



10. Neurodermatitis (niu pi xuan)

Key Symptoms: a chronic inflammatory skin disease with paroxysms of pruritus and development of lichenoid changes to the skin that may be raised and rough. Generally, on the neck, wrist, elbows, ankles or anal region. Scratching makes it itchier. The skin looks like that of an ox's nape: stubborn, tough, hard, like rotten wood when scratched (thick and leathery). Alternative names: lichen simplex chronicus (LSC) or scratch dermatitis.

It is different from psoriasis which is more widespread and involves extensor aspects of the limbs especially the extensor aspect of the elbows and knees and can sometimes spread to affect the entire body including the nails and scalp.

Also, it is different from eczema which is characterized by dry, rough, thickened and scaling lesions, a deepening and widening of the cleavage lines of the skin, hyperpigmentation or hypopigmentation. Itching can be moderate or intense. Eczema is also more wide-spread than Neurodermatitis.

TCM Etiology: emotional depression, exogenous wind, improper diet, overwork, overthinking that injures the Spleen and Stomach, or side effects of drug

TCM Pathophysiology:

1. Emotional factors such as depression, nervous tension, irritability and stress lead to Qi Stagnation that can transform Heat and generate Fire. Fire and Heat accumulate and lie latent in the Ying and Xue levels leading to exuberant heat in the Blood which generates Wind. Wind leads to Dryness which manifests as severe itching and desquamation
2. Enduring Blood Heat damages, Yin and Blood, resulting in Ying Qi and Blood Deficiency which further damages the movement of fluids in the channels and vessels. Skin is deprived of necessary nutrients. Lesions manifest as thickened and rough plaques. Blood Deficiency generates Wind leading to Dryness and itchy skin with scales
3. Invasion of Pathogenic Wind Damp Heat is retained in the flesh and interstices (cou li) rather than being disperse. This transforms Heat at the Ying and Xue levels. Long Term retention of Wind in the interstices causes disharmony in the channels and vessels leading to chronic disease

**Friction caused by clothing or scratching the skin can aggravate the disease causing lichenification.

<i>Relevant Western Diseases:</i>
Neurodermatitis

Pattern	Key Signs and Symptoms	Tongue and Pulse	Treatment Principle	Point Selection	Additional Therapies
Wind due to Blood Heat	Slight elevated flat-top red papules which quickly become confluent to form red plaques with well-defined borders. Skin becomes rough, deepened skin rises appear and a thin layer of fine dry scales covers the plaques. Severe itching and excoriation lead to bloody crusts + restlessness, dry mouth, thirst and poor sleep	T: red and thin, yellow coat P: Wiry, Slippery or Slippery, Rapid	Clear Heat, cool Blood, disperse Wind and alleviate itching	Sedate: LI11, SP10, BL40, GV14, GV16, GB20, GB31 Tonify: SP6, ST36, PC6 Encirclement needling: Ashi points to circle the lesions	Herbal Rx: Xiao Feng San (Wind Dispersing Powder) Lifestyle: identify and eliminate the factors that are causing the itching whether that's food, drug or clothing Electro acupuncture: Ashi points around the lesions directed towards the center of the lesions
Wind Damp	Rough, thickened infiltrative, lichenified plaque resembling the skin on the neck of an ox, local intense itching	T: Red or Crimson with a scanty coat P: Deep and Rough	Stop Wind, transform Damp, Clear Heat and alleviate itching	Tonify: ST36, SP3, CV12, BL20 Sedate: LI4, SP9, GB31, LI11, BL40, SP10	Herbal Rx: Xiao Feng San (Wind Dispersing Powder) + Shen Ling Bai Zhu San (Ginseng, Poria and Atractylodes Macrocephalae Powder) Lifestyle: identify and eliminate the factors that are causing the itching whether that's food, drug or clothing
Blood Deficiency with Wind Dryness	Rough, thickened, dry skin + insomnia, yellow urine, dry stools	T: pale, dry P: Thin, Weak	Nourish Blood, moisten the skin, dispel Wind and relieve itching	Tonify: ST36, SP3, LR8, BL20, BL18, BL17 Sedate: GB20, LI4, GB31	Herbal Rx: Dang Gui Yin Zi (Chinese Angelica Drink) Lifestyle: identify and eliminate the factors that are causing the itching whether that's food, drug or clothing