



The History and Development of TCM Ointment Therapy

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ABSTRACT

Ointment massage (paste massage) is a traditional external treatment method of traditional Chinese medicine. It is a form of massage and ointment used together by using the ointment as the medium, applying paste before manipulation, and then applying the Tuina massage technique. The ointment has been used for over 2000 years, as early as the pre-Qin period. With the development of history, from the northern and Southern Dynasties, Sui and Tang Dynasties, Song, Jin, Yuan Dynasties, and Ming and Qing Dynasties. Up to now, ointment massage therapy can treat various clinical diseases and has a significant curative effect, which more and more patients have recognized. This paper showed the development of ointment in Traditional Chinese Medicine history to the modern period.

Keywords: ointment massage therapy; the history of TCM ointment therapy; TCM external therapy; paste massage

1. Origin of Ointment

The development of ointment massage therapy in China has a long history, recorded in many historical pieces of literature on traditional Chinese medicine. The earliest record of ointment massage therapy is *52 Bing Fang (Prescriptions for fifty-two diseases)*. The content of ointment massage therapy was first recorded in *Huangdi Neijing (The Yellow Emperor's Canon of Internal Classic)*. There are also records of medicinal rubs or ointments, mainly used to treat dermatoses, such as itch of skin and frostbite. However, the prescription composition is not recorded [1-3].

2. The emergence of the term "Ointment"

The classic literature *Synopsis of prescriptions of the Golden Chamber* put forward the word "ointment massage." Ointment massage has become an external treatment combining massage techniques and drugs, which has attracted the attention of doctors of all dynasties. This literature puts forward the concept of preventing and treating diseases. "The way of promoting health preventing diseases. As soon as the evil Qi

reaches the meridians and collaterals, it should be treated immediately, not waiting for it to go deep into the viscera. In case of serious pain and numbness in the limbs, the channels and collaterals are blocked. We should use methods such as guidance, exhalation, acupuncture, ointment external application, and massage so that the meridians and orifices are not blocked. The five flavors of diet should be balanced, not partial to food. Excessive sexual activity can exhaust kidney essence. If the body's healthy Qi is strong, the evil Qi will not invade the internal organs and meridians and get sick. The *Synopsis of prescriptions of the Golden Chamber* also records the ointment massage prescription "Tou Feng Mo San Gao": Dafuzi and salt rub the rash with a square inch dagger so the drug can be effective." It has become the origin of the "Mo Ding Gao" ointment in the later period [4].

3. History and progress of ointment massage therapy

3.1 Two Jin's northern and Southern Dynasties

Two Jin's northern and Southern dynasties were the period of the formation and initial development of

ointment. The prescription of ointment has been scattered in the preserved literature. Moreover, there is a relatively complete prescription of "Gaomo (ointment)," as well as disease-specific and application methods. Become the foundation of the development of ointment massage therapy for later periods [5].

3.1.1 Huangdi Neijing (*The Yellow Emperor's Canon of Internal Classic*) and ointment

According to Huangdi Neijing, Ointment massage therapy is clinically used to treat facial paralysis and other diseases. *Lingshu Jingjin Chapter 13* records, "The treatment for the disease of Foot Yangming's meridians is to use horse ointment, stick it on the side of the contracture and convulsion. Then mix cinnamon powder with Baijiu (distilled spirits), apply it on the loose side, hook it in the corner of the mouth with a mulberry hook, and place it in a small pot with the charcoal fire of mulberry firewood. The high and low position is subject to the patient's slow breathing when sitting. While ironing the cheek on the contracture and convulsion side with horse ointment, drink some wine and eat more delicious things like bacon. People who cannot drink alcohol should also reluctantly drink some and rub the affected part repeatedly so that they can heal." This is the treatment method of ointment massage combined with massage technique for facial paralysis. In the later period, the *Sheng Ji Zonglu (General Medical Collection of Royal Benevolence)* also used Chinese honey locust ointment to treat facial paralysis. These are the fundamental theories of treating facial paralysis with horse ointment from *Lingshu Jingjin Chapter 13*, which comes from the treatment of facial paralysis with ointment in the later periods [6].

3.1.2 Zhou Hou Bei Ji Yao Fang (*The Handbook of Prescriptions for Emergencies*) and ointment

The ointment prescription recorded in the *Zhou Hou Bei Ji Yao Fang (The Handbook of Prescriptions for Emergencies)* can be used externally or orally. In the use of ointment massage, it is emphasized that "Xianghuomo" mean that using massage techniques to produce warmth can achieve the effect of "warming the meridians and dredging the collaterals" in order to increase the therapeutic effect. This concept has made significant progress in applying ointment massage therapy. The ointment formula has been used in medical books and modified to a certain extent in later periods. "Pei Shi Wu Du Shen Gao ointment is a prescription for treating all kinds of diseases that cause by evil pathogenic, with symptoms such as talk nonsense, dizziness, and unconsciousness: Xionghuang, Zhusha, Danggui, Chuanjiao, and Wutou, soaking in bitter wine overnight. Five jin (a unit of weight) of pig fat, fry the Chenlu five times, grind away the dregs, mix and stir with Xionghuang and Zhusha powder. Take with a

warm wine in the dosage same as jujube stone. If it does not heal, retake it until the disease gets healed; If there is a disease in the limbs, or carbuncle, swelling and other diseases and sores can be rubbed and applied with the paste. It is better to apply it to the body at night and when the disease emits fog and dew." These showed that ointment therapy and formula had been continuously used and supplemented in the clinic. The traditional Chinese Medicine drugs used in the ointment formula recorded in the above *Zhou Hou Bei Ji Yao Fang* have many indications. They can be used to treat various diseases.

3.1.3 Liu Juanzi Guiyi Fang and Gao Mo

Liu Juanzi Guiyi Fang is remarkable literature on surgery, which also records the rich records of ointment massage therapy in treating diseases. It was written in 483 years. The ointment formulas in the book include *Sheng Xiong Qiong* ointment, *Wu Du* ointment, *Sheng Rou* ointment, *Baizhi* massage ointment, *Dan Sha* ointment, *Shexiang* ointment, *Haunglian* ointment, *Ouzhi* ointment, etc., which are specialized in the treatment of surgical diseases.

3.2 Sui and Tang Dynasties

In the Sui and Tang Dynasties, plaster massage therapy got further development. Especially in the Tang Dynasty, the application of ointment massage therapy was an essential feature in the history of massage.

3.2.1 Beiji Qianjin Yaofang (*Prescriptions Worth a Thousand Pieces of Gold for Emergencies*) and ointment

During this period, ointment massage therapy has been extensively developed. *Beiji Qianjin Yaofang* records many ointment formulas for preventing and treating pediatric diseases. For example, *Wuwugancaoshengmo* ointment, *Mosheng* ointment, *Danshachi* ointment, *Yizhongbaiyu*, *Mifenyan*, in *Beiji Qianjin Yaofang*: Shao Xiao Ying Ru Fang. It is a lot of proven prescriptions obtained from folk experience. Sun Simiao recorded many ointment prescriptions in *Beiji Qianjin Yaofang*: volume 16-*Zhongfengshang Zhugaodisan*, Volume 17-*Feng Du Jiao Qi Gaodiwu*. There also found ointment massage therapy treating various diseases in *Beiji Qianjin Yaofang*: Volume 5-*Shao Xiao Ying Ru Fang*, *Fu Ren Yi*. Therefore, *Beiji Qianjin Yaofang* contains plenty of ointment massage prescriptions, which can treat internal medicine, surgery, gynecology, pediatrics, ophthalmology and otorhinolaryngology, dermatology, and other diseases [11-12].

3.2.2 Wai Tai Mi Yao Fang (*Essential Secrets from Outside the Metropolis*) and ointment

Wai Tai Mi Yao Fang records many names of ointment massage prescriptions used to treat swelling,

arthralgia and pain. Most increased ointment prescriptions are used to treat surgical skin diseases, such as rheumatic pruritus, dandruff, alopecia, ringworm itching, and other diseases. *Wai Tai Mi Yao Fang* also emphasizes the technique of "Mozhiji" "Ointment after the application of massage ointment, described in *Wai Tai: Volume 32-Tou Feng Bai Xie Jian Shengfa Fang Bashou*." Lianzicao juice, Songye, Qingtongbaipi, Zaogenvaipi, Fangfeng, Shaoyao, Baizhi, Xinhuangren, Zhenben, Chenxiang, Qinyuan, Shanglu root, Xijiaoxie, Qingzhupi, Xixin, Duruo, MANjingzi, Linglingxiang, Gansongxiang, Baizhum Tianxiong, Bobaipi, Fengxiang, Shengdihuang juice, Sesame oil, Zhuzongzi, Mazonggao, Xiongzhi, Manqingzi oil, The right 30 drugs are cut, mixed with Lianzi juice and Shengdi juice, soaked overnight. Then become the *Mozhizi* ointment." The purpose is to make drugs penetrate the subcutaneous muscle layer through the massage technique to improve the therapeutic effect of drugs. It provides an excellent reference value for future generations to study the development history of ointment massage therapy [13].

3.3 Song, Jin, and Yuan Dynasties

The ointment massage therapy in Song, Jin, and Yuan Dynasties was inherited from the Sui and Tang Dynasties, mainly through the local use of ointment massage therapy. In addition to using ointment massage to treat the diseased parts, it also cooperates with the theory of the Five internal organs, the Six hollow organs, and acupuncture points, and with massage techniques on the relevant parts and points. It can improve the clinical effect and has a remarkable curative effect.

3.3.1 *Tai Ping Sheng Hui Fang (The Peaceful Holy Benevolence Formulae) and ointment*

Tai Ping Sheng Hui Fang in the early Northern Song Dynasty was written in 992. Wang Huaiyin summarized the prescription of ointment massage and the experience of using ointment massage prescription. This literature includes the historical ointment prescriptions and the characteristics of special ointment massage applications. There are nearly 100 ointment formulas in the book, such as the ointment formula for treating eye diseases and the formula for treating eye diseases. Waist massage cream is very distinctive in its production and use. *Tai Ping Sheng Hui Fang* also records the "Mo Feng Gao" ointment, mainly used to treat Bi syndrome, and systematically summarizes the ointment massage therapy and external treatment of Bi syndrome such as gout. This book also records the "Mo Feng Gao" ointment, "Shen Yan Mo Feng Gao" ointment, and "Mo Tong Gao" that are widely used in orthopedics and traumatology departments. It is an excellent development of plaster

and moxibustion in treating orthopedic diseases. [14-15].

3.3.2 *Shengji Zonglu (The complete record of hoky benevolence) and ointment*

The record of Shengji was written from 1111 to 1117. The development of ointment massage therapy and application. The content of *Shengji Zonglu* is more complete than *Tai Ping Shengyi Fang (The Peaceful Holy Benevolence Formulae)*, which can be said to be a complete medical book in the Song Dynasty. This book has also made new contributions to the development of ointment. For example, "Mo Ting Gao" ointment treats eye diseases. *Tai Ping Shengyi Fang* is based on the basic theory of using an iron spoon as "Shengtie Tangdouzi" equipment. In *Shengji Zonglu: Volume 150-Chimaichongguanheijing*, use "Shengtie Tangdouzi" equipment with "Modingmingmugaofang" to treat the pinkeye that causes by the wind-heat pathogen. Moreover, *Shengji Zonglu* records many effective ointment prescriptions used in the treatment of orthopedics and traumatology and further integrates them into one of the three main orthopedics and traumatology treatment processes. It expands the clinical application of ointment massage in orthopedics and traumatology [16].

3.4 Ming and Qing Dynasties

In the Ming and Qing Dynasties, adult massage therapy was greatly limited due to the shackles of feudal ethics since the Song Dynasty. At the same time, pediatric massage has been comprehensively developed.

3.4.1 *Ben Cao Gang Mu (Compendium of Materia Medica) and ointment*

Li Shizhen has unique views on treating Apoplectic Hemiplegia with ointment massage therapy. The thorough analysis of cleavage, method, prescription, and medicine is his experience summary of ointment massage therapy. The clinical efficacy is outstanding and needs further research. Ben Cao Gang Mu records many ointment massage and instrument massage therapy in treating internal, surgery, gynecology, pediatrics, facial features, and dermatology diseases. The drugs recorded in Ben Cao Gang Mu include Yiyu, Huma, Huma oil, Wushi, Xiongzhi, Dongbitu, Longnaoxiang, Qicao, Spider, wine, Chi, Lichang, Jincai, Salt, and Maxie, etc. This book records the treatment of various diseases with ointment massage, such as dead fetus in the uterus, retained afterbirth, postpartum uterine prolapse, hypogalactia, galactostasis, childhood eclampsia, fever, infantile rhinorrhea, infantile craniectomy, jaundice, swelling, abscess, gall, Scrofula, Centipede and scorpion sting, fracture, abdominal pain, hemiplegia, headache, head wind pain, chest and rib pain, waist and kidney deficiency cold, urine obstruction, Prickly heat, The eyes look up and cannot rotate, cataract, choking, hair loss, beriberi, etc. Therefore, Ben Cao Gang Mu

summarizes Li Shizhen's personal experience and also notes all the ointment formulas before the Ming Dynasty [17].

3.4.2 Puji Fang (Prescriptions for Universal Relief) and ointment

In the Puji Fang written by Zhu Di in the Ming Dynasty, the ointment prescriptions recorded, such as "Wuwu Gancao Shengmo ointment," "Taifu white ointment," and "Yannian Shuo Zhai ointment," can be seen in the historical documents before this book, which can be said to be another collation and summary of the classic ointment with good curative effect. For example, "Mo Yao pill" in Puji Fang: Volume 155 Shentimen-Wuzhongyaotonglun treats kidney yang deficiency and other five kinds of low back pain [18].

3.4.3 Li Yue Pianwen(Topical Remedies in Rhyme) and ointment

Wu Shangxian, a surgeon in the Qing Dynasty, wrote the Li Yue Pianwen, which has been pushed to a new peak in theory and clinical practice as a significant contribution. Wu Shangxian believed that "external treatment can treat internal diseases, internal medicine can be used as external medicine," and "ointment can cure all diseases." For internal governance, all kinds of decoction, pills, and powder are used as an ointment. For example, "Rubbing the waist for the disease of lower Jiao Method" and "Huo Mo Yu Dian" ointment. He believed that the ointment rub could be reduced to the needle burnt. From the guidance, exhalation, acupuncture, moxibustion, and ointment massage methods from Jin Gui Yao Lue (Synopsis of the Golden Chamber) proposed that "the pathogenic factor of apoplexy lies in the meridians and does not enter the viscera." He used "Da Bai" ointment and "Dahei" ointment from Qian Jin Yao Fang (Prescriptions Worth a Thousand Pieces of Gold for Emergencies) to treat leprosy. According to the theory that "external treatment can treat internal diseases, and internal medicine can be used for external medicine," Wu Shangxian used "Xiaoerjijingfengdingzi" ointment to treat infantile convulsion and "Xiaoqinglongjiashigao Decoction" to treat cough and asthma.

Conclusion

Different researchers often have different conclusions about the development of ancient ointment massage in traditional Chinese Medicine. Due to different priorities, differences are inevitable. This paper makes comprehensive-textual research on the relevant materials of ointment massage carried in the historical documents as far as possible and strives to comprehensively and objectively reflect the true face of history. However, ancient Chinese medicine was rooted in traditional Chinese medicine. Its development process was not synchronized with the overall

development of traditional Chinese medicine, which reflected the difference molding of different technical categories of the same discipline by the overall factors of culture, politics, and society. The cognition of this molding difference may be a good source for researchers to make different conclusions.

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