

COVID-19 vaccines and thrombosis: a review

Part two – Integrative approaches

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As well as conventional approaches, traditional, complementary and integrative medicine have a role to play in the treatment of COVID-19, during both acute and chronic stages of the infection. One would hope for more attention to funding and referring to such services from healthcare providers, and it is to be applauded that there is an integrative approach in China and India.

For example, the Chinese government released a series of 'National COVID-19 Diagnostic and Treatment Guidelines' from January 2020, which provided useful Chinese medicine diagnostic information, treatment strategies and herbal formulae to the Chinese herbal practitioner community. A summary report can be downloaded from the Chinese Centre for Disease Control and Prevention. There are several tools within the heritage of Classical / Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM). Classical texts such as the *Huang Di Nei Jing (Inner Canon of the Yellow Emperor)* are fundamental. *Shang Han Lun (Treatise on Cold Damage Diseases)* was compiled by Zhang Zhongjing prior to 220 AD, around the end of the Han dynasty. It comprehensively describes six stages of disease from exterior pathogenic factors.

Wen Bing Xue (Warm Disease Theory) is particularly relevant for epidemic type diseases and infectious outbreaks, including COVID-19. This body of work was developed from the Ming and Qing dynasties onwards.

Much greater integration between anthroposophical and conventional medicine took place, especially within primary and secondary clinics / hospitals in Switzerland and Germany; see news release by the International Federation of Anthroposophic Medical Associations (IVAA). See also publications by Halle and Hindes.

The Clifcol (Clinical File Collection) project is an international database of homeopathic case reports and case series, to which registered homeopaths can submit their data. Reporting has so far revealed useful insights, for example into genus epidemicus prescribing.



A number of COVID-19 guidelines are available from the Ministry of AYUSH, India, including specific treatment guidelines for Ayurveda and homeopathy practitioners.

This article does not discuss the above projects and guidelines, but focuses instead on integrative approaches relevant to the cardiovascular risks of COVID-19 vaccines. Information on doses of individual remedies is not mentioned, as that depends on the homeopath's judgement when individualising the case.

Anthroposophical medicine and the cardiovascular system

It is beyond the scope of this article to include a fuller discussion on the blood and circulation from the perspective of anthroposophical medicine (based on the indications of Rudolf Steiner). The references include several publications for

interested readers. However, a brief synopsis follows:

The four aspects of a human being are the Ego (Self or Individuality), astral body (comprising the forces of emotion, desire and sensation), etheric body (the vital energy, facilitating growth, development, metabolism and life) and physical body (the vehicle for grounded manifestation). All four are ever-present in each part of the anatomy, and a true understanding of physiology can only take place by comprehending the interaction of these subtle forces on the physical. Thus the heart is regarded as both a spiritual organ as well as material, and with sensory functions as well as motor. The blood does not circulate solely through a mechanical pump process of the heart. Rather, there is primarily an 'etheric pump', whereby forces from the world ether stream into

Blood is like a constantly moving stream

the blood as it circulates through the capillary beds. Since etheric energy has forces of buoyancy and levity (anti-gravity), this vitalises the blood with more than enough upward motion to overcome gravity, and return to the right side of the heart via the venous system.

Hence the blood is more like a constantly moving stream moved by energy rather than mechanical force. Indeed, the heart functions more like a 'dam', whereby the cardiac valves close to transiently stop the continuous movement of blood within the ventricular chambers towards the end of the diastolic re-filling of these chambers. This enables the Ego individuality to 'be still and know thyself', or experience a moment of self-reflection. The blood is a vital fluid permeated by Ego, imparting esoteric forces of identity, memory of one's biography and blueprints for life destiny. ▸

▷ Meanwhile, the forces of the astral body are especially active within the muscular tone and contraction of the cardiovascular system, including the contractility (strength of contraction) and rhythm of the heart and the tone of the arterial smooth muscle walls (and hence the blood pressure).

Coagulation can thus be understood in a deeper manner, as the ability to maintain the integrity of the whole organism to heal an injured surface (blood vessel lining) and set a limit in corporeal space (or to have a sufficiently firm boundary of Self to the external world). On the one hand, the blood must function in relative 'openness' to the outside world (in particular being permeable to the diffusion of gases through the lung alveoli), but must be prepared to set an outer limit if a rift occurs in the integrity

of the vessel wall. In pathological states, a polarisation of the Ego can be discerned in how the coagulation system operates. Hence, in bleeding disorders the Ego cannot firmly enough grasp and set limits to the circulation, and may be too diffusely spread into the realm of ego-less or self-less consciousness. Conversely, chronic or recurrent clotting disorders typify blood ego states that are too ego-centric or self-centred, protective of self identity. However, a further complication arises if the outside or external world also excessively invades the realm of the blood and internal anatomy. Note that blood will clot when drawn out of the body. Although there is an obvious activation of clotting factors, from an esoteric angle, the blood is no longer residing within an internal space defined by the Ego, but is

open to the telluric forces of the Earth (which cause a precipitation or materialisation to take place).

Hence blood is constantly in a balance between the opposing forces of coagulation and anti-coagulation, fine-tuned in such a manner that it remains a flowing fluid during normal health. Indeed, the arterial blood has more the nature of a high-pressure fluid with gaseous properties compared to the more viscous fluid of the venous circulation. This finely tuned balance is pushed to one side or the other during physiological or pathological states. The clotting reaction involves a precipitation process within the blood, of soluble fibrinogen into insoluble fibrin, and the clotting factor cascade of reactions represents a progressive and amplified but tightly constrained materialisation of blood to ensure



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the Ego re-establishes the integrity of its vital fluid.

Rudolf Steiner often also spoke of the blood clotting process as an expression of a subtle antimony process. In anthroposophical philosophy, antimony is a key element (at trace levels within the body bordering on potentised) for establishing and maintaining the vitality of the etheric body whilst this is bound to the physical body. Antimony has a tendency to form clusters of filaments or needles, such as when heated. This form-making process is internalised at subtle levels into the clotting process, and is evident in the shape taken by the activated platelets and mesh of cross-linked fibrin.

Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) and herbal approaches

It is useful to consider thromboembolism from the perspective of TCM, which has a sophisticated approach to understanding this as blood stagnation (reduced circulation) leading to blood stasis (vessel obstruction). A summary of principal energetic syndromes that can cause blood stasis are (Neeb):

Qi stagnation – in TCM the blood is moved by the life force of energy or qi, hence stagnation of this can lead to blood pathology. From an anthroposophical medicine perspective, this is equivalent to disordered

Much greater integration between anthroposophical and conventional medicine took place

etheric primary flow of the blood from the capillary beds and dysfunctional astral energy not moving the arterial blood.

Qi deficiency – chronic disease typically exhausts the qi, and leads to weakened blood vitality as well as circulation.

Yang deficiency with cold states – the yang is the qi that especially warms the interior and the blood. When it becomes deficient pathogenic cold can invade, the blood can become thick and viscous and thereby stagnant or, even worse,

undergo stasis.

Pathogenic heat damaging the blood – the heat can consume the vital fluids; including blood, causing this to thicken and become scorched as a destructive process. This can occur during fevers and infections.

Injury causing blood stasis – prior or recurrent tissue injury may lead to poor healing and chronic blood stagnation, which can deteriorate into stasis.

Blood deficiency – this can occur, for example, after acute or chronic blood loss / haemorrhage – also causing exhaustion, nutritional disorders or anaemia. Reduced blood flow results from the lowered blood volume and vitality.

Yin deficiency or dryness states – this can occur as part of chronic ageing, long-term exhaustion or chronic fluid loss, etc. The reduced yin forces in the body lead to higher blood viscosity as well as deficiency.

Phlegm combined with blood stasis – phlegm here means more than simply mucus, but can include chronic inflammation within the blood compartment as well as metabolic disturbances such as arteriosclerosis. Phlegm binds with and restrains other pathogenic states, thus it can trigger and aggravate any tendency to blood stasis.

From the viewpoint of acupuncture and Chinese herbal prescription, making an accurate energetic diagnosis enables a rational treatment strategy, as each requires a different methodology. Space limits a full discussion of treatment protocols, but three groups of blood stasis herbs can be differentiated:

- 1) **Blood harmonising herbs** – these have overall less blood invigorating or mobilising effects but work more to nourish and / or cool blood. Examples include Crataegus (hawthorn berry or flower), Rehmannia (Sheng di Huang), Salvia (sage), Rosa (rose).
- 2) **Blood moving herbs** – these include many classic blood stasis herbs, mobilising the blood

Hirudo is a medicinal leech



▷ more vigorously than group 1. However, over the long term they could weaken the blood, and thus should be combined with group 1 blood nourishing herbs. Examples include *Gingko biloba* (maidenhair tree), *Levisticum* (lovage), *Curcuma longa* (turmeric), *Leonurus* (motherwort).

- 3) **Blood stasis breaking herbs** – these are the most powerful for breaking up established blood stasis deposits or thrombosis. They can remove obstruction from vessels. Typically they should be used for relatively short periods and / or within a balanced formula with other herbs. Examples include resinous herb products such as Myrrh, Draco or *Daemonorops* (Dragon's blood), *Hirudo* (medicinal leech – note that TCM animal products are restricted within the UK).

Typically TCM herbal treatment encompasses all three categories into a balanced formula. If only one herbal medicine could be selected as a general health support before and after the vaccine, consider *Levisticum officinalis* (lovage). Belonging to the *Apiaceae* (formerly called *Umbelliferae*) this is a prominent traditional herb for headaches of any causation. It also promotes blood circulation, is a bronchodilator and eases nerve cramps and spasms.

Homeopathic approaches

Of course, any herbal or homeopathic treatment is recommended as part of an integrated medicine approach, and can be complementary to conventional medical management. There are many possible remedies within our *materia medica*, and following are a small selection as examples. Furthermore, I have integrated TCM patterns with their homeopathic profiles (further commentary can be found in my *materia medica*).

Anacardium – blood stasis obstructing internally within. Withdrawal of the spirit, chronic lack of

enthusiasm for life and chronic introversion can all insidiously cause qi stagnation and blood stasis. This then obstructs internal channels and organs; the shen (spirit) of the heart is not calm. Symptoms include labile emotions, agitation alternating with catatonia and speaking to oneself, paranoid delusions, hallucinations, a stagnant dusky facial complexion and headaches. Some cases are more suggestive of phlegm-damp obstructing internally, especially caused by chronic worry and anxiety leading to spleen yang deficiency and excessive damp formation. There is particularly a blockage within the stomach and spleen middle burner, causing gut obstruction.

Anthracinum – fire within blood and blood heat toxins, this is a more severe state than simply heat within the blood. Features include dark, purple skin or surface spots from charring and destruction of the blood. It may begin as exterior heat pathogen invading the

There is an alchemical relationship of gold to the sun. A lack of inner solar quality in one's life imparts depression, with bleak pessimism for the future. A balance is needed between the earthbound state and the elevation of the soul into spiritual freedom

body, but all chronic states have persistent interior fire. Continued deterioration may cause shock, dark or black haemorrhages and convulsions.

Arnica – localised qi and blood stagnation and heart blood stagnation / stasis, often arising from trauma. Bleeding arising out of injury leads to collections of blood within the local tissue, and may become a persistent blockage to further qi flow. Pain is fixed, stabbing or boring in nature, with dark coloured blood stagnation, bruising, palpable masses, mental depression and irritability.

Aurum – this particularly matches heart blood stagnation, which is invariably a part of a wider heart yang deficiency, heart blood deficiency or oppressive heart fire pattern. The features include palpitations, angina chest pains and poor circulation. Underlying there is liver qi stagnation with liver blood stasis, manifesting as irritability, melancholy, depression





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and reduced appetite. If this liver pattern becomes transformed into liver fire then further symptoms can occur, e.g. anger, bitterness, frustration, headache and acid reflux.

Strokes and paralysis may occur when liver fire ascends to affect the nervous system. *Aurum* is also in many ways a prominent remedy to promote long term emotional and spiritual recovery after the pandemic.

Camphora – its profile matches that of the collapse of yang energy. This causes chilliness, pallor and weak pulse. Collapse of yang can be the final end stage of life, with risk of impending death, and inability to control the blood and fluids. There is profuse oily sweating, weak breathing, hypotension and shock. Phlegm damp may also accumulate within the head and orifices, clouding the consciousness and causing delirium, confusion and coma.

Crotalus horridus – this correlates well with deficient qi not holding the blood, and yin deficiency

with heat agitating the blood.

One function of qi is to control the blood and guide it within the blood vessels, especially yang qi. Spleen qi deficiency leads to blood spilling out of the vessels, and there is often sinking of the spleen yang, causing bleeding within the lower orifices (vagina, urethra, bowel). Such bleeding tends to be fresh and bright red in appearance. Heat may also lead to bleeding, causing blood to behave recklessly and spill out. Such bleeding may be upwards (e.g. epistaxis, haemoptysis) or downwards. Where stasis also occurs due to heat obstructing the blood vessels over a long period of time then bleeding tends to be darker and clotty.

Elaps – (see image on page 24) blood stasis and phlegm fire within the channels and organs. This is a complex mix of internal pathogenic factors arising out of qi deficiency, causing yang to rise and create interior hot wind. This creates phlegm, which often combines with the fire

A true understanding of physiology can only take place by comprehending the interaction of these subtle forces on the physical



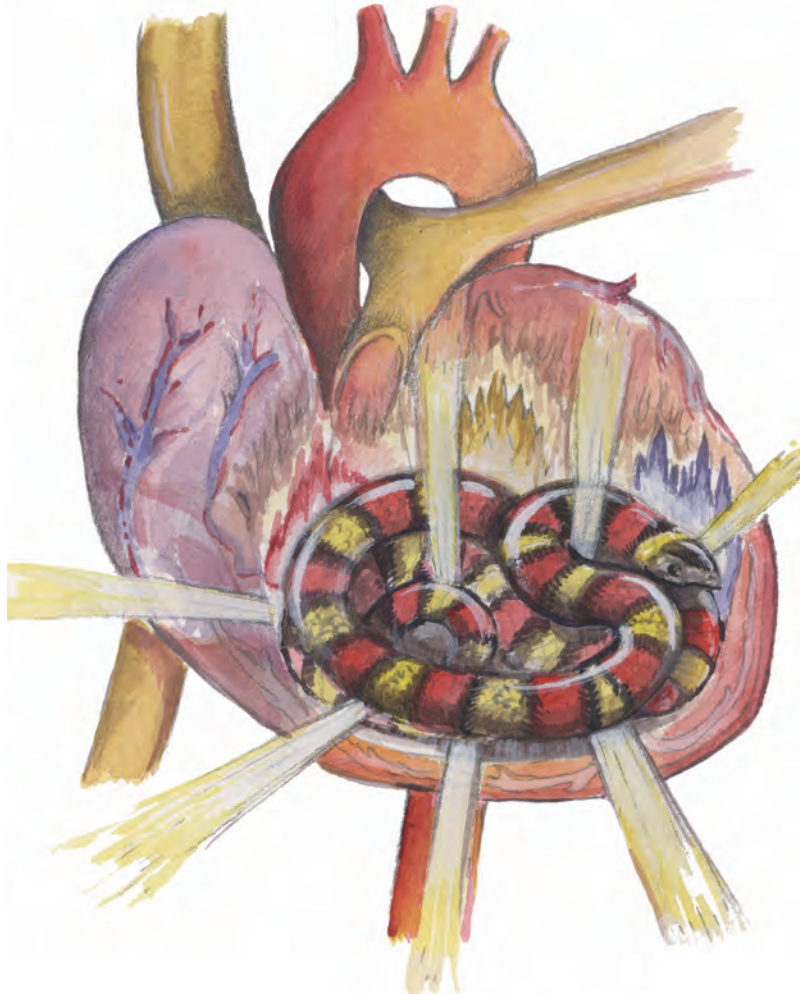
▷ to form phlegm fire. Both blood stasis and phlegm fire can obstruct the meridians to cause wind stroke, equivalent to a cerebrovascular accident. With predominance of blood stasis there is limb stiffness with pain.

Gunpowder – this remedy is a good example of a combined pattern of heat toxin damage and exterior pathogenic factors destructively entering the blood level, especially to cause blood phlegm heat afflicting the infected organ or region. There is blood stasis, marked qi deficiency and severe rifts in the defence qi. The phlegm also provides the ground for further pathogenic factors to become lodged, perpetuating the sepsis. The image is suggestive of destructive pathology in the brain, of which venous sinus thrombosis is one rare cause.

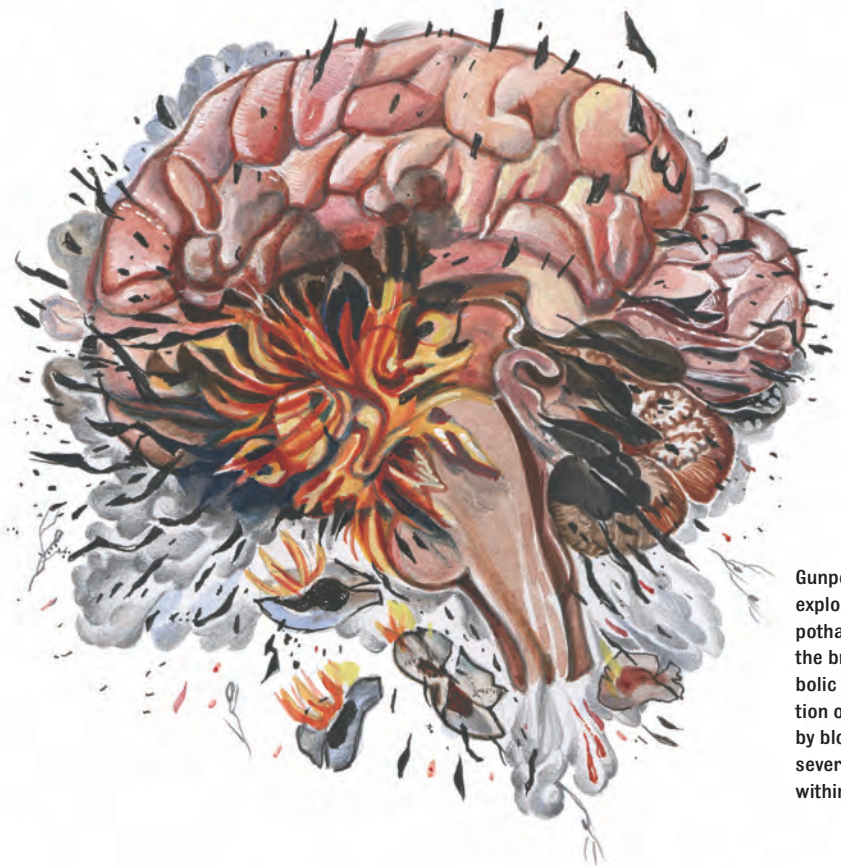
Hecla lava – internal fire and blood stasis within the local tissues. Symptoms include dryness, fluid stasis, bleeding, ulceration and destruction of affected organs.

Lachesis – full heat in blood, phlegm heat obstructing the lungs and phlegm fire harassing the heart. This remedy features several pathologies characterised by fire and heat obstruction and destruction. Exterior pathogenic heat may invade the interior during weakness of the defence qi, or interior factors may transform into heat. Symptoms include hot flushes, skin eruptions and bleeding. Phlegm heat may enter and obstruct the lungs with productive cough, breathlessness and chest discomfort. The phlegm fire can damage the heart; symptoms include palpitations, mental restlessness, insomnia, confusion, and coma in severe cases.

Latrodectans mactans – heart fire blazing, leading to heat congealing heart blood and heart blood stasis. Heart fire may result from liver



Elaps depicted inside the heart. Snake remedies have an affinity for the cardiovascular system and blood



Gunpowder and explosion of the hypothalamus within the brain, as symbolic representation of destruction by blood toxins and severe heat / fire within the blood

fire rising, which in itself can also cause wind stroke (cerebrovascular accident). The heat eventually congeals or decomposes the blood within the heart, leading to stasis or thrombosis. The features then include angina, chest oppression or constriction, cyanosis and dusky cold peripheries.

Naja naja – heart yang deficiency, leading to heart blood stagnation. The lack of heart yang causes a failure to move the blood. The features include palpitations, breathlessness, tiredness, sweating, chest discomfort, cyanosis and chilliness.

Pyrogen – correlates with fire / heat toxins in the blood, typically matching a state of septic shock. Features include fevers, red skin eruptions and bleeding. Eventually the yang may collapse, causing chilliness, breathlessness, profuse sweating with an oily sweat, and hypotensive collapse.

Radium bromatum – wind fire invasion, leading to yin deficiency and fire heat congealing the blood. As blood vessels become damaged with congealed clotted blood, then dark coloured haemorrhages occur (e.g. disseminated intravascular coagulation).

Sanguinaria – heat within the blood, with heart fire blazing. Blood heat may occur from external invasion, but often also stem internally from chronic stagnation, typically within the liver and heart. Liver fire ascends and leads to irritability, angry outbursts, temporal headaches, bitter taste, mouth ulcers, insomnia, constipation, vomiting blood or haemorrhage generally. Heart fire blazing causes palpitations, hypertension, angina and restlessness.

Secale – stasis of blood anywhere within the circulation, but especially within the liver, intestines and uterus. The problem usually stems from liver qi stagnation, which is often due to long-standing melancholy, anger, frustration and resentment. The features include a dark complexion, purplish lips, face and nails, pain which is fixed, deep and stabbing, abdominal masses (of

congealed blood and fluids), dark coloured bleeding with dark clots, painful periods, and premenstrual tension. Uterus blood stasis especially causes painful clotting, dark bleeds and miscarriages, whilst intestinal pathology manifests as bleeding within the stools.

Syphilinum – kidney and heart yin deficiency, leading to heart fire blazing. Eventually heart blood stasis can occur, due to heat congealing the blood. Features then resemble angina with severe chest pains and cyanosis. Since kidney essence and yin creates the marrow of the brain, and heart blood nourishes the brain, the final insult is often blood stasis and marrow deficiency within the brain. This presents as brain tumours, strokes or dementia patterns.

Tarentula (hispanica or cubensis) – exterior heat invading pericardium and insulting the heart, also phlegm fire harassing the heart. This external heat damages body fluids and tissues to cause necrosis and sticky phlegm. Symptoms include mental restlessness, angry outbursts, manic depression, confusion, insomnia, incoherent speech, palpitations, and eventually destruction of heart tissue.

Vipera – heat invading the pericardium, heat and fire causing congealed blood and blood stasis within the heart and circulation. Congealed blood and blood stasis within the heart presents as palpitations, angina and chest pain, stuffiness and constriction of the chest, cyanosis, and cold peripheries. This may also occur in regions of the blood circulation, causing localised coagulation, bleeding, pain and tissue necrosis.

Notice the prevalence of snake remedies in my short-list as pathological similars for thromboembolic disease. In summary, if a genus epidemicus prescribing methodology was being considered as support during the vaccine, I would personally select homeopathic *Ar-nica* and herbal *Levisticum*. Further individualisation based on pathological risks would also suggest a homeopathic snake if there was a

Anthroposophical medicine describes in great detail the nature of the Ego and the nature of the heart

prior history of thromboembolism, and *Aurum* if there was underlying cardiovascular disease.

Conclusion

There are many aspects of thromboembolic disease that have not been covered in this article, in particular the predisposing factors to this condition. For example, a common cause in Traditional Chinese Medicine is underlying chronic liver qi stagnation, which largely matches states of chronic anger, depression, frustration, resentment and so on. It is worth exploring the link between mental health and the effects of pandemic lockdown. Thromboembolism does not therefore necessarily occur in isolation without other causative layers, such as liver and heart syndrome patterns. Anthroposophical medicine describes in great detail the nature of the Ego and the nature of the heart as both a spiritual organ with sensory and cognitive functions as well as material and motor. A deeper consideration of this is relevant for both diagnosis and therapy. For example, depression, poverty (at both material and spiritual levels), joylessness, spiritual emptiness, lack of personal fulfilment or destiny, are all issues faced by millions during the pandemic and with profound effects on long-term health.

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In bleeding disorders the Ego cannot firmly enough grasp and set limits to the circulation

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