Introduction to Depression Types

What I know is that that doesn't really tell me very much. There are four or five different very, very clearly delineated types. And what works for one, let's say selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors, or SSRIs, will work for 1. It doesn' work with the other four.

That's why you see them largely being ineffective if you're just kind of throwing them at. Hi and welcome to The Balancing Point. I'm Dr. John Needers and I am here to make traditional Chinese medicine.

functional medicine and integrative health simple, practical and fun so you can restore balance, boost vitality and enjoy a healthier life every single day.

Hi, this is Dr. John. I want to thank you for joining me here on The Balancing Point and today I have kind of a fun presentation to do with you. I interviewed a woman named Lori Hammer last week.

Her podcast will be coming out soon, that edition. And Lori met Julia Ross many decades ago. Julia is the person who came up with this idea of the mood cure, using amino acids to help treat depression.

She's been very, very successful. And now Lori does that, she's very very uh successful also. she loves working with perimenopausal or menopause women that uh have children and are totally stressed out.

Anyway, I really enjoyed speaking with Lori. Now, this concept of the mood cure is a book that Julia published many, many years ago. And in it, she originally identified four different types of depression.

She now has a fifth. I'm only going to talk about the first four today. and how to treat them.

Mood Cure Framework and TCM Overview

So what I'm going to do is take her ideas and then show you side by side how traditional Chinese medicine would treat and has treated and does treat those very same depressions.

Now, one of the first questions when someone comes in and says depression, what is that that doesn't really tell me very much. Because there are four or five different very, very clearly delineated types.

And what works for one, let's say selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors, or SSRIs, will work for 1. It doesnt work with the other four. That's why you see them largely being ineffective if you're just kind of throwing them at general depression.

And so one of the major distinctions for me is, are you having negative self-thoughts? Are you constantly just like a dog with a bone perseverating, et cetera, with very negative thoughts?

And I contrast that with apathy. You're tired, you're worn out, You just don't care. you don' want to get off the couch. Now, sometimes those can exist together, but that's kind of a basic delineation.

And then we'll get into it a little deeper. So, Julia identified these four types in the book, The Mood Cure. The dark cloud of low serotonin, the blaws of the low catecholamines, thus stressed out type from low GABA.

It doesn't matter what's happening in a world, they're stressed-out. And then the too sensitive type, from the endorphins. Now, in TCM constitutional basics, we, of course, listen to all of those things, but we identify things a lot by the eight principles.

Is it internal or external? Is that hot or cold? is it deficiency or excess? Is it yin or yang? Then we look at the five phases, which often gets translated as elements, The elements were known, but it's actually phases and you move from phase to phase from wood to fire to earth to metal to water.

And then there's the Zong Fu system. So that's. The internal organs and there are the zong, which are, the active organs, you know, heart, liver, kidneys, et cetera.

and then, there, are The Fu or empty organs that hold things like your stomach and your intestines. And then there's a system called the Chi and blood system.

And so we're going to look at Julia Ross's ideas and see how they fit into TCM constitutional basics. So dark cloud of serotonin. You've all seen this.

Hopefully you haven't experienced it. Um, and so. Repetitive, negative, obsessive thoughts, often accompanied by low self-esteem or insomnia and craving for sweets.

Serotonin, we need to remember, is largely made and released in the gut. Different estimates, I've seen 80 to 95 percent, but it's a lot. It's released into the got.

And it is a largely dependent, once again, on our microbiome like almost everything else in our lives are.

Low Serotonin: Dark Cloud Depression

the bacterial imbalance in our gut. It is responsible for rhythmic circadian flow of mood, emotions, and sleep on a daily, monthly, or annual basis. When serotonin drops too low, the dark cloud envelops the heart mind, or the xin, in Chinese medicine.

And so SSRIs can be effective for this condition. Now, eventually, they kind of wear out, and they're hard to go off of because your body has readjusted to that high level of SSR- I'm sorry, of seratonin.

And so for this one, Julia recommends precursors, such as for serotonin boosting, like 5-HTP, which is 5 hydroxy tryptophan, or trypophane. That's kind of at the core.

Now, she would recommend some other things also, but that's the cord. You've got to get that into the body. Now some possible TCM treatment patterns, and again, there's not a one-to-one correspondence.

And the dark cloud and irritability point to liver depression, chi stagnation. This is very common in the United States. In Chinese medicine, we say that the cause of liver-depression is unfulfilled desires.

The entire U. S. Um, lifestyle is every ad you see is to create a sense of lack. It's sense. Of needing something of wanting something. So, you know, school, kids go, I have kids that were getting tutored to get into the best preschools and then to.

Get into. The best grammar schools to, get. Into the. Best high school. They get the, best college, so they could get to the, best at master's program.

so, they can get, into, the.best. a doctoral program, so that whole time they have unfulfilled desires. So the classic formula for this is one of the two best formulas, selling formulas in the United States called Xiao Yaosan.

Sometimes it's called the peaceful, easy wanderer. My wife calls it peace and love in 20 minutes. And if there's significant irritability and PMS, you change that to a little stronger formula called Danzhi Xiao Yao San.

If there are the repetitive obsessive thoughts and the latent of the carb cravings are, those are textbooks, spleen, chi, and blood deficiency. And the classic base formula for that is called guai pitong, which is often called the student formula.

After you've been in school long enough. And I would see in a four-year master's program, this could show up by the end of the first year. And Guay Pitong will get them through for a while, and then we have to shift to a little stronger formula to get him through school and get through the state board exams.

So, number two, the blahs of low catecholamines, dopamine, epinephrine and norepinephrin. So here the symptoms include apathy, poor focus, low motivation, physical and emotional lethargy.

It's just like everything seems too hard. You'd rather just sit in your recliner. Now these people need stimulants to wake up the brain. Coffee, chocolate, tea, stimulant drugs.

These people would go for uppers. Epinephrine is primarily known for causing changes in heart rate and the strength of the contractions. So when you see a tiger is the classic example, you want a lot of epinephrine because your heart needs to beat faster to pump more blood.

You also need norepinephrin because that causes the blood to move from the internal organs and be routed to the extremities and brain to allow us to run away from tiger.

Now here's the problem. Those are both very heating and very damaging to the system if you have too many of them too much of the time. But also dopamine is the precursor for epinephrine and norepinephrin.

Low Catecholamines: Blahs and Low Drive

And when you get depleted dopamine with continued stress, you're in deep trouble. You don't care about anything. We're a culture that craves dopamine.

Craves dopamine, every time you get a like and you press it, you'll get little shot of dopamine. It's why slot machines, why people love them. They get this little jolt of, dopamine or a big jolts of.

Dopamine if they hit a jackpot. So, but the dopamine is completely depleted because we use too much of it. And it's the major reward chemical. So most common Chinese medical patterns are kidney-yong deficiency and spleen-chi deficiency.

So the catecholamines represent the body's fire, the drive, and the active vitality. And these are the physical aspect of what we call the gate of life, or Ming Men fire.

So Ming men fire is the Gate of Life located between, there's some disagreement, between the kidneys, which means the adrenal glands, are focused more on one than the other.

But anyway, this is adrenal energy, because the catecholamines, epinephrine and norepinephrin, in the adrenal glands. For the kidney yang aspect, the base formula could be Shen Qi Wan.

There are many options, but that's one of them. Now, in order to raise the Shen, or the spirit, My mom used to always say, the eyes are the windows to the soul, Johnny.

And it's true, that we can see the Shen. We can if people are there, their spirits full, which in this condition doesn't have the Mingmen spark, they heat, needed to push it upward.

For that, we would classically use the most popular formula in China, Buzhong Yichitong, to help to pull up the center. Very, very popular formula. Here, we're more into the stress formulas.

There, they're into pulling things up. GABA, or it has been called Nature's Valium, it's that critical and so wonderful. So this is GABE aminobutyric acid, is the primary inhibitory neurotransmitter in the brain.

Epinephrine, norepinephrin, cortisol are all activating, activating different systems in your body. And GABA is the primary thing that slows them down, inhibits them.

This type of patient presents as being completely overwhelmed, including having an overwhelmed nervous system, always stressed, tense, unable to relax, anxious, like all the time.

Most people are susceptible to having some anxiety around certain events that we don't like, but these people were anxious all the time. I have patients that would send me emails every day, every because they're so anxious about what they've eaten and what did 20 years ago.

And so these are generally GABA deficient. Now it's easy to find a list of GABA rich foods, but most of them you have to eat a lot to get enough GAba.

So I would recommend if this is you, that you do a GABa supplement. Now I'm not recommending anybody take anything without professional support, um, But I wouldn't use GAB or supplements that support GAbA because those can alleviate this condition and it needs to be alleviated.

You, these people will die very young. Right. In fact, I have several patients that every time they come in and they're so stressed out about things that happened 20 years ago, 10 years.

And they were wondering if that will kill them. I say, no, what will you is your anxiety because you're pumping yourself full of stress hormones. So.

Low GABA: Anxiety and Overwhelm

In the whole Yin-Yang, Yin being the substantial, the cooling force, Yang being energetic heating force. Gaba is classic Yin. It cools, it grounds, anchors the nervous system.

And the most common TCM patterns for this are liver, yin and blood deficiency and possibly liver-yong rising or heart-yin deficiency. And so again, we'd be looking at the whole person, not just this one condition to see what's at core of it.

The base formulas for this condition are generally Xuanzhou Rentong or Tianhuang Buxiandong. And people will look at it and say, well, those are sleep formulas, both of them.

Well, Tianhuan Bixiadong is a classic cortisol manager. and Xuanshou rentong can calm people down enough that they can actually sleep and not have to lie in bed perseverating.

And always remember that most formulas would have additions or subtractions. I say the base formula is swanzail runtong. Yesterday I gave that, but I had three other herbs that I added to it to fit the particular person and presentation.

Then we have the two sensitive, the low endorphins. Now, our natural pleasure reward system, so you talk to runners and they have to run because they need that runner's high, right?

After a mile, it's different for everybody, but after a few miles, they start getting this just incredible high. And they feel great. They feel better than when they're doing any other activity.

That's from the increased endorphins. Now, low endorphins, the symptoms include extreme emotional and physical sensitivity, crying easily. I mean, you know, just over things that most people would not even, maybe even notice.

Feeling emotionally hurt and reactive to slighted, to the slightest perceived stressors. These people are usually comfort eaters. But they're also often very picky eaters.

They don't want to eat nutritious food, they are not attracted to it, but they want comfort food. Right? They want something that's going to pick up their energy.

And this is also associated with low levels of natural pain relief. and reduce feelings of comfort or pleasure. You got

no endorphins, you're in trouble.

So I've observed significant increases in this pattern over the past few years. This is something I rarely saw two decades ago, but now I'm seeing it a lot.

A lot, it's frightening. And one of my associates currently has four young nieces with this condition. Constant and tense overreaction to the slightest issues.

You know, mom says, no, you can't go to movies. Hours of crying and swearing. hostility, slamming doors, right? And so that's a low endorphins. Now for this, so I've been talking about herbs, but acupuncture works extremely well with this condition.

It's hard to get those people into the clinic to, to to acupunture. But if we can, there are very specific electro acu puncture frequencies that can help with endorphin release.

It's quite magical. These were mapped out in the 50s by a Professor Han in Beijing, where he mapped which frequencies caused the release of which neurotransmitters, opioids, endorfins.

etc. In Chinese medicine, this condition is usually consistent with heart blood deficiency, heart chi deficiency and liver yin deficiency. So you got a lot of organs there.

And older females, so this is perimenopausal, menoposal and postmenopasal. This was often been called dry organ syndrome. In the younger kids, it doesn't really fit all the characteristics of dry organ syndrome, but it's very consistent.

Low Endorphins and Sensitivity

So, ganmai datsaotong is traditionally used for this condition during perimenopause or menopausal. I now use it with many young female patients also. Bottom line.

If you consider yourself depressed, or you've been diagnosed with depression, Or you have family members with, quote, depression. You need to determine the type that you're dealing with here.

So there's a fifth type, which is about glucose receptors in the brain. But that wasn't something I remembered from Julia's book. There are moderately effective pharmaceuticals available for about half of these conditions.

About half them, there are moderate effective conditions, but Even though the pharmaceuticals can be effective, all, that's capital ALL, All drugs have side effects.

There have been years when 10,000 people died from aspirin alone. So, you know, there are no drugs without side-effects. None. Try diet. supplements, lifestyle changes, and traditional Chinese medicine first.

Now, acupuncture is basically side effect free. As long as it's done by a trained acupunturist, there were a rash of problems done, by physical therapists, without extensive acu- puncture training, a punctured lung to a very famous professional football player who is then out of commission for months.

Now, I don't want to scare you because acupuncture doesn't do that if it's done by an acupuncturist. I am the chairperson of the Acupunctury Advisory Committee for a major malpractice insurance company and the cases that we see are done by non-acupuncturists.

So herbal medicine also has a better safety record than any pharmaceutical.

Treatment Takeaways and Safety

The Cleveland Clinic had an herbal program and they track things very closely and there were exactly three side

effects from approximately 500,000 prescriptions.

Now you give any drug to 500 thousand people and you're going to get a lot of side effects. And these were minor. One person had nausea, one person at diarrhea, and one had itching.

So before you go the drug route, try diet, supplements, lifestyle changes and TCM first. So thank you. I really appreciate your being here with me and hope you tune into our next podcast.

In the meantime, be happy, Be healthy. Thank you for joining me on The Balancing Point. If you enjoyed today's episode, please follow the show, share it with a friend and leave a review.

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