

Differential Diagnosis

8/28/05

Table of Contents

Differential Diagnosis.....	1
Additional Texts of Note.....	1
Tongue Diagnosis.....	2
Things to look for:.....	2
Why are we looking at tongues?.....	2
The three jiaos and organ placement on the body of the tongue:.....	2
Things that mess up tongue Diagnosis.....	3
Normal tongue.....	3
How to look at the tongue.....	4
Thin Tongue.....	4
Cracks.....	4
Swollen tongue.....	4
Tough Tongues and Tender Tongues.....	5
Tongue Color.....	5
Pale/white - “More white and less red”.....	5
Red.....	5
Purple.....	6
Green blue.....	6
Thorny tongue.....	6
Bearing of the tongue.....	6
Stiff tongues –	6
Trembling Tongue.....	6
Deviated Tongue.....	7
Contracted Tongue.....	7
Long Tongue.....	7
Worried Tongue.....	7
Coating on the tongue.....	7
Slimy fur.....	8
Bean curd.....	8
white coat.....	8
yellow coat.....	8
Grey coat.....	8
Black coat.....	8
No coat.....	9
Tongue Diagnosis in children.....	9
Homework.....	9

Additional Texts of Note

Additional Texts for pulse diagnosis if you want:

- Pulse Diagnosis – Li Shen Zhen

ISBN: 0-912111-06-2

Additional Texts for tongue diagnosis if you want:

- Tongue Diagnosis in Chinese Medicine (Macchiochia sp?)
 - The same guy that wrote our notepack.
- Atlas of Chinese Medical Diagnosis – Barbara Kirschbaum. (Eastland Press)
 - ISBN: 0-939616-33-5
 - Lot's of good pictures of tongues. There are several in the library.

Tongue Diagnosis

Things to look for:

Color of tongue body

Color of tongue coat

Look for the thickness of the fur

The thicker the coating, the worse the disease.

Moisture of the coat

Is it dry/wet/drippy?

(overly wet in yang deficient or qi deficiency)

(dryness means heat or yin deficiency)

Type of coat (bean curd, etc...)

Color of coat (can be different from the body color)

Tongue form (shape)

scallops

plump

squared-off end

Sublingual vein (under the tongue)

Good indication of stagnation in the body. If they are blueish purple, there is stagnation.

You shouldn't really see veins on the bottom of the tongue.

Bearing of the tongue.

Can the patient protrude the tongue normally.

Is the tongue quivering, or flapping in the breeze?

Is it a “worried” tongue.

Why are we looking at tongues?

It shows the environment in the body. The condition of the qi and blood in the body. Is there enough qi/blood/yin/yang in the body?

Over time by checking the tongue you can see the progress of the treatment/disease.

The tongue show's the presence of hot or cold within the body (the more yellow the coat, the more heat)(Pale tongues show cold)

Use tongue diagnosis to see how far the pathogen has gone into the body.

The three jiaos and organ placement on the body of the tongue:

- Upper Jiao - Heart then lung

- Middle Jiao (Center s spleen/stomach)(Sides is Shao Yang – liver & Gall bladder
- Lower Jiao - root of tongue. The kidneys and bladder.

Prickles in the lv/gb area would mean heat in the lv/gb for example.

Purple spots (purple macules) – this can be a sign of blood stagnation.

“The tongue is the shoot of the heart.” More problems with the movement of the heart come from the heart. Having difficulties with speech is related to the heart. Mumbling, stumbling speech, babbling, repeating themselves, people going off on a tangent...

“The tongue is the eternal indicator of the spleen and stomach.” The coating on the tongue is the smoke from the furnace of digestion. Having the proper amount of “smoke” or coating on the tongue shows a good digestive fire there. The spleen meridian goes to the root of the tongue and spreads across the tongue as well.

The kidney meridian ends at the root of the tongue as well. In a healthy person the tongue cuts straight across the back, in a depleted person, there's a dip in the root of the tongue. You'll see this in older people, or people who are rarely sick. However, it's not always a great indicator.

Illnesses don't always show up on the tongue. You can be sick and have a normal tongue, you can be healthy and have a horrible looking tongue. It needs to be taken into context with the rest of a patients symptoms.

Things that mess up tongue Diagnosis

Different foods and medicines can affect how a tongue looks. (cough drops, drinks, foods, etc can all affect the tongue.)

You need good light for proper tongue diagnosis. Natural light is best. Pull them over to the window. Purple curtains, yellow fluorescent lights, lipstick (bright lipstick will make the tongue look more pale, etc...). People with a nice tan/women with makeup/colors of the clothes can give a false impression of the tongue color.

Tongue scrapers – people can scrape off the tongue coat. Ask if in doubt.

Don't leave the tongue hanging out for inspection for a long time. It changes the color and moisture of the tongue. The longer it is out, the more red it appears. 10 seconds is about it.

A Normal Tongue

A pale red color. A “proper red”.

It's a fresh looking body. It isn't stiff/plastic/ dried up.

It looks like it is being supplied by blood, it's healthy tissue.

The tongue must be free in motion. (it doesn't look stiff and inflexible)

Tongue should be a little moist

showing there are adequate fluids in the body.

Thin and white(creamy) tongue coat

Not yellow, that shows too much heat.

But thin white can also mean wind/cold

Shape of the normal tongue – not too thick, not too thin. It is proportional to the size of the mouth/the size of the person. (From the side view, the tip should be thinner towards the tip and thicker towards the root.)

How to look at the tongue

The order in tongue investigation.

1. Look at the tongue tip
2. Look at the tongue center
3. Look at the tongue root
4. Look at the tongue sides
5. Look at tongue fur
6. Then look at the tongue body

Tongue Body

Thin Tongue

Smaller than normal tongue. A thinner than normal tongue.

This is showing deficient qi and deficient blood. - pale

There's not enough qi or blood to plump the tongue up

Red – some dehydration. Yin deficiency tongues. (often a deep red from the deficiency heat)

Cracked or red and cracked – the heat has consumed the fluids. The deeper the cracks, the longer the problem has been going on.

Orange often means blood deficiency.

Orange just on the sides, liver qi stagnation causing a blood deficiency in the liver.

Different shades of orange show different degrees of heat with the blood deficiency.

Cracks

Can be normal in a small percentage of the population.

Swollen tongue

a plump tongue. It is overly big or enlarged.

Pale/moist/whiter/glossier fur (like Crisco) – not enough heat in the body. This can be kidney/spleen yang deficiency. Water/damp is accumulating.

More red – this is damp heat in the body. Often with yellow fur, slimy looking fur. (It looks as though there is a “coating of honey”.) The more red, the more excess heat.

Scallops on the edges – tooth marks on the edges of the tongue. Dampness isn't being moved (qi deficiency) or too much of a damp condition in the body (somebody has a weak spleen and eats a lot of ice cream).

Where on the tongue are you seeing the dampness?, The sides of the tongue? (LV/GB) the tip? (HT)

Normal color, but swollen tip, this could be a heart qi deficiency...

Normal color, but swollen just behind the tip, lung qi deficiency.

Phlegm can also cause swelling.

A red and swollen tip – heat phlegm in the heart. They may be a little shen disturbed as well.

Tough Tongues and Tender Tongues

A tough tongue looks rough and coarse, hard and tough. It has some texture to it. This tends to show an excess pattern or excess problem. (often heat, you can see tastebuds, etc) It shows that the person has good body resistance.

Tender tongue – the tongue body is fine and kind of delicate looking. Usually this shows deficiency problems. It may look kind of sickly. It doesn't have a lot of texture. It just looks fine and delicate. It may often have tooth marks on the side. This can show yang deficiency or general deficiency problems. (No matter what the coat is like, this is still a deficient tongue.

Tongue Color

Pale/white - "More white and less red"

Qi deficiency – this will be damp. (There's not enough qi to transport the fluids) (Also slightly swollen is possible)

Blood deficiency – this will be drier. (This will look like a cat's tongue) Blood is a component of fluids in the body. Tends to be a thinner/flatter tongue.

Cold Problems will also make the tongue pale.

Excess cold – excess yin. This will tend to have a thicker white coat.

Deficiency cold - yang deficiency. This will tend to have an overly wet tongue. The body could be really plump looking. You can see the scallops perhaps.

Red

A red tongue shows heat.

Sometimes the tip of the tongue will become red with an exogenous wind/heat attack. Sometimes a red rim all the way around the tongue.

Excess Heat

It will have an excess coat.

Where ever it's more red, there's more heat.

Deficiency Heat

This will have a deficiency coat. It will be peeled or with no coat. Over time this can become the mirror tongue.

If the coat is missing in the center, you have a yin deficiency in the stomach.

If the coat is missing on the sides – yin deficiency in the lv/gb

If the coating is missing in the tip – yin deficiency in the HT.

Mirror tongue – a systemic yin deficiency. You've got problems. A mirror tongue.

“The tongue is tender/delicate and red with little or no fur.”

“When the entire tongue is red without fur, there is heat throughout the entire viscera.”

The hotter the heat the redder the tongue.

Purple

Hot or cold problem depending on the color of purple.

This shows stagnation.

Lavender and moist – more cold.

Dark red purple and dry – heat and stagnation

Purple spots on the tongue – blood stagnation involved with trauma sometimes.

Green blue

Cold. Exogenous cold – have they been exposed to some cold?

Also could be blood stasis. - have they had trauma, something to cause the blood to be stagnant.

Thorny tongue

Prickles, thorny – it looks like it has little spots of red

The hotter it is, the more it will protrude out. (The taste buds on the surface have swollen up.)

This means excess heat. The more the heat, the more the prickles, the more they stick out.

Sometimes the prickles will be black. This is more like blood stasis.

Bearing of the tongue

Stiff tongues –

move slowly, have difficulties speaking or protruding the tongue. This is a sign of something pretty serious going on.

- Heat in the pericardium if they can't talk

- Liver wind on the inner part of the body (stroke)
- Phlegm

Trembling Tongue

Liver wind due to:

- liver yang ascending
 - High grade fever – red tongue
- Blood deficiency – pale tongue

Deviated Tongue

It's not coming out of the mouth straight.

It can mean that they have had a stroke or perhaps that they are going to have a stroke.

Contracted Tongue

Can't extend the tongue out of their mouth.

A person can be born like this (tongue tied).

If they can't protrude it and it's red, the extreme heat has damaged the yin of the body and the tongue has become desiccated.

If they can protrude it just a little, it's pale & moist but – a collapse of the yang qi (a step worse than yang deficiency).

Phlegm can also cause this to happen. The tongue will look slimy in this case. (also possible with wind strike/stroke)

Long Tongue

A tongue that is longer than normal. It's often thinner than normal.

This shows the presence of heat. It is usually red. (Heat in the heart)

If there's phlegm and heat in the heart, it can be long and thin, with a little bulb at the end.

Worried Tongue

A tongue that they can't protrude it. It dances around, licking the lips,

If the tongue body is red – heat (heart or spleen)

In children – indicator of infantile fright wind or long time disease.

“In some children because of pre-natal qi, their intelligence may be lowered and the worry tongue may be seen.”

Tongue Coat

Thin – can you see the body of the tongue through the coating.

Thick – the body of the tongue cannot be seen through the fur.

The quality of the fur tells how serious the disease is, and the progression of the pathological evil.

Thin coat – pretty superficial. (qei qi attacks, wind-cold etc...)

thick coat – some type of dampness or turbidity within the body. More stagnate conditions and more the interior of the body.

Position of coat can indicate where the problem is.

A thick yellow/brown coat in the lower jiao can shown an impending bladder infection.

A moist coat – cold problems.

Dry coat – heat is drying off the coating, or a lack of fluids.

Overly wet tongue/Dry tongue

Slimy Fur

It looks like it can't be scraped off – A sign of damp and turbidity.

Slimy fur can be more white – cold phlegm or cold dampness

Yellow slimy – more heat with the damp. It's perhaps been stagnating and generating more heat.

Bean Curd

Tofu curd, cottage cheese, or granular

Fur s thick and it looks kind of loose. It looks pretty disgusting.

“Bean curd does not remain” - meaning it looks like you could take it off really easily.

There's more dampness and more turbidity, and stagnation.

Usually in the intestines/stomach. In the digestive system.

White Coat

Thin white coat – healthy or perhaps wind-cold

Thick white coat – see above

Yellow Coat

The darker the yellow (tending towards brown or black eventually) the more the heat.

Grey Coat

An interior problem/syndrome

It can mean either cold or heat. Check the moisture on the coating.

Grey/dry – heat

Grey/moist – cold

Black Coat

A step worse than a grey coat.

It's a progression from the grey coat. It's a more serious interior problem. It means severe illness.

Black/dry - severe dry or severe hot (might see thorns as well)

Black/moist – severe cold problem

No coat

Red – peeled tongue or mirrored tongue

Pale – a very severe deficiency. A damage of qi along with the yin deficiency

Tongue Diagnosis in children

Children run several shades redder than adults. Children are more yang and active

A red tongue might be normal.

If there's heat, it will be redder than an adult.

The most reliable indicator is the tip of the tongue.

If the tip looks redder than the rest of the tongue – disturbed child or wind-heat.

The tongue coat is not reliable in a child. Don't take that into consideration.

Homework

Fill out the handout.

Look at four tongues over the next two weeks. It doesn't have to be in clinic.

It's just practice in observation.

Have fun with it....

You've got two weeks to look at four tongues.

Color it in if you want!!! ;-)