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 7)

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KEYWORDS: linguistics; terminology; translation; English; terms; traditional Chinese medicine; internal diseases (TCM)

痰饮, phlegm-fluid retention: (1) a general term for retention of phlegm and fluid in any part of the body; (2) a particular designation for retention of fluid in the gastrointestinal tract, for example, gastric retention in pyloric stenosis.

The term 痰饮, first used in the Synopsis of Golden Chamber 《金匱要略》, generally refers to the disease caused by retention of fluid or infusion of fluid in any part of the body due to failure to transform and transport excessive fluid. In this term, 痰 refers to thick and turbid fluid while 饮 refers to thin and clear fluid. As a technical term, 痰饮 is used to describe two different pathological conditions. One is retention of fluid in general due to dysfunction of the lung, the spleen and the kidney in transporting and transforming fluid, which can be treated by warming and tonifying the spleen and kidney as well as draining water and removing fluid retention. The other, also known as flowing fluid retention (流饮), is the disease caused by retention of pathogenic factors in the intestines and stomach, characterized by losing weight, reduced appetite, borborgiums and sloppy stool, or accompanied by palpitation, shortness of
breath, vomiting and drooling, which can be treated by warming yang and transforming fluid.

支饮 pleural fluid retention: a disease characterized by excess fluid retained in the side of the thorax with stretching pain during cough.

The so-called支饮, also known as 痈饮, one of the four types of fluid retention, is caused by retention of pathogenic factors in the chest and hypochondrium, usually characterized by hypochondriac distension, fullness and discomfort, repeated cough with pain, and referred pain when turning the body and breathing, accompanied by retching, shortness of breath and deep taut pulse, which can be treated by expelling fluid retention.

溢饮 subcutaneous fluid retention: a disease characterized by excessive fluid of the body spilling outward to the body surface.

The term溢饮, first used in Simple Conversation (《素问》), one of the four types of fluid retention, refers to the disease caused by wanter flow and retention of fluid in the skin due to dysfunction of the spleen in transportation, usually characterized by pain and heaviness or swelling of the limbs, accompanied by panting and cough, which can be treated by warming the lung and inducing sweating.

支饮 thoracic fluid retention: retention of excessive fluid in the lung and chest.

The so-called支饮, one of the four types of fluid retention, is a disease caused by dysfunction of the lung in depuration and descent due to retention of pathogenic fluid in the chest and diaphragm that suppresses the lung, usually characterized by chest oppression, shortness of breath, cough, retching, inability to lie in supination, and swelling, accompanied by vertigo, blurred vision, blackish complexion and hard mass beneath the heart, which can be treated by warming the lung, resolving retained fluid and relieving panting.

伏饮 recurrent fluid retention: a disease characterized by phlegm-fluid lying latent in the body with episodes brought on by external contractions.

The term伏饮 was first used in Synopsis of Golden Chamber. It is a disease caused by repeated attack of phlegm and fluid retained in the body, usually characterized by panting, fullness, cough and spitting, or accompanied by aversion to cold, fever, backache and lumbago, spontaneous tearing and body tremor if attacked by external pathogenic cold, which can be treated by resolving retained fluid and removing pathogenic factors as well as fortifying the healthy qi and reinforcing the body.

微饮 mild fluid retention: a mild case of fluid retention mainly manifested by shortness of breath.

The so-called微饮 may refer to the mild case of fluid retention, but it is not a traditional technical term used in traditional Chinese medicine (TCM).

留饮 persistent fluid retention: a case of fluid retention with lingering course and difficult to cure.

留饮, another type of fluid retention, is also translated as "lingering fluid retention". Comparatively speaking, “persistent fluid retention” sounds more expressive. It may cause various disorders when retained in different regions, such as failure of yang qi in the governor vessel to rise when retained in the back, hypochondriac pain involving the clavicular fossa when retained in the hypochondrium, shortness of breath and panting when retained in the chest, pain of limb joints when retained in the meridians, abdominal distension and body heaviness when retained in the spleen, cyst and leg swelling.
when retained in the kidney. It can be treated first by eliminating fluid retention, and then by fortifying the spleen and warming the kidney as well as strengthening the healthy qi and resolving retained fluid.

汗证; 汗病 abnormal sweating: any diseased state characterized by generalized or local abnormal sweating

汗证 and 汗病 are seldom used in TCM. In TCM, there are various terms to describe abnormal sweating, such as profuse sweating (多汗 or 大汗), spontaneous sweating (自汗), night sweating (盗汗), cold sweating (冷汗), incessant profuse sweating (绝汗), shiver sweating (战汗), leaking sweat (漏汗), oily sweat (油汗) and great dripping sweat (大汗淋漓), etc.

脱汗 shock sweating: profuse sweating associated with listlessness, cold limbs, and hardly perceivable pulse, usually occurring in a critical case

The so-called 脱汗, same as 绝汗, is one of the critical symptoms caused by separation of yin and yang. That is why it was translated as “sweating in a critical stage”. In the current translation practice, there are various ways to translate 脱汗, such as “prostration sweating”, “sweating in shock” and “collapse sweating”. In the WFCMS Standard[11], it has adopted “collapse sweating”. This problem can be treated by restoring yin to prevent from collapse.

消渴; 消渴病 wasting-thirst: any diseased state characterized by polydipsia, polyphagia, and polyuria, similar to diabetes

消渴, also known as 消瘦, refers to three problems. The first is characterized by polydipsia, polyphagia and polyuria due to excessive taking of rich food or improper food, or emotional disorder, or lack of necessary physical activities, eventually leading to dryness and heat in the internal organs and yin deficiency with effulgence of fire, which can be treated by enriching yin, moistening dryness and reducing fire. The second is characterized by polydipsia and polyuria with sweet taste. The third is just a symptom of thirst in the cases of taiyang disease as described in the Treatise of Cold Damage (《伤寒论》). In the early period, 消渴 was translated as “diabetes”. Such a translation is obviously improper because 消渴 includes diabetes, but diabetes cannot cover the implications of 消渴. In order to reveal the basic meaning of this term, it was later on translated as “consumptive disease”, sounding much better than “diabetes”, but still inaccurate. In recent years, this term is frequently translated as “thirst disease”, sounding much better than previous translations. To translate it as “wasting-thirst” is a new trial.

上消 upper wasting-thirst: a wasting-thirst case characterized by polydipsia with excessive drinking

The so-called 上消, also known as 焦消 and 肾消, is one type of 消渴 characterized by thirst due to exuberance of fire in the heart and stomach with dryness and heat in the upper energizer, which can be treated by moistening the lung and clearing the stomach.

中消 middle wasting-thirst: a wasting-thirst case characterized by polyphagia and emaciation

The so-called 中消, also known as 消脾 or 消中 or 胃消, is the second type of 消渴 characterized by frequent hunger, emaciation, frequent urination and hard stool due to dryness and heat in the spleen and stomach, which can be treated by clearing the stomach and reducing fire as well as enriching yin and moistening dryness.

下消 lower wasting-thirst: a wasting-thirst case characterized chiefly by polyuria

The so-called 下消, also known as 消肾 or 肾消, is the third type of 消渴 characterized by blackish complexion, dryness of ears, more urination with less drinking of water and discharge of oily urine caused by deficiency of kidney water and dysfunction of the kidney in steaming and resolving water, which can be treated by tonifying the kidney and astringing water.

虚劳 consumptive disease: a general term for chronic deficiency diseases due to consumption of yin, yang, qi and blood

The term 虛劳, first used in the Synopsis of Golden Chamber, refers to either a variety of disorders caused by deficiency and damage of qi, blood and viscera or tuberculosis.

勞倦 fatigue due to overexertion: a diseased state caused by overexertion, manifested by fatigue, lassitude, shortness of breath upon exertion, and spontaneous sweating

勞倦, also known as 劳伤, is usually caused by internal damage due to emotional disorders, irregular activities, damage of spleen qi and decline of qi with exuberance of fire, characterized by fatigue, no desire to speak, panting on movement, spontaneous sweating due to external heat, dysphoria and restlessness. This term is usually translated as “overstrain” which is adopted in the WFCMS Standard[11].

积聚; 症瘕 aggregation-accumulation: a general term referring to mass formation in the chest and
abdomen, also called abdominal mass

The term 病, which literally means accumulation and gathering, refers to a disease characterized by abdominal mass or distension or pain. That is why it is usually simply translated as “abdominal mass” which is adopted in the WFCMS Standard[1]. If the mass is evident and fixed, if the distension and pain are severe, it is called 积 or accumulation; if the mass is latent and wandering with distension and unfixed pain, it is called 积 or gathering. This problem is usually caused by emotional depression, qi stagnation and blood stasis, or internal damage due to improper food, block due to phlegm and stagnation, or imbalance between cold and heat, or deficiency of healthy qi and retention of pathogenic factors. It can be treated by dispersing cold, resolving mass, removing stasis, promoting qi flow and strengthening healthy qi.

瘀; 瘀证 syncope: a morbid state characterized by temporary loss of consciousness with cold extremities up to the elbows and knees or beyond, the same as collapse

In TCM, 瘀 refers to three pathological conditions. The first is characterized by sudden fainting and unconsciousness. In most cases the patient can eventually come round. The second is characterized by coldness of limbs. The third is characterized by severe dysuria. Traditionally 瘀 is translated as “syncope” as indicated above. However, in the WPRO Standard[2], it is also translated as “reverting” and “reversal” in the part of “Syndrome Differentiation of the Six Meridians”.

瘀证 flopping syncope: an acute disease characterized by sudden fainting

瘀症, one type of 瘀, refers to severe case of syncope caused by sudden rage and characterized by sudden headache and vertigo, which is usually seen in cerebral hemorrhage and cerebral vascular spasm. In the current translation practice, 瘀症 is often translated as “severe syncope”.

瘀证; 瘀证 visceral syncope: syncope due to yang debilitation of internal organs

瘀证 and 虚证 mean the same thing because 虚 is the simplified form of 虚. In TCM, 瘀证 refers to the severe case of cold syncope characterized by coldness of the limbs due to extreme deficiency of visceral yang qi. In the Synopsis of Golden Chamber, it says that “visceral synopisis is characterized by extremely feeble pulse, coldness of skin after seven or eight days and restlessness”. It can be treated by restoring yang[3].

食瘀 crupulent syncope: syncope due to eating and drinking too much at one sitting

瘀证; 瘀证 heat syncope: syncope due to yin debilitation and excessive heat, also called scorching syncope

In TCM, 瘀证 and 瘀证 are two different types of syncope. Though similar to each other, they still differ etiologically and therapeutically. If the former is translated as “heat syncope”, the latter may be translated as “steaming syncope”. 瘀证 is either caused by insufficiency of yin due to exuberance of pathogenic heat with the symptoms of feverish palms and soles, fever and reddish urine or caused by failure of yang qi to reach the exterior due to exuberance of pathogenic heat with the symptoms of fever and headache followed by mental confusion, coldness of hands and feet, deep and slippery pulse, or aversion to heat, or thirst with the desire to drink water, or insomnia due to restlessness, scorching heat in the chest and abdomen, constipation and reddish urine. 瘀症 refers to syncope caused by internal heat scorching yin fluid due to frequent depletion of yin essence and hyperactivity of yang qi complicated by summer heat, often characterized by tinnitus, deafness, blindness, or even sudden fainting, usually seen in cerebral vascular spasm, cerebral hemorrhage and subarachnoid hemorrhage[4].

寒证 cold syncope: syncope due to yang debilitation and excessive cold

In TCM, 寒证 is a disease caused by yin deficiency and yang exuberance, usually characterized by coldness of hands and feet, aversion to cold, diarrhea with undigested food, no thirst, or characterized by body coldness, abdominal pain, flushed complexion, bluish nails, even fainting, light-colored tongue coating and feeble pulse. It can be treated by warming yang and replenishing qi.

风证 wind syncope: syncope due to transformation of liver qi into wind

In the “Chapter of Separate Discussion of Yin and Yang” in the Simple Conversation, it says that wind syncope is caused by double yang with single yin, characterized by fear, backache, frequent hiccup and yawning”. In the “Chapter of Discussion of Heat Diseases”, it explains that 风 (wind) refers to seating with fever while 瘀 (syncope) refers to sweating without relieving dysphoria and fullness”.

气证 qi syncope: syncope induced by emotional upset with upward flow of qi

气证 refers to syncope caused by disorder of qi movement, which can be divided into two types,
qi excess and qi deficiency. Syncope due to qi deficiency is characterized by fainting, bright white complexion, sweating with cold limbs and feeble pulse, which can be treated by tonifying qi and blood. Syncope due to qi excess is characterized by sudden fainting, panting and fullness in the chest and diaphragm, taut and slippery pulse, which can be treated by smoothing qi movement and relieving stagnation.

血瘀: blood syncope: syncope due to a fit of rage that causes an upward reverse flow of qi and blood, marked by flushed face and stringy forceful pulse.

血瘀 refers to two different pathological conditions. One is the severe case of syncope caused by stagnation of blood in the upper part of the body due to excessive hemorrhage or sudden rage that causes counterflow of qi, often characterized by sudden fainting, bright white complexion, coldness of limbs and extremely feeble pulse, usually seen in sudden metrorrhagia and hematemesis, which can be treated by replenishing qi and stopping collapse. The other refers to sudden fainting without suffering from any disease before, characterized by stiffness of the body, unconsciousness and lockjaw. In the latter case, the patient may eventually come round.

痰瘀: phlegm syncope: syncope due to exuberant phlegm that causes a qi block.

痰瘀 is a sort of syncope with coldness of limbs caused by exuberance of phlegm and qi block, which can be treated by resolving phlegm and descending qi. In case of excessive phlegm and severe block of qi, measures should be taken to induce vomiting first.

真头痛: true headache: a critical case of headache marked by sudden attack of severe pain in the head accompanied by nausea, vomiting, and counterflow cold of extremities up to the elbows and knees.

The so-called 真头痛, literally meaning “true headache” or “real headache”, refers to the severe case of headache caused by invasion of pathogenic wind cold into the brain. In the WFMS Standard, it is translated as “real headache”.

头风: 腭风: head wind: (1) chronic headache with repeated recurrence; (2) a general term for affections of the head caused by pathogenic wind, including headache, dizziness, facial paralysis, and itching of the scalp with much scurf.

In TCM, 头风 and 腭风 are two separate terms, though similar to each other in some way. 头风 is usually caused by attack of wind cold or wind heat, often complicated by retention of stagnated phlegm in the head meridians and collaterals. The clinical symptoms also include pain of the eyes or even blindness, or foul nasal discharge, or nausea and tinnitus, or numbness of the head and stiffness of the neck. It can be treated by expelling wind and unblocking collaterals, or supplemented by dispersing cold, clearing fire, resolving phlegm and expelling stasis. 腭风 (brain wind) is caused by invasion of wind into the brain, characterized by chilliness in the nape and back, extreme coldness in the brain and unbearable pain, which can be treated by warming and dispersing therapies. In the WFCMS Standard, 腭风 is translated as “recurrent headache”.

偏头痛: hemilateral head wind: chronic recurrent headache occurring on one side or one part of the head.

偏头痛, also known as 边头风 or 偏头痛, is usually caused by pathogenic wind attacking the shaoyang meridian or stagnation of phlegm and fire due to liver deficiency, which can be treated by expelling wind and unblocking collaterals, soothing the liver and discharging phlegm, or tonifying the liver and nourishing the blood. In the WFCMS Standard, 偏头痛 is translated as “migraine”. In fact, “migraine” is the natural equivalence of 偏头痛 in English.

雷头风: thunder head wind: a diseased state characterized by pain with loud noise in the head.

The so-called 雷头风 refers to severe case of headache caused by external attack of pathogenic wind or phlegm heat that transforming into wind, usually characterized by headache, lump and pain in the face, or aversion to cold with high fever, and thunder-like noise in the brain. It can be treated by clearing, diffusing, elevating and dispersing therapeutic methods. This term used to be translated as “wind-syndrome over the head”, eventually changed into “thunder-headache” or “thunder-like headache”. Comparatively speaking, “thunder head wind” appears more equivalent to the original term in structure.

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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（七）

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