4 IMBALANCES AND 5 ORGANS

A New System for Diagnosis and Treatment

EXPLAINING

4 Imbalances and 5 Organs

Jeremy Ross

www.jeremyross.com
DIFFERENTIAL QUESTIONS
A New System for Diagnosis

90 Organ syndromes In Chinese medicine, it is necessary to able to distinguish between over 90 Organ syndromes.

4 Imbalances These Organ syndromes can be divided according to the 4 Imbalances to give some clarity organization to a large number of syndromes.

3 Differential questions The new system gives three differential questions for each one of these syndromes. This structured system makes differential diagnosis easier, faster, and more accurate.

Every-day language The questions are phrased in every-day language that can make diagnosis engaging for both patient and practitioner.
SYNDROME ORGANIZATION

In this system, the syndromes are organized in 4 levels:

- 4 Imbalances
- 4 Imbalance syndromes
- Organs
- Organ syndromes
USES OF 4 IMBALANCES + 5 ORGANS

• Diagnosis  faster, easier, and more accurate diagnosis

• Treatment  more effective treatment with:
  • Western herbs
  • Chinese herbs
  • Acupuncture
  • Qi gong
  • Nutrition
Many modern patients are complex, with 10 or more different Chinese syndromes.

This makes 2 problems in clinical practice:

- **Problem 1** After the consultation, the practitioner is buried in data, and may lose sight of a *clear overall picture* of the patient.

- **Problem 2** The practitioner does not know where to focus their attention, so that differential diagnosis lacks *precision of the details.*
**Solution**  It was to solve these two problems that I developed the system of the 4 Imbalances and 5 Organs.

**4 Imbalances**  We can say that there are 4 things that can go wrong with the energy of the body:
DEFICIENCY
Not enough energy, with symptoms of exhaustion or physical weakness.

**Principle of treatment**  **tonify**
Increase the energy of the body of a whole, or of a specific organ system.

STAGNATION
There is energy, but the flow is blocked, with symptoms such as obstruction sensations in the chest, or emotional constraint.

**Principle of treatment**  **move**
Obstruction to the flow of energy in the body of a whole, or of a specific organ system.
DISTURBANCE
Energy is disturbed or unstable, with emotional symptoms such as anger or anxiety, or physical symptoms such as vomiting or cough.

**Principle of treatment** calm the disturbance, whether this is physical, emotional, or mental.

EXCESS
Temporarily too much energy, as in hyperactivity or fever, or too much material, for example, excessive bronchial phlegm.

**Principle of treatment** drain to reduce the amount of energy or material, either in the body of a whole, or in a specific organ system.
PRINCIPLES OF TREATMENT

DEFICIENCY
- tonify

DISTURBANCE
- calm

STAGNATION
- move

EXCESS
- drain

4 IMBALANCES
- principles of treatment
The 4 Imbalances system gives a clear simple overview of the patient.

You can reduce a complex diagnosis to the basic question:

Do I tonify, move, calm, or drain this patient?

Safety  The 4 Imbalance system can increase the safety and effectiveness of your prescriptions.

Potential mistreatment  If you do not understand the 4 Imbalances, and, for example, drain a Deficient patient, then that patient will be worse than before the treatment.
COMBINATIONS OF IMBALANCES

Often a patient has two, three, or four Imbalances at the same time.

Example

Oswald has all four Imbalances, but to different degrees, as shown in the 4 Imbalances box opposite.
Relative importance of each Imbalance

If the patient has more than one Imbalance, the practitioner must decide the *relative importance* of each Imbalance.

Star rating system

The relative importance of each Imbalance is shown by its *star rating*.

Star ratings from 0-5

Ratings are given from 0-5 stars ★ for each of the 4 Imbalances, according to the *severity of the main disorder* associated with that Imbalance.
The practitioner and patient together can prioritize the patient’s different disorders, giving star ratings for each. For example, the practitioner may ask the patient:

‘Oswald, you say that your main illnesses are exhaustion, restlessness, a sensation of chest discomfort, and feeling too hot. How many stars, out of five, would you give to each?’

After some discussion, the Oswald decides four stars for exhaustion, two for restlessness, one for chest discomfort, and one for heat sensations.

Adjust star rating practitioner can always alter the rating later, for example, in the light of data from pulse and tongue.
The importance of star ratings is that they determine the relative number of herbs in a combination. The more stars awarded to an Imbalance, the more herbs allocated to that Imbalance in the herb combination.

For example, for Oswald, in a 6-herb combination, there would be:

- 2 tonic herbs (4 stars)
- 2 calming herbs (4 stars)
- 1 moving herb (2 stars)
- 1 draining herb (2 stars)
4 IMBALANCES + 5 ORGANS

4 IMBALANCES:
CLEAR SIMPLE OVERVIEW

• Cuts through complexity and focuses on the patient’s basic needs, in terms of just four factors: Deficiency, Stagnation, Disturbance, and Excess.

4 IMBALANCES + 5 ORGANS:
PRECISE DETAIL

• Increases the accuracy of diagnosis: the key to safe and successful treatment

• Each of the five Organ systems of Chinese medicine: SP, LU, KI, LR, and HT, can have each of the 4 Imbalances: Deficiency, Stagnation, Disturbance, and Excess.
Oswald and the Heart system

Practitioner now specifically questions Oswald about the Heart Organ system, and finds:

- **chest discomfort** is associated with sadness, and Heart Stagnant Qi
- **restlessness** is associated with anxiety and insomnia, and Heart Spirit Disturbance
- **heat sensations** are worse with increasing anxiety, associated with Heart Deficiency Heat, based on Deficient Yin

But Oswald’s exhaustion is not associated with increasing sadness or anxiety, so the practitioner must check the other four Organ systems to identify the system associated with Deficiency.
OTHER ORGAN SYSTEMS

• **Spleen, Lung, and Liver** The practitioner questions Oswald about these Organs, but Oswald has none of their specific symptoms.

• **Kidney** But Oswald does have weak lower back, urinary frequency, and tinnitus that get worse with increasing exhaustion.

• **Diagnosis** So the practitioner diagnoses Kidney Deficient Yin, and gives Kidney Deficiency Heat two stars.

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Kidney Organ box

![Kidney Organ box diagram](image)

The full Patient Diagram on the next slide, includes the central 4 Imbalance box, and the five Organ boxes, which give precise details of each Organ system in terms of the 4 Imbalances.
PATIENT DIAGRAM
PROBLEMS OF HERB CHOICE

• Overlapping herb actions
  One of the biggest problems for herbal practitioners is that herbs in the same group can have many overlapping actions and uses.

• Difficult herb choice
  This can make it difficult to differentiate between similar herbs, and to choose the right herb for the patient’s needs.

• What makes a herb special
  A practitioner wants to know what makes a particular herb special and different from other herbs in the same group.
HERB DIAGRAMS

• Solution
  was to solve these problems of herb
  choice that I developed the Herb
  Diagrams using the system of the 4
  Imbalances and 5 Organs.

• Herb Diagrams
  These are organized in a similar way to
  the Patient Diagram described above,
  and use the same 0-5 star rating system.

• Quick clear visual picture
  It is sometimes said that a picture
  is worth a thousand words, and,
  as can be seen below, the Herb
  Diagram can give a quick clear
  visual impression of what makes a
  herb special.
The Rosmarinus 4 Imbalance box gives a very clear simple overview of the herb.

It shows that Rosmarinus is:

- **primarily** to **tonify** Deficiency, and **move** Stagnation

- **secondarily** to **calm** Disturbance
Herb Diagrams can compare similar herbs. The differences become very clear in this visual representation.

Rosmarinus and Lavandula
Rosmarinus is primarily a moving and tonifying, whilst Lavandula is primarily calming. Neither of these herbs has draining action.
FULL HERB DIAGRAM FOR ROSMARINUS