Comparative study on WHO Western Pacific Region and World Federation of Chinese Medicine Societies international standard terminologies on traditional medicine: Diseases in Internal Medicine (Part 2)

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瘟疫 pestilence: a general disease term for virulent infectious epidemic

In Chinese language, both the characters 瘟 and 疫 refer to epidemic diseases or pathogenic factors that may lead to epidemic diseases. When used together, 瘟疫 may just mean epidemic diseases. But in the current translation practice, it is often translated as “pestilence” or virulent epidemic disease[1].

大头瘟 erysipelas facialis: an acute infection of the face marked by high fever and local redness, swelling, hotness and pain

In Chinese language, 大头瘟 literally means epidemic disease with swollen head. It is usually caused by attack of wind-warm pathogen or seasonal pathogenic factors, often characterized by redness of eyes, swollen head or sore-throat. It is also frequently translated as “swollen-head infection” as done in the WFCMS Standard[2].

湿毒 warm toxin: (1) warm pathogen combined with heat toxin; (2) any acute inflammatory disease attributable to contraction of such pathogen

In TCM, 湿毒 usually refers to infection, especially when used to describe skin problems. However, in the current translation practice, it is often literally translated as “toxin”, sounding a little bit inaccurate in semantics. The so-called 湿毒, as analyzed in the definition, may refer to both warm and toxic...
pathogenic factors or problems caused by these sort of pathogenic factors[13]. In the past, this term was often translated as “febrile toxin” or “febrile poison”. In order to maintain consistency in translation, it is now generally rendered as “warm toxin” as done in both international standards.

风湿 warm disease: a general term for acute externally contracted diseases caused by warm pathogens, with fever as the chief manifestation, also known as warm pathogen disease

In TCM,风湿 refers to either the disease caused by warm pathogenic factors or a specialty that studies and treats such a disease. In the early period of TCM translation, this term was frequently rendered as “exogenous febrile disease”, indicating that this disease is caused by external pathogenic factors and often characterized by clinical manifestation of fever. In order to make the translation of this term concise and equivalent to the original in structure, it is now generally rendered as “warm disease”. Though there are still disputes over such a translation, it is quite widely used in the translation field.

春湿 spring warmth: a warm disease contracted in spring

In TCM, the so-called春湿 refers to a sort of warm disease that often occurs or spreads in the spring, often marked by fever, thirst, dysphoria, yellowish and reddish urine, and reddish tongue. It is usually categorized into seven types, namely, stagnation of heat in the gallbladder, stagnation of heat in the chest and diaphragm, heat scorching the chest and diaphragm, intense heat in the stomach, heat binding in the yangming meridian with dual deficiency of qi and humor, exuberant heat in the yangming meridian and small intestine, and heat scorching the nutrient and yin aspects. In the translation practice, this term is either rendered as “acute spring febrile disease” or “acute seasonal febrile disease”, appearing somewhat wordy. To translate it as “spring warmth” looks quite concise. However, it does not sound like a medical term. In order to maintain the basic meaning of the original term, it can be changed into “spring warm disease”.

风湿 wind-warmth: a warm disease attributable to contraction of wind-heat pathogen

In TCM, the so-called风湿 refers to a sort of disease that is caused by a combination of pathogenic wind and warm factors, usually occurring in winter or spring, often marked by fever, slight aversion to wind and cold, slight thirst, cough and floating and rapid pulse at the early stage. The progress of this disease is characterized by normal progress, which refers to transmission of pathogenic factors in the lung-defense that fail to be relieved into the qi aspect, and abnormal progress, which refers to transmission of heat in the lung-defense into the pericardium.

中暑; 烈 summerheat stroke: an acute febrile disease attributable to contraction of summerheat, the same as heatstroke

The so-called 中暑 in TCM is almost the same as “heatstroke” and “sunstroke” in English, usually marked by flushed complexion, profuse sweating, dampness-cold in the skin and thin and weak pulse. Perhaps it is quite reasonable to use these two English words to translate 中暑.

冒暑 summerheat affliction: common cold in summer

The so-called 冒暑, in which 冒 means dizziness, is the same as 中暑 in TCM. This term was first used in the book entitled Effective Formulae Used in
the World (《世医得效方》) compiled by Wei Yi-lin.

暑薙: summerheat damage: a general term for various conditions caused by summerheat, especially for mild cases of heatstroke and sunstroke.

The so-called 偲暑, either of yin or of yang in nature, refers to diseases caused by sunstroke in summer as mentioned above. In the Discussion on Acupuncture, a chapter in the Plain Conversation, it says that “exuberance of qi with chilliness is caused by cold damage while deficiency of qi with fever is caused by heat damage”. Later on, it is used to refer to mild cases of heatstroke and sunstroke, as described in the Reflection of Medicine (《医学心悟》), compiled by Cheng Guo-peng and published in 1732, that “heat damage and heatstroke mean the same thing; the only difference is that the former is mild but the latter is severe”.[4]

伏暑: latent summerheat: an acute febrile disease caused by latent summerheat or summerheat-dampness pathogen, occurring in autumn or winter.

伏暑, used first in the book entitled Life-Saving Formulae (《济生方》), refers to pathogenic heat and dampness that attack the body in the late summer and lead to disease in the autumn. It is usually classified into four categories according to the time of onset, including latent summerheat occurring in the autumn (伏暑秋发), latent summerheat occurring late (伏暑晚发), cold damage due to latent summerheat (伏暑伤寒) and latent summerheat in the winter (冬月伏暑).[5]

暑痫: summerheat convulsions: a type of severe summerheat stroke in summer with loss of consciousness and convulsions.

暑痫, not included in the WFCMS Standard, is also frequently translated as “summerheat epilepsy” or “summerheat convulsive seizure”. This term generally refers to various febrile diseases caused by heat in the summer, including sunstroke, summerheat damage, latent summerheat, heatstroke, yang summerheat, yin summerheat, summerheat wind, summerheat syncope and summerheat diarrhea, etc. It may occur in the autumn due to latent summerheat.

暑湿: summerheat-warmth: a warm disease attributable to contraction of summerheat pathogen

The so-called 暑湿 is a kind of acute febrile disease caused by summerheat pathogen, usually marked by high fever, spontaneous sweating, thirst, reddened complexion, shortness of breath, large pulse in the right hand and changeability. This disease is usually seen in epidemic encephalitis B and often treated with the therapeutic methods for clearing away summerheat, replenishing qi and yin, and astringing fluid.

暑风: summerheat-wind: a disease marked by sudden onset of opisthotonos and convulsions caused by summerheat.

The so-called 暑风 usually refers to three pathological conditions, either summerheat damage complicated by wind attack with the manifestation of hand or foot convulsion to be treated by clearing away heat and repelling wind, or summerheat warmth disease caused by exuberant heat with the manifestations of unconsciousness and convulsion, or sever itching like being needled over with the manifestation of reddened skin to be treated by repelling wind and clearing collaterals.

滯溼: dampness-warmth: a warm disease attributable to contraction of dampness-heat pathogen

The so-called 滯溼 usually refers to three pathological conditions, either a kind of febrile disease occurring in summer due to attack of dampness-heat with the manifestations of lingering fever, heaviness of head, body pain, chest oppression, whitish slimy or yellowish slimy tongue coating and soggy pulse, or a disease marked by headache, chest and abdominal fullness, ravings, profuse sweating, syncope with convulsion and hematochezia, or mild case of leprous.

阴毒: yin toxin: a disease characterized by erythema and bluish facial complexion, accompanied by generalized pain and sore throat.

The clinical manifestations of the so-called yin toxin also include severe coldness of limbs, pain and heaviness of the body, opisthotonos, shortness of breath, nausea and vomiting. Besides, yin toxin is also used to refer to diseases like back carbuncle, brain carbuncle, scrofula and craneknee wind without any manifestations of redness, fever, pain and sweating.

阳毒: yang toxin: a disease characterized by erythema bright in color, accompanied by sore throat and spittle with bloody pus.

咳嗽: cough: (1) the expelling of air from the lungs suddenly with an explosive noise or expectation of spumtion; (2) any disease mainly manifested by cough.

干咳: dry cough: cough with no or little expectation.

干咳: also translated as “unproductive cough”, is often caused by fire stagnation, dryness damage or insufficiency of lung yin.

五更咳: fifth-watch cough: cough occurring or exaggerated daily just before daybreak.

The Chinese term 五更咳 is often translated as “early morning cough” or “cough before dawn” which sounds unspecific in time. To translate it as
“fifth-watch cough” appears strange at first sight, but is actually quite objective. In English language, the word “watch” refers to time in the evening. According to such a usage, the Chinese expression 五更 is certainly “fifth-watch” which sounds more equivalent than “early morning” to the original Chinese expression 早更.

肺咳 lung cough: cough due to ascending counterflow of lung qi

The so-called 肺咳 is also known as 肺经咳嗽 (lung meridian cough), usually marked by cough with asthma or hemoptysis, often caused by either cold attack or fire due to lung deficiency.

哮喘 wheezing and dyspnea: a diseased state characterized by paroxysmal labored breathing accompanied by a whistling sound, such as in asthma.

The so-called 哮喘 in TCM actually refers to two pathological conditions, namely, 哮 and 喘. The former is marked by rapid breath with whistling of sputum in the throat while the latter is marked by respiratory distress. If severe, elevated shoulders in breath and inability to lie flat can be seen in both cases. In the Authentic Discussion of Medicine (《医学正传》) compiled by Yu Tuan and published in 1515, it says that the whistling of sputum in the throat during respiration is known as 喘 while shortness of breath with distress is known as 哮. Since 喘 and 喘 tend to appear simultaneously, they are often used together as one single concept.

哮 wheezing: difficult and labored breathing with a whistling sound

喘 dyspnea: difficult and labored breathing

As described above, 喘 refers to a pathological condition marked by rapid breath with whistling of sputum in the throat. In the Essentials of Medicine (《医宗必读》) compiled by Li Zhong-zi, it says that 喘 is similar to 喘. The only difference is that 喘 is marked by opening the mouth to gasp for breath, but 喘 is not.

哮喘; 冷哮 cold wheezing: a type of asthma due to cold-phlegm obstructing the airway, marked by dyspnea with wheezing, cough with thin mucus expectoration, fullness and oppression in the chest, whitish and slippery tongue coating, and floating tight pulse

热哮 heat wheezing: a type of asthma due to retention of heat-phlegm in the lung, marked by dyspnea, wheezing, thick and yellowish expectoration, flushed face, thirst, reddened tongue with yellow slimy coating and rapid slippery pulse

实喘 dyspnea of excess type: dyspnea caused by external contraction, marked by rapid, forceful and coarse breathing with acute onset and short duration.

The so-called 实喘 is usually caused by exuberance of pathogenic factors due to external invasion of the six abnormal changes of weather, or stagnant heat caused by sputum fire, or retained fluid attacking the lung that leads to stagnation of lung qi and obstruction of the airway. It is usually categorized into cold dyspnea, heat dyspnea, sputum dyspnea, water dyspnea, and fire stagnation dyspnea, etc.

虚喘 dyspnea of deficiency type: dyspnea due to insufficient lung and kidney qi, marked by shortness of breath and dyspnea upon exertion, usually gradual on onset and chronic in nature.

The so-called 虚喘 is usually caused by constitutional weakness, longstanding dyspnea or damage of the primordial qi after severe illness that may lead to deficiency of visceral qi and failure of the kidney to receive qi. It is usually categorized into qi deficiency dyspnea, yin deficiency dyspnea and primordial qi deficiency dyspnea according to the location and causes.

短气 shortness of breath: rapid labored breathing

In the Essentials of Medicine, it says that 短气 refers to rapid and intermittent breath, usually characterized by dyspnea without sputum, stagnation of lung qi and no elevation of the shoulders in respiration. 短气 is either deficiency or excess in nature. Deficiency case, often caused by retained sputum and fluid, obstruction or qi stagnation, is usually characterized by emaciation, spiritual fatigue, low and weak voice, dizziness and lassitude, while excess case, often caused by physical weakness and damage of primordial qi due to longstanding illness, is usually characterized by distension and fullness in the chest and abdomen, coarse breath and chest oppression.

少气 shortage of qi: weak or faint breathing, also known as shallow breathing.

To translate 少气 as “shortage of qi” is obviously improper because 气 in 少气 refers to breath. In TCM, 少气 is used to describe the pathological condition marked by weakness of voice and shortness of breath, usually caused by qi deficiency in the five zang-organs, especially deficiency and detriment of lung qi, insufficiency of middle qi and depletion of kidney qi. It may also be caused by sputum, retained fluid, dyspepsia or obstruction of qi movement.

肺胀 lung distention: a disease of the lung characterized by persistent distension of the lung, manifested by a sensation of pressure in the chest, chronic cough and expectoration, shortness of breath or dyspnea, cyanotic lips and tongue.
Lung distension is frequently caused by retention of pathogenic factors in the lung that lead to distension and fullness of the lung. It can be treated by diffusing the lung and expelling pathogenic factors.

肺痈 lung abscess: abscess occurring in the lung due to heat toxin, marked by sudden onset of fever, cough, chest pain, expectoration of foul-smelling bloody purulent sputum.

Lung abscess is frequently caused by external contraction of pathogenic wind and heat toxin that accumulate in the lung and eventually lead to blood stasis due to heat retention. Its clinical manifestations also include chills and shortness of breath, often treated by clearing the lung and resolving sputum or releasing toxin and draining pus.

肺痨 lung consumption: a consumptive disease due to overstrain, characterized by cough, hemoptyysis, tidal fever, night sweating and emaciation.

In the current translation practice, 肺痨 is also frequently translated as “pulmonary tuberculosis” or “pulmonary phthisis”. In the WFCMS Standard[1], it is translated as “pulmonary tuberculosis”. To translate 肺痨 as “lung consumption” seems also reasonable because it is a consumptive disease.

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WHO 西太区与世界中医药学会联合会中医名词术语
国际标准比较研究：内科疾病（二）

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关键词：语言学；科学术语；翻译；英语；中医名词；中医内科疾病