

The “Old Child” After The Car Accident

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There is an old Chinese saying, *“We can neither predict the weather, nor can we predict our luck or misfortune, no matter how we try, one can’t escape one’s fate.”*

In June of 2003, our regular patient, Huan Yu, made a reservation for her older brother. The whole family shows up in our clinic (husband, 60 year old; son, 30 year old; daughter-in-law, 30 year old, and Huan Yu herself, 60 year old). The strange thing was the patient was acting like a restless child, repeatedly bends over as if he wants to pick up something from the floor. His family members surrounded him fearing him running all over the clinic.

Past medical history showed patient has Scoliosis ever since birth, otherwise his medical history was unremarkable and without any mental illness. Upon patient encounter, Huan Yu told me immediately that I am their last hope, if I can’t treat her brother; she has to send him to the mental institute because they have no other ways to deal with him. I was half joking when I reply her, “Why don’t you do some good? Why are you sending me such a tough case?” And I thought to myself that this must be an extremely difficult case, or else the whole family wouldn’t show up together.

Patient is a 75-year-old male with Scoliosis, his eyes have no spirit and he mumbles to himself. He was not able to answer any questions and was acting like a kid. I observed that the patient kept bending over as if he was trying to pick up something from the floor. Since I knew Huan Yu for a long time, I sarcastically asked her if her brother was possessed. If that is the case, she should look for a monk or Taoist instead. She gave me a dirty look. So I reluctantly started to ask what caused his latest condition.

About 2 weeks ago, while the patient was riding his bicycle, a student, who was on his motorcycle, from the rear, struck him. After the impact, the patient was thrown in the air and landed on the right lateral side of his head, inflicting a concussion with intracranial hemorrhage. He was sent to 4 different hospital’s emergency room but none of them has an extra bed for him. When finally the fifth hospital accepted him, all they did was to spot inject anti-coagulant and observed him. As 2 weeks passed by, the patient can no longer recognize anybody; including himself. His IQ has receded to the level of a 2 year old kid. He would keep running around, grab a pair of chopsticks,

and turned on the facet etc. So the family members take 4 shifts around the clock to monitor him, fearing he might burn down the house accidentally. After I hear the whole story, I diagnosed him as having post-traumatic sequelae brain injury due to the auto accident. This kind of complication is very common after auto accidents. I was very reluctant to take this case because the ramification was very serious, in that he can lose his life with the wrong treatment.

I told Huan Yu that I would prescribe her brother 2 days of herbs and observe his reaction after the herbal formula. Concerned that her brother's situation was grim, Huan Yu eyes grew big and said "What? 2 days of herbs only? You are our last hope! You can't send us away like this! You have to at least put a few needles in his brain!"

Then I get into my doctor's "mode", and said, "Are you the doctor or am I the doctor? I have some needles here and why don't you needle him yourself? What if something happen? Who is going to be responsible?" Huan Yu was stunned by my reaction for she has never seen me this way. She knows I will usually take on very tough cases, so now she knows her brother is in big trouble!

Then she lamented, "If something bad happened, so be it! Then none of us have to worry anymore and we are released of our duty as his family. You don't have to be responsible either!" I was able to detect her resignation by her words. In that instance, I can no longer escape my duty as a doctor.

However, I was very conservative with my treatment. I only needle 2 points in his head. Then I told Huan Yu that we would wait a little and see his response. After ten minutes, Huan Yu told me that her brother is ok and begged me to put in a few more needles. I didn't want to argue with her so I put in a few more needles. That was the whole treatment for the first day.

At this point, I have to tell our reader that I was also working as a host on a radio show. Not only I was the radio host but I was also the producer of the show as well. It was a live radio show from 2pm to 3pm on Saturday, and from 2pm to 5pm on Sunday. Our topic was health care related with live call in from the audience. We try to answer medically related symptoms and guide the audience to various clinics. So I have to prepared special materials in the recording studio in my clinic until 4:40pm, and then go live at 5pm. That was my routine for the weekend.

The day after Huan Yu's brother 1st visit, I just finished my radio show and was

on my way home. I saw two people standing outside my clinic; it was Huan Yu and her brother. I was surprised to see they were without the other family members. I joked with Huan Yu, “Aren’t you afraid your brother will run away?” Then Huan Yu let out a mysterious smile and said, “I don’t know, but after we went home last night my brother just went to sleep by himself. He didn’t run around of anything. Thank God, we all can sleep at least for a night. Dr. Wu, can you needle my brother some more? What do you think?” I was moved. Being a healer I take comfort that I was able to make a difference in my patient’s life. I granted Huan Yu’s wishes by gradually increase the number of needles in her brother’s head and limbs; I also give him herbal formulas. After about 40 days with approximately 20 offices visits, this patient whom I had so much problems with, finally open his mouth and said, “ Dr. Wu, thank you for bring me back to this world!”

Although a very short sentence, he made me all choked up and speechless, fearing tears will come out of my eyes. I felt embarrassed so I composed myself after a while. I told him, “It’s good that you are awake, it’s good that you are awake.” Then I took a gulp of tea, fearing I will get choked up again.

With this case study, we can demonstrate the TCM treatment principle: invigorate the blood to dispel stasis and to awaken the brain by opening the orifices. In this case, the acupuncture is used to unblock the channels to get rid of the blood stasis and increase blood circulation, and herbs to evaporate the blood stasis. I was happy that and thankful that his symptoms improves day by day.