

# Differential Diagnosis

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## Pulses

### ***Wiry Pulse (Xuan Mai)***

This is a taut string pulse.

It's an excess pulse. It's considered a strong pulse. You won't have a weak deficient person with a wiry pulse. It really comes up and hits your fingers.

“It passes straight under the fingers without any sideways movement.”

It hits the fingers with force.

It doesn't vibrate to the side.

It's considered a long pulse. It is found under all three fingers.

A violin string or string of a musical instrument.

Causes:

- This is a generally a problem with the liver and gall bladder.
- Pain can create a wiry pulse as well. When you hurt, it can make a wiry pulse.

Wherever there is pain, there is stagnate energy.

- Phlegm can cause a wiry pulse + Pathogenic fluids (Tends to be more wiry/slippery)

Western diagnosis would include:

- Hyper-tension/High Blood pressure can sometimes have a wiry pulse. (due to ascending liver yang?)
- Arterial Sclerosis (plaques in the arteries – something is wrong with the circulatory system)

There's also an empty wiry pulse. This pulse is more like liver-yang ascending. There's an imbalance on this “teeter-totter” because the liver yin is deficient. You feel it hit your finger tips, but you feel a weakness there. You feel the wiry towards the surface, when you press down on it it feels soft.

### ***Tight Pulse (Jin Mai)***

Tense Pulse

Cold syndromes.

It's close to being pulse. But, it's not so hard. It's not hitting your fingers as strongly.

“It rises and falls with strength and vibrates left and right”

Tight and forceful like a stretched rope.

It's a long and forceful pulse.

It is fuller and more elastic than a wiry pulse.

This is found in cold syndromes.

- Cold
  - Interior

Excess Cold

Not Deficiency (deficiency yang – this is described as weak and feeble.)

This could be in alike an asthma patient. (phlegm and cold)

Direct strike on ST, LI, and uterus

- Exterior (wind cold attack)

This would be tight and floating/superficial and tense.

- Pain

### ***Soft Pulse (Ru Mai)***

Soggy/Boggy pulse

Generally felt on a more superficial level.

It's like a cotton ball floating on water.

“It's a little floaty”

It might feel a little strong on the surface, but if you press on it, it disappears.

This is weaker than a superficial pulse. This is a deficient condition.

It's softer and not as floating as a superficial pulse.

It's smaller than normal pulse, it's not strong.

Some women have a constitutional soft pulse.

This can also mean dampness (soggy)

Dampness can be either slippery or soggy

If it's an interior dampness problem (spleen qi deficiency) it's more soggy.

The slippery is more due to an exogenous damp.

### ***Thready Pulse (Xi Mai)***

Fine pulse or thin pulse

It's like a fine thread.

This is a deficiency type of pulse. It's weak but clear.

You feel it on all three levels. (On a lot of thin older women going through menopause)

This is thinner than normal.

You can find it at all three positions, or at just one position.

This is your garden hose that has just a trickle of water than it.

- A deficiency of yin fluids
- A deficiency of blood & qi

### ***Other Pulse types***

#### **Flooding Pulse**

- A big pulse
- An excess pulse
- “Like ocean waves hitting the beach”
- Also called a surging pulse.
- Can mean
  - Excess heat (Yang ming - the four greats)

#### **Minute pulse**

- Deficiency pulse

- A thin and soft pulse
- It breaks when pressure is applied , it's soft and soggy, but with a thready quality.

## **Scattered Pulse**

- like dandelion seeds in the wind.

## **Irregular pulse (dai mai)**

- or interrupted pulse
- It skips a beat.
- If it beats irregularly (skips random beats – it's not as bad as a regularly irregular.)
  - Causes
    - A knotted pulse if it is a slow pulse. This means stagnation. (Stagnation of cold, or blood stasis. It could be HT qi stagnation, but not as serious a problem)
    - Can happen in healthy people under stress
    - People addicted to exercise may have stagnate qi.
- If it beats regularly irregularly, it's a serious problem.
  - HT qi stagnation/deficiency, could be a serious problem.
- Causes:
  - Heart qi is damaged. (usually more than one organ is involved)
  - Blood stasis
  - Cold Phlegm
  - Could mean pain
  - Emotionally upset about things.

## **Long Pulse (Chang Mai)**

It goes further up the arm.

Cun-Guan-Chi-----> it keeps going this way.

Excess

- An excess yang syndrome (excess heat)
- Excess problem with the liver/gall bladder

## Short Pulse

Cun-guan and nothing else...

Or maybe just in Guan, or maybe just in the Cun position.

Rarely just in the chi position.

It is described as dissatisfying.

## Misc

You won't commonly find these:

Hallow – severe blood loss

Leisurely

Leather

Firm

## Pulse Discrepancies

The tongue and pulse may not agree (rapid pulse, but not a red tongue for example)

### ***rapid pulse, non-red tongue***

You might see this in

- Shock
- Type “A” people (work too hard for too long)

### ***Pulse is slow, but tongue is red***

- Heart disease
- Athletes