

Differential Diagnosis

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Pulses

Pulses can show

1. “The pulse can show the rise and fall of the pathogenic evil”
2. Proper Qi or not
A strong pulse shows a sufficient level of qi, a weak pulse shows a weaker person.
3. Shows type of pathogen
4. Where the disease is (depth and organ)

Normal pulse

- Felt at all levels
- Not too big and not too small
- Soft (it feels elastic and flexible) and forceful (in the “chi” position, in the kidneys)
- A normal even rhythm (4 beats per respiratory cycle)(not a rough pulse – smooth and calm. The stomach is the root for the postnatal qi, the origin of our acquired qi. If the pulse is rough or hard, the function of the stomach is impaired.)

A full meal will cause a full pulse. The true pulse will be hidden by a full stomach after a meal.

Quality

1. Having stomach qi
2. Having Spirit (soft but with strength)(it shouldn't change in quality or frequency)

- Shows the heart has qi. The state of the blood is good.
- 3. A root or base
 - can be felt upon deep palpation
 - can be felt in the chi position

Position

- Chi – kidney position
- Guan – means valley
- Cun – the lungs and heart position. Sometimes called the inch.

What to pay attention to

- Taken between 3am and 5am in the morning
 - shows the true energy state of the organs.
 - Before anything has happened during the day.
 - Make sure the patient has had a chance to rest and collect themselves before taking their pulse in the clinic. Let them relax. (This also applies to the doctor as well.)

How to take a pulse

1. Feel the pulse as a whole.
2. Feel if the pulse has stomach qi, have spirit, have a root.
3. Feel all three levels (depths) and all three positions (organs)
4. Experience the strength of the pulse. (is it strong or weak, can you even find it?)
5. What kind of quality does the pulse have
 - There are 28 basic qualities of pulses. We commonly use about 16 of them.

Always compare the pulse to the complaint and what the other symptoms are as well.

History of the pulse

- Goes back to the Nei Jing.
- Back then was called cun ko
 - Stomach 9
 - Groin area
 - in the elbow area
 - At bladder 59
 - at the medial malleolus
 - at HT7
 - at LI4
 - for babies, on the index finger.

Basic techniques

- Under the radial bone at the radial artery, by the styloid process,
 - In some people the radial artery bifurcates at the chi level. You'll have to hunt around for it.
- While the wrist is at the same level as the heart.
- Check for one minute, or at least 50 beats. China says check for 3 to 5 minutes.

From Li Shi Zhen: The pulse master's classic

Leon Hammer's book is WAY too much to begin with.

<i>Position</i>	<i>Left</i>	<i>Right</i>
Cun (inch)	Heart/Small Intestine	Lung/Large Intestine
Guan (valley)	Liver/GB	Spleen/Stomach
Chi	Kidney/UB (prostate)	Kidney/PC or KD/SJ

- Start with the middle finger on the styloid process. Tap it around and feel with just the tip of the finger.
- Each finger on yourself, will go right next to each other. These two fingers will have to be adjusted for size.

The ideal is that the pulses are in harmony. This says that one has no illness, or that it will resolve itself.

Each organ position is supposed to have its own quality. (We won't get into that) It reflects what the organ does in the body.

Pulses can change with the seasons. It can reflect changes in the climate. This is normal.

- Summertime – more superficial and it tends to have a strong quality to it.
- Spring – the pulse tends to be more wiry.
- Autumn – Yang qi is decreasing, so the pulse becomes more empty and a little floating, a little softer.
- Winter – The pulse becomes deep and strong.

Pulse types:

Superficial Pulse (Fu Mai)

Floating pulse or Fu Mai.

Easily felt with light taking. You don't have to press.

This is like wood floating on water.

Significance: An external problem. An outside evil trying to get into the body. At a more superficial level. It shows a more superficial problem. The body is trying to push the evil out.

This is a way to determine if it is an exterior pattern.

It feels like the little bubbles coming up to the surface.

It's at the level of the skin.

Indicative of people at the tai yang stage.

- Don't use points like KD that are at a deeper level. (You can use KD7 (with LI4), and that's about it for kidney points if the pulse is floating)

- Don't needle as deeply.

There's wind in the superficial aspect of the body.

Can also be seen in a person who is not getting sick, but is very qi deficient. This is typically a very weak, floating pulse. The qi is floating out of the body. (Enduring illness (cancer) or after major blood loss (anemia))

Deep Pulse (Chen Mai)

Submerged or sinking pulse.

It's felt at the deepest level down by the bone.

It means that it is an interior problem.

Like a cotton ball on sand. - It's soft on the top and rigid underneath.

It can be

- Deep and Forceful – an internal excess problem. (phlegm, stagnation (digestate stagnation or qi stagnation))
- Deep and weak – Internal deficient condition. (Deficiency of qi or deficiency of yang)

This isn't abnormal for a bigger/fatter person.

Not always an indicator of a pathological situation. If it is soft/slippery and constant with no other complaints can mean the person is ok if the quality of the pulse is ok as well.

Slow Pulse (Chi Mai)

This is a pulse that is less than 60 beats per minute. (70-90 is normal, fast is more than 100)

Less than 4 beats per respiratory cycle.

Causes can be:

- x This is indicative of cold.
 - x Excess Yin – slow and strong
 - x Deficiency Yang – slow and weak
- x Stagnation – (not necessarily cold) phlegm stagnation or blood stasis.
- x People who are athletic

Rapid Pulse (Shuo (shu) Mai)

This means some type of heat.

100 or more bpm.

Rapid and forceful means excess heat

Rapid and weak means deficiency heat – rapid and thready.

Deficiency Pulse (Xu Mai)

Weak or deficiency pulse

Empty pulse. - wouldn't use empty by itself. Always use another adjective.

It feels big but soft. It feels bug, but when it's pushed it goes away. It is forceless at deeper levels.

It's less distinct.

Classics describes this as a spring onion. (This is different than hollow).

It's force less at the deeper levels.

Cause:

- Qi and blood deficiency
- Fear, fright, shock

Excess Pulse (Shi Mai)

You want to further describe this.

It's a full and strong pulse.

This is a general term You feel it at all three levels and generally at all positions.

This indicates an excess syndrome

- Forceful and rapid – excess heat. (perverse/evil heat)

Slippery Pulse (Hua Mai)

It's smooth and rounded. It's slippery to the touch.

Like a greasy pearl rolling in a bowl. It doesn't have a sharp edge to it. It's like a wet noodle, there's no sharp edges. It slides around under your fingers.

“It remains even, like a smooth stream of water.”

Means

- Phlegm
- Dampness in the body – retained pathological fluids.
- Pregnancy sign.
- Alternately, one or two days before she starts to bleed, it can feel slippery to.
- Retention of heat and food stagnation.
- It can be a sign of health (like an athlete)
- Weak and slippery – deficiency with damp.
- Shortly after a full meal, the stomach pulse can be slippery as well - this is considered normal.

Often a component of rapid to it. It feels a little to fast. There's usually a heat component to it.

Slippery pulses are generally excess.

Choppy Pulse (Se Mai)

A hesitant pulse.

A rough and uneven.

Irregular in strength. Irregular in fullness. This is irregular in quality, no tempo.

It's like a knife scraping bamboo.

It is easily scatter like rain falling onto sand.

Caused by

- deficiency
 - (of qi and blood or just qi)
 - (people who have exhausted the fluids of their body)
- Blood stasis
- Choppy and forceful – a tight pulse.

Is it there or isn't it. It kind of vibrates.

Homework – do it in clinic.