formula could be given for the latter one or two weeks of the menstrual cycle only. However many women, particularly those in stressful situations, like to take this sort of formula most of the time. If a patient is also Yin deficient, the use of a yin tonic constitutional formula in the first two weeks of the cycle would be advised, with the use of Jade Calm being restricted to the latter two weeks.

Defer use of this formula during the acute phase of an infection or attack by an external pathogen.

Jade Fluid

Premenstrual Syndrome with fluid retention

When Spleen function is suppressed by the Liver, fluids are not transported efficiently causing puffiness and bloating and weight gain. This may be accompanied by cravings for starchy and sweet foods. There may be constipation, occasionally there is nausea and sometimes a dragging feeling of discomfort in the abdomen. Lethargy is a common symptom when Spleen qi is compromised.

Chai hu (Bupleuri Radix)
Bai shao (Paeoniae Radix alba)
Dang gui (Angelicae sinensis Radix)
Bai zhu (Atractylodis macrocephalae Rhizoma)
Cang zhu (Atractylodis Rhizoma)
Fu ling (Poria)
He huan pi (Albiziae Cortex)
Huang qi (Astragali radix)
Mu xiang (Aucklandia radix)
Xu duan (Dipsaci Radix)
(chao) Niu xi (Achyranthis bidentatae Radix)
Gan cao (Glycyrrhizae Radix)

The focus of treatment

- Fortify Spleen
- Clear damp, relieve fluid retention
- Calm mind
- Regulate Liver qi and the blood.

Formula construction and therapeutic strategy

As in Jade Calm we have used Xiao Yao San as a guiding formula but in Jade Fluid we have emphasized Spleen support by retaining Bai Zhu, Fu Ling and Gan Cao.

Again Chai hu is the main herb to relieve constraint of Liver qi, Bai Shao and Dang gui

being added to soften the Liver and protect the Blood.

Bai zhu is an important herb for strengthening Spleen qi and is used here to promote fluid metabolism and transport to reduce fluid retention in the extremities or other parts of the body.

Fu ling works synergistically with Bai Zhu to strengthen Spleen and clear damp. It also has the added benefit of calming the shen and easing the mind.

Cang zhu aids Fu ling in resolving damp by drying it. It strengthens the Spleen, reduces fluid retention and helps alleviate fatigue and nausea.

And Mu Xiang aids Spleen function by moving qi in the stomach and intestines thus relieving abdominal bloating, discomfort or constipation.

Gan Cao benefits the Spleen and helps to relieve Liver constraint and moderates the actions of the other herbs.

To these tonics we add Huang qi which augments and holds qi up. Its warmth reinforces yang transport and transformation thus supporting Spleen function. By holding qi up it alleviates dragging down abdominal or perineal discomfort which is sometimes experienced premenstrually in women who are Spleen deficient. It is diuretic and aids Fu Ling in moving fluid out of the body and resolving oedema.

He Huan pi is added for all the reasons outlined in the previous formula and Xu Duan is added as a Kidney qi support.

Niu xi tonifies the Kidneys, treats edema and supports Xu Duan in preventing lower back pain.

Herbs; Flavour, nature and site of action

Herbs used to supplement the qi

Bai zhu (*Atractylodis macrocephalae* Rhizoma)

Bitter and sweet, warm. Spleen and Stomach channels.

Huang qi (Astragali radix)

Sweet, slightly warm. Spleen and Lung channels.

Gan cao (Glycyrrhizae Radix)

Sweet, neutral. Heart, Lungs, Spleen and Stomach channels.

Herbs used to clear Damp

Fu ling (Poria)

Sweet and bland, neutral. Lung, Spleen, Heart and Bladder channels.

Cang zhu (Atractylodis Rhizoma)

Bitter and acrid, warm. Spleen and Stomach channels.

Herbs used to regulate the qi

Chai hu (Bupleuri Radix) (from Release the exterior category)

Bitter, slightly cold. Pericardium, Liver, Triple Burner and Gall-Bladder channels.

Mu xiang (Aucklandia radix)

Acrid and bitter. Warm. Spleen, Stomach, Liver and Gall-Bladder channels.

Herbs used to calm the mind

He huan pi (Albiziae Cortex)

Sweet, neutral. Heart and Liver channels.

Herbs used to supplement the Blood

Dang gui (Angelicae sinensis Radix)

Sweet and acrid, warm. Liver, Heart and Spleen channels.

Bai shao (Paeoniae radix alba)

Bitter and acid, slightly cold. Liver and Spleen channels.

Herbs used to invigorate Blood

Niu xi (Achyranthis bidentatae Radix)

Bitter and acidic, neutral. Liver and Kidney channels.

Herbs used to supplement the Kidney yang

Xu duan (Dipsaci Radix)

Bitter, sweet and acrid, warm. Liver and Kidney channels.

Prescribing Jade Fluid.

Jade Fluid is most effective if taken each month from mid cycle. Once symptoms improve, use of Jade Fluid can be reduced to one week before the period, or when symptoms appear.

Defer use of this formula during the acute phase of an infection or attack by an external pathogen.

Dysmenorrhea

Dysmenorrhea or period pain usually occurs in the first day or two of menstruation, and sometimes just before the bleeding commences. Pain is commonly felt in the lower abdomen and can be of a gripey, twisting, achey or stabbing nature. Lower back pain often accompanies the abdomen pain and is sometimes the chief complaint. The menstrual flow may appear dark or clotty, or unsmooth, with a stop start pattern of bleeding but this is not always the case.

Pain is usually an indication of something stuck and not flowing - the qi or the blood or both are obstructed. To treat period pain we need to remove any obstruction to qi and blood and facilitate its smooth flow.

In this formula for dysmenorrhoea the majority of the herbs are those which encourage the blood to move without hindrance. They do this by warming and expanding blood vessels and increasing blood flow through them, thinning the blood and dissolving clots, opening the cervix and leading the blood out, relaxing the uterine muscles to prevent excessive uterine contractions and nourishing the ligaments of the lower back to relieve back pain.

Jade Moon Flow

Dang gui (Angelicae sinensis Radix)
Chi shao (Paeoniae Radix rubra)
Chuan xiong (Cuanxiong Rhizoma)
Tao ren (Persicae Semen)
(Chao) Gui zhi (Cinnamomi Ramulus)
Dan Shen (Salviae miltiorrhizae Radix)
(Sheng) shan zha (Crataegi Fructus)
(Sheng) Pu huang (Typhae Pollen)
Yan hu suo (Corydalis Rhizoma)
(Cu) Xiang fu (Cypero Rhizoma)
Xu duan (Dipsaci Radix)
Chuan Niu Xi (Cyathulae radix)

Focus of treatment

- Invigorate and move Blood
- Relax and regulate the qi
- Tonify Kidney

Formula construction and therapeutic strategy

Jade Moon Flow is influenced by the original blood moving formula, Tao hong si wu tang (Four substance decoction with Safflower and Peach kernel) and also aspects of the famous “Drive out stasis” formulas Xue fu, Ge Xia and Shao fu Zhu yu tang.

Additionally some elements of Yue Ju wan (Escape Restraint) are employed to create a formula which aims to remove all impediments to the smooth flow of qi and blood and thus the alleviation of pain.

For example if we look at the key elements from Shao Fu Zhu Yu tang (Drive out Blood stasis in the Lower Abdomen) which are adopted for use in Jade Moon Flow we have a

group of herbs which have a potent capacity to move blood which is stuck or not flowing for whatever reason; Dang Gui invigorating and reinforcing the blood, Chi shao cooling and moving the blood, Chuan Xiong warming and moving the blood, Yan Hu Suo removing stasis and relieving pain and Pu Huang clearing stagnation but also adding some controls on the blood flow, in the face of all the blood moving herbs.

Yan Hu Suo is a particularly important herb in a formula designed to relieve pain. It has been shown to raise the pain threshold, alleviate spasms and has a calming action.

Chuan Xiong and Xiang fu are a very effective combination for moving qi and blood. Used famously in Yue Ju wan (Escape restraint formula), they work synergistically to relieve constraint at different levels. Together they move the qi in the blood (Xiang fu) and the blood in the qi (Chuan xiong). Chuan xiong soothes spasms of smooth muscle and its calming action on the nervous system helps to relieve pain.

Shan zha is used here for its ability to harmoniously invigorate blood and move constrained qi so as to relieve pain. It is harmonious in that it protects qi and blood at the same time as moving it.

Chao gui zhi facilitates this movement by unblocking blood vessels allowing a smoother blood flow, its warmth helping to relieve pain.

Tao ren (a component of some of the Dispel Stasis formulas, Ge Xia and Xue fu zhu yu tang) is used here in a large enough dose to break up congealed blood and stop pain.

Dan shen is added to Jade Moon Flow to thin the blood and prevent clotting which might hinder the menstrual flow. It also helps to calm the Shen, an important role since quietening the spirit is important when there is pain – the pain threshold is lifted and distress is reduced.

Xu Duan is a Kidney tonic, useful if there is lower back pain associated with menses. It not only boosts Kidney but also invigorates the blood, unblocking collaterals and channels and alleviating pain.

Chuan Niu xi guides the qi and blood downwards via the cervix, so it can leave the body without hindrance and pain.

Herbs; Flavour, nature and site of action

Herbs used to invigorate the Blood and relieve stasis

Chuan xiong (Chuanxiong Rhizoma)

Acrid, warm. Liver, Gall bladder and Pericardium channels.

Dan shen (Salviae miltiorrhizae Radix)

Bitter, slightly cold. Heart, Pericardium and Liver channels.

Tao Ren (Persicae semen)

Bitter, neutral. Heart, Liver, Lung and Large Intestines channels.

Yan hu suo (Corydalis Rhizoma)

Acrid and bitter, warm. Heart, Liver and Spleen channels.

(*Sheng*) *Pu huang* (Typhae Pollen) from Stop bleeding category

Sweet, neutral. Liver and Heart channels.

(*Sheng*) *shan zha* (Crataegi Fructus) from Food stagnation category.

Sour and sweet, slightly warm. Spleen, Stomach and Liver channels.

Chuan Niu Xi (Cyathulae radix)

Bitter and sour, neutral Liver and Kidney channels

Herbs used to cool the Blood and relieve stasis

Chi shao (Paeoniae Radix rubra)

Bitter and sour, slightly cold. Liver and Spleen channels.

Herbs used to supplement the Blood

Dang gui (Angelicae sinensis Radix)

Sweet and acrid, warm. Liver Heart and Spleen channels.

Herbs used to invigorate the Blood and warm the channels

(*Chao*) *Gui zhi* (Cinnamomi Ramulus) from the Exterior releasing category.

Acrid and sweet, warm. Heart, Lung and Bladder channels.

Herbs used to regulate qi

Xiang fu (Cyperi Rhizoma)

Acrid and slightly bitter and sweet, neutral. Liver and San Jiao channels.

Herbs used to support the Kidneys

Xu duan (Dipsaci Radix) (from Supplement yang category)

Bitter, sweet and acrid. Slightly warm. Liver and Kidney channels.

Prescribing Jade Moon Flow

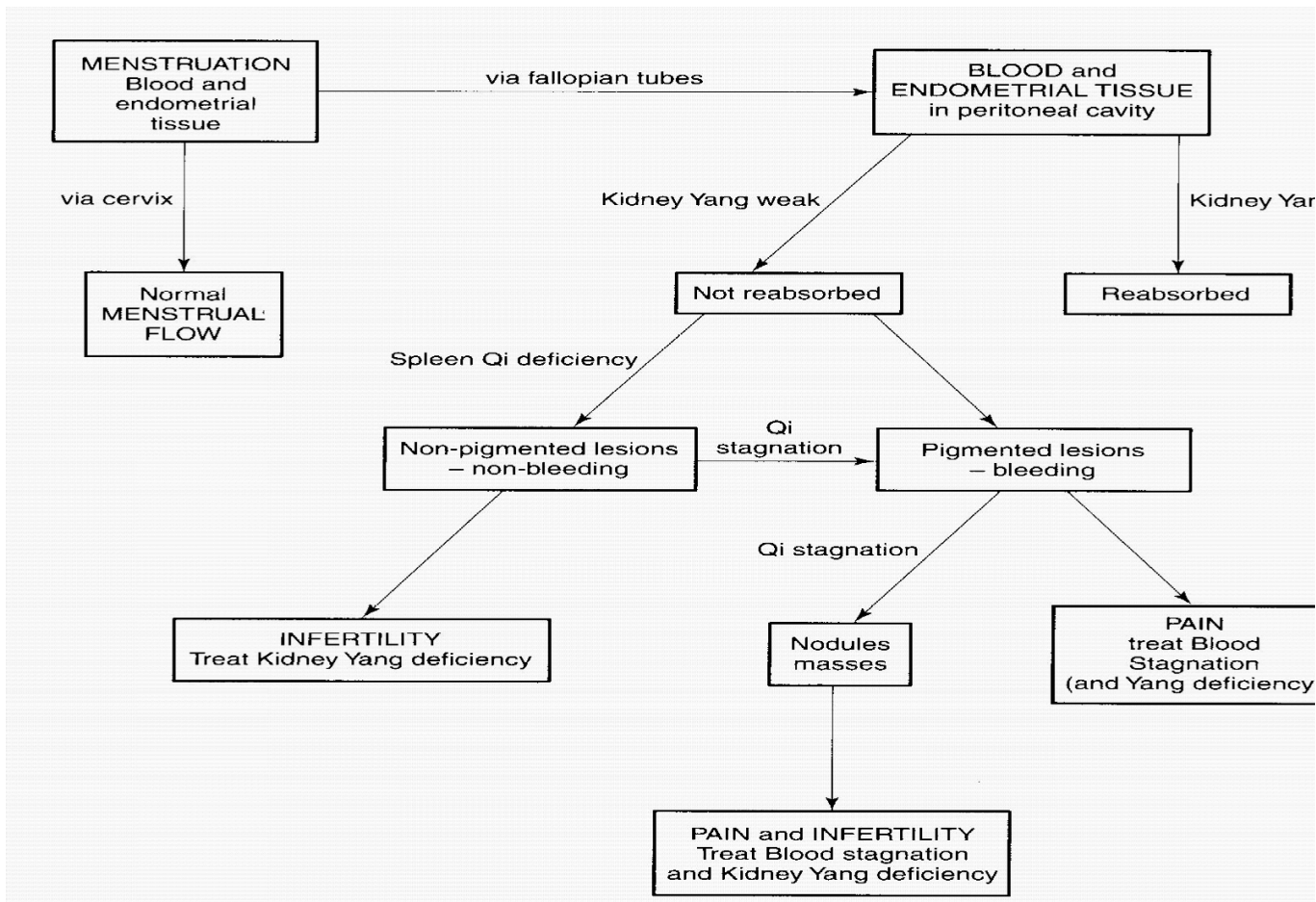
Jade Moon flow should be taken in the week before the period and during the period. Initially it may cause slightly more menstrual flow than usual and occasionally large clots may be passed as any stagnation is cleared. It will need to be taken for 3 – 6 cycles. This formula should be used with caution in women who have heavy periods related to heat in the blood or Spleen deficiency. Use of Jade Restraint might be considered in these cases.

If period pain is purely from deficiency then the use of this formula on its own may not get the desired result. Pain from deficiency is not as severe as pain from obstruction, and women suffering from this type may not seek treatment for dysmenorrhoea. However it is not uncommon to see mixed pathologies of deficiency and excess, where the pain is marked (and clearly related to a local obstruction or excess) but the blood and qi are deficient. When qi or blood is deficient it is easy for it to become obstructed in the same way a small trickle of a stream is easily blocked by the sort of minor obstructions which wouldn't hinder a strong flow. In this case judicious short term use of Jade Moon Flow can be made during the period with the use of popular patent medicines such as [Women's Precious pills](#) which build the qi and blood at other times of the month.

Defer use of this formula during the acute phase of an infection or attack by an external pathogen.

Endometriosis

Endometriosis is a condition characterized by the presence of endometrial tissue at sites of the body (usually the pelvis) other than the inside of the uterus. You might ask how does it get there? We know that menstrual blood travels not only downwards from the uterus and out through the cervix but also upwards through the fallopian tubes and out in to the peritoneal cavity. This small quantity of blood carries with it bits of endometrium. Women with strong uterine cramps (often related to Liver qi stagnation) are more likely to lose more menstrual flow upwards through the tubes. The blood and the tissue will either be reabsorbed, or will remain and establish itself somewhere in the pelvic cavity causing an endometrial implant at some location in the pelvis, or a chocolate (blood filled) cyst on the ovary. If Kidney yang is strong then the activity of qi in the pelvis will mobilise the menstrual debris which shouldn't be there and it will be efficiently reabsorbed (or destroyed by a properly functioning immune system). A weakness of Kidney yang (or a deficiency in the immune system) predisposes the woman to the establishment of endometrial implants where they fall in the pelvic cavity. Some forms of endometriosis cause infertility (possibly due to an altered immune environment, or to excess secretions clogging the fallopian tube entrances, or to obstructions to the tubes) and some cause pain and some do both.



From “The Treatment of Infertility with Chinese Medicine” by Jane Lyttleton

Published by Churchill Livingstone 2004 1st edition, 2012 2nd edition.

While the physical manifestations of endometriosis have been well described there are other less well understood features of the disease that indicate there may be an auto immune component. Modern researchers have noticed that auto immune diseases are more common in endometriosis sufferers than the general population. The endometriosis lesions themselves are associated with increased levels of IgM production and increased numbers of macrophages. Anti-endometrial antibodies are sometimes found in the uterine lining of endometriosis patients and may contribute to infertility if they hinder embryo implantation.

The main features of endometriosis are pelvic pain and infertility. Not all endometriosis

patients have either or both of these features. Some women with endometriosis notice spotting before the period, and a dark or clotty menstrual flow. Pain can occur during menstruation, ovulation or sex.

Many endometriosis lesions can be removed surgically and this relieves pain and improves fertility. However the pain relief is short lived, returning in more than a third of cases as early as 4 weeks after surgery and in 70% of cases eventually. The improved fertility window is also a short one, lasting a few months only.

Hence any alternative to surgery, or adjunct to surgical treatment is a welcome one.

Chinese herbal medicine, while not claiming to cure the condition has a good history of providing significant relief and increasing the odds of conception.

Endometriosis is a western medical label not a TCM one, but the medical understanding of this disease has contributed to the notion that this is a disease characterised by blood being where it shouldn't and unable to escape the body ie blood stasis. Symptoms like severe stabbing period pain, clotty menstrual flow and palpable nodules or masses in the abdomen appear to verify the diagnosis of stagnant blood.

Additionally, considering the new findings related to immune system dysfunction in endometriosis patients, our treatments need to address inflammation associated with auto immune reactions as well as clearing the stagnant blood from the abdomen. Some research has shown that a formula like Gui Zhi Fu Ling wan can reduce specific uterine IgM levels and more recently herbs which clear damp heat and toxins are proving effective.

Finally, healthy Kidney yang and Spleen qi, along with unfettered Liver qi are all important aspects of successful treatment.

If a woman with endometriosis is trying to conceive, then the aim is to try and push the endometriosis to one side to allow pregnancy to occur and the ovaries and the endometrium must become the central focus of the treatment plan. In this case the use of an endometriosis formula will be combined with those that focus on the different stages

of the menstrual cycle (Jade Moon formulas).

[Jade Disperse 1](#) and [Jade Disperse 2](#) take these different factors into account with varying emphasis according to the constitution and the nature of the endometriosis itself. The different emphasis of treatment of these two formulas might also influence how they are prescribed - at different times, both of the menstrual cycle, but also in months when conception is attempted or not.

Jade Disperse 1

Endometriosis - robust constitution

This is a strong formula incorporating herbs which break up blood stasis, clear damp heat and remove inflammation, move the blood and the qi, and finally herbs which protect or reinforce the yin and yang, qi and blood. It should be used for resolving substantial implants of endometriosis - it aims to get right into the root of the implants, targeting pigmented endometrial implants, masses, cysts, nodules and clotty dark menstrual flow.

(Cu) San leng (sparganii rhizoma)

(Cu) E zhu (curcuma rhizoma)

Pu huang (Typhae pollen)

(Sheng) shan zha (Crataegi Fructus)

(Zhi) da huang (Rhei radix et Rhizoma)

Tao ren (persica semen)

Dan Shen (salviae miltiorrhizae)

Bai jiang cao (patrinia herba)

Lian qiao (Forsythiae Suspensae Fructus)

Hong teng (sargentodoxae caulis)

Li zhi he (litchi semen)

Dang gui (angelica sinensis radix)

Xu duan (dipsaci radix)

Yin yang huo (epimedii herba) 9

Gui zhi (cinnamomi ramulus) 6

Tai zi shen (pseudostellariae radix) 12

The focus of treatment is

- Break up static blood accumulations to reduce endometrial implants
- Clear damp and phlegm
- Detoxify and clear damp heat
- Boost Kidney yang
- Support qi and blood .

Formula construction and therapeutic strategy

The main part of this formula targets the endometrial implants directly. The rest of the formula supports the Kidney yang and the qi and blood.

We start with classic formulas like Tao He Cheng Qi tang (Peach Kernel decoction to Order the qi), or Gui Zhi Fu Ling wan (Cinnamon Twig and Poria Pill) both of which have been used for many hundreds of years to dispel blood stasis and masses in the lower abdomen. These formulas both combine Tao Ren (to break up stasis and stop pain) and Gui Zhi (to unblock the vessels so that stasis can be expelled).

This action is strengthened with the addition of Da Huang which attacks blood stasis and guides it out of the body, along with any associated heat or phlegm heat. We use the prepared form of Da Huang to reduce its purgative effect.

Next we expand the formula using modern ideas and research findings. A modern formula like Hua Yu Li Shi Tang (Transform Blood stasis and resolve Damp decoction), not only clears stasis but also reduces inflammation and moderates auto immune reactions. Strong blood invigorating herbs are used in combination with herbs which clear damp heat to achieve these aims.

E Zhu and San Leng are commonly used when there are masses that need to be reduced. E zhu is particularly potent at reducing accumulations and masses in the abdomen. It does this by transforming blood stasis and expelling phlegm and whittling away at the mass. San Leng works in conjunction with E Zhu breaking up stagnation of qi and blood.

Using the cu prepared version of these herbs reduces their harsh drying nature, facilitates the dispersal of stasis and relieves pain.

Augmenting this action we add another three herbs which regulate blood, Pu huang, (Sheng) shan zha and Dan Shen.

Pu huang is an important addition to the formula – it regulates blood but also stops bleeding leaving no foci for the formation of future blood stasis. This is crucial since we want to stop endometrial implants bleeding internally into the pelvic cavity and increasing internal accumulations such as chocolate cysts on the ovary.

Shan Zha is a more gentle blood invigorating herb, another one that is useful in reducing abdomen masses.

Dan Shen is employed in this formula to not only expel retained blood but to settle the mind and soothe the emotions. This is an important part of pain management. And as we saw in the formulas for autoimmune infertility, Dan Shen is well known for its anti inflammatory action.

Dang gui is added to protect, reinforce and gently move the blood.

The next part of our formula addresses internal inflammation more strongly.

Bai Jiang cao and Hong Teng resolve blood stasis and clear heat and damp and any toxic accumulation in the pelvis. Thus any local inflammation or hostile immune reactions which might be destroying gametes or making the environment inhospitable for an embryo will be subdued.

A third herb in this category adds yet more support. Lian Qiao expels toxins and clears phelgm heat and dissolves nodules. At the same time it clears Heart fire.

The last herb we use to clear stagnation is Li Zhi he which regulates qi, especially in the Liver channel and around the ovaries and fallopian tubes. It helps to dispel cold and blood stagnation causing pain in these areas.

At the same time that we are vigorously breaking up internal accumulations, we must support the Kidney yang, and protect the qi and the Blood.

Hence we add Kidney yang tonics, Xu duan and Yin Yang huo, to boost the Kidneys and improve ovary function. Warming and steaming the yang is an important feature of pelvic health and prevents further endometriosis forming. This is Ming men at work.

Xu Duan is our herb of choice here since it has the dual attributes of boosting Kidneys while at the same time invigorating blood and relieving pain.

Yin Yang Huo warms and unblocks the flow of Yang qi so that the conditions for more endometriosis forming are not supported.

Gui Zhi, which we described earlier in terms of its ability to unblock channels so that stagnant blood could be removed, also plays a part in warming the Yang, transforming thin mucus secretions and moving accumulated phlegm, balancing and complementing the action of the cold herbs like Bai Jiang Cao and Hong Teng.

Finally we add some more support in the shape of Tai zi shen, a qi tonic which has a moistening quality to balance the drying nature of some of the other herbs.

Reinforcement and circulation of the qi is important as we start to break up and remove the debris of stagnant Blood. Tai zi shen and Li Zhi He help to achieve this aim.

Herbs; Flavour, nature and site of action

Herbs used to invigorate Blood and dispel stasis.

(Cu) *San leng* (sparganii rhizoma)

Bitter and neutral. Liver and Spleen channels.

(Cu) *E zhu* (curcuma rhizoma)

Acrid and bitter, warm. Liver and Spleen channels.

Pu huang (Typhae pollen) (from Stop bleeding category)

Sweet, neutral. Liver and Pericardium channels.

(Sheng) *shan zha* (Crataegi Fructus) (from Relieve food stagnation category)

Sweet and acidic, slightly warm. Spleen, Stomach and Liver channels.

Tao ren (persica semen)

Bitter and sweet, neutral. Liver, Lungs and Large Intestine channels.

Dan Shen (salviae miltiorrhizae)

Bitter, slightly cold. Heart and Liver channels.

(Zhi) *da huang* (Rhei radix et Rhizoma) (from purgative category)

Bitter, cold. Spleen, Stomach, Large Intestine and Liver channels.

Herbs used to clear Heat and toxicity

Bai jiang cao (patrinia herba)

Acrid and bitter. slightly cold. Stomach, Large Intestine and Liver channels.

Lian qiao (Fructus Forsythiae Suspensae)

Bitter, cold. Lungs, Heart and Gall-Bladder channels.

Hong teng (sargentodoxae caulis)

Bitter, neutral. Large Intestine channel.

Herbs used to regulate qi

Li Zhi he (litchi semen)

Sweet and astringent, warm. Liver and Stomach channels.

Herbs used to supplement Blood.

Dang gui (angelica sinensis radix)

Sweet and acrid, warm. Liver, Heart and Spleen channels.

Herbs used to supplement Yang

Xu duan (dipsaci radix)

Bitter, sweet and acrid, warm. Liver and Kidney channels.

Yin yang huo (epimedii herba)

Acrid and hot. Liver and Kidney channels.

Gui zhi (cinnamomi ramulus) (from Exterior releasing category).

Acrid and sweet, warm. Heart, Lungs and Bladder channels.

Herbs to reinforce/supplement Qi

Tai zi shen (pseudostellariae radix)

Sweet and slightly bitter, neutral. Spleen and Lung channel.

Prescribing Jade Disperse 1

This formula is designed for use with robust patients with severe endometriosis, who have plentiful qi and blood. For patients who are less robust, but nevertheless have severe endometriosis this formula can still apply but in a cautious manner (see below).

The way this formula is used depends on whether the patient is actively trying to conceive or not.

For patients not trying to conceive this formula can be used quite aggressively throughout the menstrual cycle. Or it may just be used in the latter two weeks of the cycle, leading up to the period. In general it is advisable for women with severe endometriosis to delay attempts to conceive for a few months while the endometriosis is treated. Jade Disperse 1 can be taken for a few months after which time, if a patient wants to try to conceive she can combine it with Jade Moon Phase treatments as described below.

In patients with severe endometriosis who are currently trying to conceive there are two approaches to the use of this formula.

Jade Disperse 1 can be taken throughout the menstrual cycle until the implantation window (5 days after ovulation). This is then followed with Jade Moon Phase 4 for last week of cycle, returning to Jade Disperse 1 once the period starts.

A less forceful approach is to prescribe Jade Moon Phase 2, 3 and 4 to be taken at the appropriate time of the month up until a pregnancy test gives a reliable negative reading (this can be done using a sensitive HcG test on first morning urine 10 or 11 days after ovulation) whereupon Jade Disperse 1 can be resumed until and throughout the period.

If an endometriosis patient has significant pain during ovulation Jade Disperse 1 can replace Phase 3 Jade Moon, but if conception is being attempted that cycle its use should be limited to a few days and only when there is pain.

With endometriosis patients trying to conceive, watch for improvements in the luteal phase on the Basal Body Temperature charts. If the luteal phase is maintained well ie the temperature is high and stable for at least 12 or 13 days, then we can be sure that the Kidney yang is functioning optimally and it is less likely endometriosis will reoccur.

Sometimes Jade Disperse 1 is prescribed to a patient who does not have a robust constitution but who has significant and substantial endometrial implants with severe signs and symptoms of stagnation. Judicious and timely use of Jade Disperse 1 can be very effective. You would only use it in short bursts in the few days before a period or

during the period for example.

Defer use of this formula during the acute phase of an infection or attack by an external pathogen.

Jade Disperse 2

Endometriosis - not robust

One can't dispel and scatter too much in weak patients. But the endometrial implants still have to be broken up. Jade Disperse 2 uses herbs which break up blood stasis but its prime aim is to fortify Kidney yang first then yin, blood and qi, so that the endometrial lesions can be reabsorbed. Or at least their development slowed. This is done by encouraging the proper hormonal milieu.

Yin yang huo (epimedii herba)
Xu duan (dipsaci radix)
Tu si zi (cuscatae semen)
Gou qi zi (lycii fructus)
Huang qi (astragali radix)
Dang gui (angelica sinensis radix)
Ze lan (lycopi herba)
Dan shen (salviae miltiorrhizae)
San qi (notoginseng radix)
(Cu) Xiang fu (cyperi rhizoma)
Yan hu suo (corydalis rhizoma)
Niu xi (achyranthis bidentatae radix)
Rou gui (cinnamomi cortex)
Tao ren (persica semen)
Hong hua (carthami flos)
(Cu) San leng (sparganii rhizoma)
E zhu (curcuma rhizoma)

Focus of treatment

- Boost Kidney yang
- Regulate blood and qi
- Invigorate blood to clear stasis
- Break up static blood accumulations

Formula construction and therapeutic strategy

Jade Disperse 2 borrows elements from a classic formula like Ge Xia Zhu Yu tang (Remove Stasis from below the diaphragm decoction) and a modern formula like Bu Shen Qu Yu fang (Supplement Kidney and dispel blood stasis formula).

We support the Kidney yang and qi first, then move qi and blood, finally adding herbs (in modest doses) which break up accumulations.

We begin with three Kidney yang tonics Yin yang huo, Xu duan and Tu si zi to address the fundamental deficit that can create the conditions for endometriosis to develop in some women.

Yin yang huo boosts Kidney yang and the Fire of Ming men, unblocking the flow of yang qi. Tu si zi also encourages the movement of primal yang, and at the same time augments the Kidney yin and nourishes the Liver. Xu Duan is useful here for its dual role in boosting Kidney yang and also invigorating Blood. Together they ensure the pelvic environment is such that blood moves vigorously and any bleeding or debris in inappropriate parts of the pelvis is dealt with efficiently.

Three more tonics follow, Gou qi zi for the yin, Huang qi for the qi and Dang gui for the blood. Gou qi zi is used here mostly for the protection and reinforcement it offers the Kidney yin. But it also nourishes Liver blood and supports the action of the Kidney yang tonics. Dang gui will both reinforce and move the blood.

Huang qi is a strong qi tonic which also supports the action of the Kidney yang tonics. Where there is blood stasis there is often accompanying qi and blood deficiency which arises as a result of the obstruction in the channels and collaterals. This is especially the case if the blood stasis is chronic or longterm. As we start to remove stasis, reinforcement and circulation of the qi must be encouraged with herbs such as Huang qi, to help remove accumulated stagnant blood.

As discussed in the immune infertility formulae, Huang Qi is also an important herb for moderating immune function.

Xiang fu plays an important role (along with Huang qi) in ensuring that the qi is capable of moving the blood and also any products of endometriosis tissue which have been broken down, such that they are expelled efficiently. Xiang fu keeps the qi moving at the blood level.

Alongside the tonics we must remain mindful of the need to clear any blood stasis. We do this with the help of herbs such as Ze lan, Dan shen, San qi, Yan hu suo, Tao ren, Hong hua, Dang gui, San leng, E zhu and Niu xi.

Ze Lan and Dan shen are often used together to reduce abdominal masses. Ze Lan dispels blood stasis gently and Dan shen then helps to expel the retained and stagnant blood while settling the shen. San Qi is used to stem internal bleeding from the endometriosis tissue into the pelvic cavity, at the same time as transforming the static blood. Yan hu Suo is particularly potent at relieving pain since it reaches deep stagnation, moving both the blood and the qi at the blood level. Hong Hua and Tao Ren are used here in modest doses and work synergistically to dredge and regulate blood flow.

E zhu and San Leng used in smaller doses than the previous formula, help to dissolve endometriotic implants or cysts by dispelling stagnant blood and phlegm and promoting the flow of qi.

Niu Xi supports the action of all the stasis dispelling herbs and guides the blood down so it is expelled smoothly from the body.

Rou gui is added in small amounts to enhance the blood moving action of other herbs. It warms the Yang and moves the blood, helping to break up endometriosis and relieve pain.

Herbs; Flavour, nature and site of action

Herbs used to supplement Yang

Xu duan (dipsaci radix)

Bitter, sweet and acrid, warm. Liver and Kidney channels.

Yin yang huo (epimedii herba)

Acrid and hot. Kidney and Liver channels.

Tu si zi (cuscatae semen)

Acrid and sweet, neutral. Liver and Kidney channels.

Herbs used to supplement Yin

Gou qi zi (lycii fructus)

Sweet, neutral. Liver, Kidney and Lung channels.

Herbs used to supplement Blood.

Dang gui (angelica sinensis radix)

Sweet and acrid, warm. Liver, Heart and Spleen channels.

Herbs used to supplement Qi

Huang qi (astragali radix)

Sweet, slightly warm. Spleen and Lung channels.

Herbs used to regulate Qi

(Cu) *Xiang fu* (cyperi rhizoma)

Acrid and slightly bitter, neutral. Liver and Stomach channels.

Herbs used to invigorate blood and dispel stasis.

(Cu) *San leng* (sparganii rhizoma)

Bitter and neutral. Liver and Spleen channels.

(Cu) *E zhu* (curcuma rhizoma)

Acrid and bitter, warm. Liver and Spleen channels.

Tao ren (persica semen)

Bitter and sweet, neutral. Liver, Lungs and Large Intestine channels.

Dan Shen (salviae miltiorrhizae)

Bitter, slightly cold. Heart and Liver channels.

Ze lan (lycopi herba)

Bitter, acrid and aromatic, slightly warm. Liver and Spleen channels.

Hong hua (carthami flos)

Acrid, warm. Heart and Liver channels.

Yan hu suo (corydalis rhizoma)

Acrid and bitter, warm. Heart, Liver and Spleen channels.

Niu xi (achyranthis bidentatae radix)

Bitter and acidic, neutral. Liver and Kidney channels.
San qi (notoginseng radix) (from Stop bleeding category)
Sweet and slightly bitter, warm. Liver and Stomach channels.

Herbs used to warm the interior

Rou gui (cinnamomi cortex)
Acrid and sweet, very hot. Kidneys, Spleen, Bladder and Liver channels.

Prescribing Jade Disperse 2

This formula is designed to treat endometriosis in a patient who is deficient in qi and blood, or yin or yang. Endometriosis patients can take this formula at all times of the menstrual cycle if they are not trying to conceive. It can be taken for several months while being monitored.

Where conception is attempted concurrently there are two strategies.

Jade Disperse 2 can be taken until the implantation window (5 days after ovulation). This is then followed with Jade Moon Phase 4 for last week of cycle, returning to Jade Disperse 2 once the period starts. Jade Moon Phase 4 can be continued if conception occurs.

Or Jade Moon Phase 2, 3 and 4 are taken at the appropriate time up until a pregnancy test gives a reliable negative reading (this can be done using a sensitive HcG test on first morning urine 10 or 11 days after ovulation) whereupon Jade Disperse 2 is taken until and throughout the period.

In endometriosis patients trying to conceive, watch for improvements in the luteal phase on the Basal Body Temperature charts. If the luteal phase is maintained well i.e. the temperature is high and stable for at least 12 or 13 days, then we can be sure that the Kidney yang is functioning optimally and it is less likely endometriosis will reoccur.

Another time that Jade Disperse 2 might be employed is in a patient who has just had surgery to remove endometriosis. Then you might want to use the more gentle endometriosis formula (even in a robust patient) to keep the internal environment such that the endometriosis does not reoccur.

If conception is attempted, combine the Jade Disperse 2 formula with Phase treatments 2 – 4 as described above.

For an infertile patient who has had endometriosis diagnosed on laparoscopy, but has no symptoms of stagnation (such as pain), you need to strengthen the Kidney yang and clear phlegm and damp to clear mucus secretions from the end of the Fallopian tubes and restore fertility. In cycles where conception is attempted, Jade Disperse 2 is used during the period (or just before if there has been a reliable negative first morning urine HcG test). It is combined with Jade Moon Phase 2 during Phase 2 but in Phase 3 and 4 it should be combined with Damp clearing herbs until there is a negative HcG test, then switch back to using Jade Disperse 2 up until and during the period.

Defer use of this formula during the acute phase of an infection or attack by an external pathogen.

