



15. Vitiligo (*Bai Bo Feng*)

Key Symptoms: more common in adolescents and young adults, less so in children. Circumscribed depigmented patches of varying number and size with sharp demarcated borders, which may seem inflamed with sensation of heat after exposure to the sun. Hairs may be white in some affected areas. Autoimmune vitiligo is small, symmetrically distributed white patches with irregular but clearly defined margins on the hands especially on the dorsum, wrists, front of the knees, neck and around body orifices like mouth, eyes, genitals, anus and umbilicus along with another autoimmune disorder like thyroid disorder, pernicious anemia or diabetes mellitus. Segmental vitiligo is less common, appears with unilateral white patches in a segmental distribution such as down a limb or a dermatome.

TCM Etiology: disharmony between Qi and Blood leading to malnourishment of the skin, EPI, emotions

TCM Pathophysiology:

1. Disharmony between Qi and Blood leads to malnourishment of the skin, leading to white patches on the skin
2. EPI such as Wind, Cold, Damp, Heat invade the skin and impair the diffusing function of the Lung Qi. EPI are retained in the channels and network vessels blocking movement of Wei Qi and blocking the pores
3. Seven emotions disturb the Qi functions leading to disharmony between Qi and Blood; if there is a Wind invasion, Qi and Blood Deficiency leads to Wind Dryness disturbing upwards leads to obstruction of the channels and vessels, hence the appearance of white patches
4. Anger damages Liver leading to obstructions in the channels and impedes the production of Blood, eventually leading to Blood Stasis between the skin and membranes
5. Overwork and excessive sexual activity lead to insufficiency of the Kidney Yin leading to Heart Fire with imbalance of Water and Fire and disharmony between Qi and Blood, depriving the skin of nourishment

Relevant Western Diseases:

Common Vitiligo
Autoimmune Vitiligo

Pattern	Key Signs and Symptoms	Tongue and Pulse	Treatment Principle	Point Selection	Additional Therapies
Wind Dryness	Affects young people up to mid-thirties, shiny white patches over the upper half of the body or throughout the body, patches appear suddenly and develop rapidly	T: red + scanty coat P: Surging, Rapid	Dissipate Wind and moisten Dryness	Tonify: SP6, LR8, KI6 Sedate: LR4, SJ6, GB20, GV16	Ear Acupuncture: Lung, Occiput, Endocrine, Adrenal Gland, points corresponding to the area of the lesions Seven Star: Ashi points (the sites of the lesions) Pricking and cupping: prick the center of the lesion in the shape of a plum blossom then apply fire cup to drain out blood Lifestyle: avoid eating seafood and stimulating food, cut down on acid fruit and vegetables like tomatoes, do not take vitamin C supplements Adjacent points by area: Head and Face: LI4, GB20 Abdomen: CV12 Chest: CV17 Upper Limbs: LI11 Lower Limbs: SP10, SP6
Damp Heat	Mostly seen in young and early middle aged, sometimes elderly, pale brown or pink patches around the seven orifices of the face or on the neck, develops faster in the summer and autumn, static in the winter and spring + the itching is more severe with sun and heat exposure	T: Pale red + thin or slightly yellow, greasy coat P: Soggy, Rapid	Eliminate Damp and clear Heat	Tonify: ST36, SP3, BL20 Sedate: SP9, LI11, GB34, GB31	
Cold Congealing	Mostly seen in middle aged or elderly, dull white patches on the lower part of the body and extremities, slow progression which persists for years or throughout life	T: pale red with thin, white coat P: Deep, Thready	Dissipate Cold and free the network vessels	Tonify: GV4, GV14, CV8, KI7, KI3, CV12	
Liver Depression	Mostly seen in women with irregular periods, pale pink patches, mostly limited to one location, occasionally over the entire body; with disease progression, the margins become more clearly defined, the disease worsens with excessive thinking and preoccupation and depression	T: dark red + scanty coat P: Wiry, Rapid	Soothe the Liver, move Stagnation, invigorate Blood and increase pigmentation	Tonify: LR3, SP6, SP10, LR2, BL17	
Kidney Deficiency	Affects mostly men, porcelain white patches with haphazard distribution, the disease progression is related to overwork and/or excessive sexual activity + impotence, dizziness, lassitude	T: pale red + scanty coat P: Thready, Weak	Tonify Liver and Kidney	Tonify: BL23, GV4, KI3, SP6 Sedate:	
				Moxibustion is applicable	
				Herbal Rx: Xiao Yao San (Free and Easy Wanderer Powder)	
				Herbal Rx: Liu Wei Di Huang Wan (Six Ingredient Rehmannia Decoction)	