

Pulse diagnosis, a reliable diagnostic tool?

Xin - Heart

Each patient will present the acupuncturist with a complex set of symptoms or a western diagnosis. We, as practitioners, need pulse diagnosis as a tool to confirm the weakest or stagnated qi. The pulse, radial artery on the wrist, is an objective way to confirm the cause of the disease.

What can we diagnose on the pulse of the xin?

In the first place, as the most superficial layer on the xin pulse, shows the condition of the *jing jin* (tendo-muscular channel) of the shou shao yin (heart channel), and which can be diagnosed. It is not common to see patients presenting symptoms of pain, as a sign of stagnation of qi, of *jing jin* of the shou shao yin, in the arm. In this case, we as practitioners have to be aware that pain on the medial side of the (left) arm, could be a sign of a heart infarct. Sending the patient to the nearest hospital is advisable.

Secondly, the *jing bie* (divergent channel) of the shou shao yin, can be diagnosed. Psycho-somatic symptoms of the shoulder will be reflected on the xin pulse.

Furthermore, the *jing mai* (main channel), will reflect its condition on the pulse. The qi of the *jing mai*, is responsible for the physiological functions of the xin. The Nei Jing mentions functions of the xin as: the overall controller, nourishes of the blood, seen in the brightness of the eyes (via a branch from Ht-5), vessels of the heart and the brain, and more. A heart infarct and c.v.a. is felt on the xin pulse as an emptiness.

The *luo mai* (connecting channel) has a branch towards the eye. This is the reason why a typical round shaped hardness, is felt on the xin pulse with people wearing contact lenses.

The condition of the *heart organ* is also diagnosable on the xin pulse. Conditions such as a heart infarct, enlargement of the myocardium, valve failure and heart failure can be felt on the pulse. What can be felt as hardness, is the implantation of a stent into one of the coronary arteries. It is even possible to feel in which part of the heart. In this case the pulse has to be divided into four parts. The most distal part reflects the atriums, from which the left one is on the ulnar side, while the proximal part reflects the ventricles.

Xue, is an aspect of the qi. The *fei* is the master of the qi and the *xin* the mother of *xue*. This indicates that on the xin pulse the condition of the blood, especially the red aspect, can be diagnosed, like anaemia, although the rate of ferritin is felt on the *gan* (liver) pulse.

The spiritual aspect of the *xin* is the *shen* (spirit). Emotional, psychological and psychiatric diagnoses as depression, hysteria, bipolar and psychosis, is seen as a weakness / emptiness of the *xin* pulse.

Last but not least, is the *du mai*. The *du mai* is responsible for the brain and the spinal cord. Diagnosis of the brain, like epilepsy, will show as a weakness, while blocked and dislocated (mainly cervical) vertebrae, will give a feeling of a blocked *xin* pulse.

What can we feel more on the xin pulse, and should not be part of diagnosis?

As the xin reflects the condition of the xue, blood, many different types of medications will be felt on the xin pulse:

Anti-epileptic medication, as tegretol and depakine, can be felt as a wiry and tight condition of the xin.

Different types of psychiatric medications, like antidepressant, stimulants, antipsychotic, mood stabilizers and anxiolytics & hypnotics, have their influence on the xin pulse. Examples are: citalopram, zoloft, seroxat (covers the shen - spirit with a 'pinkie blanket'); ritalin and concerta (speeds up the xin qi); haldol, risperdal (blocks the shen); lithium (is a salt, and feels like hard metal on the pulse); valium, mogadon, xanax (gives a bloated, blocked feeling of the xin pulse).

Antibiotics. There are two types of antibiotics that are felt on the xin pulse: amoxicillin and doxycycline. They express as coldness and hardness on the xin pulse. All the other antibiotics are diagnosed in the gan (liver) pulse.

Besides medication, there are many food supplements felt on the xin pulse:

Vitamin C will give a sharp feeling of the xin. Some of the minerals, like phosphorus, copper, zinc, selenium and manganese are felt on the xin pulse. They present themselves as hardness on the pulse. Each of them has its own specific quality.

Mineral and vitamin shakes, taken to lose weight, will express itself as a 'hurricane' on the xin pulse.

Herbal medicine. Chinese herbs prescribed to patients are always felt on the xin pulse. The herbs are active in the blood or xue. Some powerful herbs will give the same sensation of the xin pulse, as chemo therapy.

Hashish and cannabis will have an action up to 6 weeks after usage on the body. The action can still be felt 6 weeks after intake, even if it was just one joint. The shen (spirit) will feel like an emmenthaler cheese, soft, broad and full of holes. Blood examination will also give up to 6 weeks marks of cannabis.

The already mentioned contact lenses can pull our leg, to misinterpret the pulse, like the stent that is brought into the coronary arteries. A valve replacement with a metal artificial valve is felt like a piece of metal.

Laser treatment for the lens of the eyes is applied with a blue laser. This invasion of coldness will give a reaction of heat, felt on the surface of the xin pulse. The luo mai of the shou shao yin is affected, and shows the heat.

The tubercle bacteria are used as a therapy against bladder cancer. A swill-trough of the bladder with lambd tubercle bacteria, is used as treatment. This action on the body will be felt as coldness in the xin pulse.

Many different expressions of the xin pulse are presented above. All of them are on the same level within the pulse, in the yin aspect of the fire. There is not so much a *deeper* or *superficial* level, although some presentations of the xin pulse are like a layer on top, like the contact lenses and reactive heat of the laser. All of the above, on page 2, should be taken into consideration, but not as part of the diagnosis.

Peter C. van Kervel