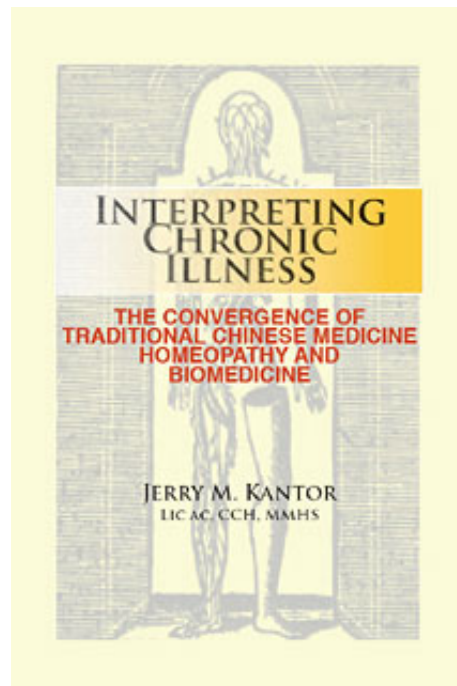


Jerry M. Kantor

Interpreting Chronic Illness

Reading excerpt
[Interpreting Chronic Illness](#)
of [Jerry M. Kantor](#)
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SMELL DIMENSION: CHRONIC ILLNESSES

Confirmation of how central orientation and direction is to the sense of smell comes from the field of organic chemistry. Scientists in the fragrance industry have discovered that the nose assigns different odors to chemicals whose otherwise identical molecular structures are mirror images of one another. In other words, and to the subtlest degree imaginable, the nose knows its right from its left.³

SMELL DIMENSION ILLNESS: ALLERGIES

Why do we suffer allergies to grass, tree pollens, cat dander, dust mites, and mold spore, or why is such a lethal reaction caused in some people after eating peanuts or shrimps? As an inherent part of the immune system, allergic reactions at some point in our evolution likely served an important purpose. For example, as suggested in the chapter on touch, an apparently random sensitivity to gluten underlying celiac disease may have protected society at large by predisposing certain individuals to survive outbreaks of ergotism. Of course, like the anaphylactic shock from eating peanuts, certain allergies can present problems too severe to discount. Otherwise, to the extent to which annoying seasonal sneezing or itching of the eyes can be withstood, a partnering approach to allergies is preferred to a reliance on medication that suppresses the immune system.

SMELL DIMENSION ILLNESS: ALLERGIES HOMEOPATHIC REMEDY

Kali carbonicum

Allergies can result when disorientation triumphs over centeredness. To illustrate, we draw on an example of analysis and treatment with a homeopathic remedy. The homeopathic remedy Kali carbonicum effectively treats allergies in an individual whose personality type hinges on the centeredness versus disorientation conundrum. The black-and-white Kali carbonicum personality adheres closely to a moral code that he expects others to also follow, and holds loyalty and honesty at a premium. Significantly, the Kali carbonicum individual is both mentally rigid and unusually sensitive to dampness.

An inability to be subtle and to detect subtle amounts of moisture in the nasal mucosa express one and the same issue. The olfactory apparatus is nestled in the nasal mucosa. A Kali carbonicum individual reflects a parallel relationship between an issue of directionality ("I can go only to the right or the left, not in-between") and the mucosa's inability or unwillingness to process moisture. In a person who is insensitive to Kali carbonicum, moisture is processed away by the nasal mucosa just as quickly as its presence is detected. In someone sensitive to Kali carbonicum, however, moisture accumulating in the nasal mucosa is not detected until there is far too much of it, at which point, an overreaction to moisture in the guise of an allergy attack erupts.

SMELL DIMENSION ILLNESSES: ASTHMA AND PANIC DISORDER

Gaspings, a sharp intake of breath, is a common respiratory response to shock. A panic attack, serial gasping (not panting), manifests as a rapid and seemingly uncontrollable intake of breath. The brain overoxygenates, causing nervous excitement and fear to spiral further.

Individuals suffering from panic attacks temporarily suffer a delusion that they are sure to die soon. In response to a past experience of shock or exhaustion, a panicking individual, in fact, inhales too much of the future and loses the current connection with the source of his breath. Try gasping serially for a few moments while also looking in a mirror; it is unlikely you can do so without raising your shoulders, constricting your lungs, and appearing very anxious.

Wheezing is the diametrical opposite of gasping. Its pattern of asthmatic respiration may express overattachment to an emotionally suppressive past (and a consequent loss of connection to the source of the breath). Though desperate to exhale his past into oblivion, the wheezing asthmatic individual creates a shortage of oxygen. In a spiraling pattern, an increasing deficit of oxygen heightens anxiety and desperation, thereby further accelerating a stimulus to wheeze. Persons with asthma who wheeze often have had a childhood in which the natural expression of emotion had been systematically suppressed—an experience not unlike suffocation. Wheezing, a form of self-suffocation, subconsciously grants the patient with asthma permission to dramatize the pain of emotional suppression while simultaneously trying to cast off its suffocating consequences.

Frequent asthmatic episodes can produce a cascade in which a chronic in-

flammatory response and mucous buildup in the airways promote secondary breathing problems and additional anxiety. According to TCM, asthma is always rooted in misdirection, in the failure of the Lung Qi to descend. A partnering with the asthmatic condition so as to redress it now suggests itself: in order to encourage the Qi to descend, a person with asthma must learn to embrace, rather than fear, his omens.

Dreaded or not, future moments do not overwhelm centered individuals. Rather, each moment is calmly encountered in its own good time. Once centering is mastered, respiratory symptoms decrease in severity and frequency, or else vanish entirely, without recourse to drugs. Relaxation techniques, meditation, and yoga practices that embrace breathing exercises abound. Simple techniques promoting the descending movement of Lung Qi and reconnection with the source of the breath can be quickly learned and easily practiced. We are thus directed to achieve mastery of the past, the present, and the future.

SMELL DIMENSION ILLNESSES: HOARSENESS AND LOSS OF VOICE

Song and speech are created by means of the breath propelling a sound wave shaped within the larynx and cavities of the head. The loss or distortion of the voice occurs when one's connection to the source of the breath is broken. The head and larynx are, in effect, instruments that must be neither overly moist nor overly dry so as to produce a clear and pleasing sound. If the mucous membranes within the head are clogged, a nasal whine is produced.⁴ Within the larynx, this relates to the Yin (natural moisture) of the Lungs, which, should they become deficient, dry out the larynx, causing hoarseness and loss of the voice.

When laryngitis occurs suddenly and not as a result of abuse of the voice, the possibility of an emotional cause has to be considered. TCM theory holds, in fact, that excessive worry dries out the body's fluids. Clinical homeopathic experience indicates that women are more inclined than men are to be subject to an emotional loss of the voice, a condition treated with great effectiveness with Ignatia. This homeopathic remedy is appropriate in situations in which a shocking grief has suddenly turned a woman's life upside down, producing, not only a loss of the voice, but disorientation and frequently depression as well.

**SMELL DIMENSION ILLNESSES: SKIN
AILMENTS: PSORIASIS, ECZEMA, ACNE**

Although amphibians, reptiles, and mammals have lungs housed within their - chest cavities, the lungs are specialized organs that did not appear on the scene until the evolution of the lungfish. Yet, older and more primitive organisms, even those consisting of only a single cell, also respire. They do so by means of an exchange of gases that occurs through the cell membrane of the skin. Even without the benefit of microscopes, TCM, which demonstrates that acupuncture points located along the Lung meridian are indicated in the treatment of most skin conditions, preserves this biological truth. Similarly, TCM describes the numerous wrinkles and extraordinary creases found in the faces of long-time smokers in terms of the depletion of Lung Yin (natural moisture).

Like frogs, in whose always-moist skin some exchange of gases necessarily occurs, we, through skin rashes and eruptions, attempt to vent internal toxins. Skin rashes and eruptions may also express a deficiency in our ability to vent a pernicious entity known in TCM as Damp Heat. We find echoes of outer membrane gas exchanges in TCM's Qi gong vital energy exercises. Here, a vestigial (or literal) ability to respire through the skin is invoked by the Qi gong instructor's directive that the practitioner visualize herself breathing through every pore in her body.

Dozens of homeopathic remedies may be used to assist the body in clearing it of internal heat and toxicity. Of these, the most frequently used is undoubtedly Sulphur.

**SMELL DIMENSION ILLNESSES:
LARGE INTESTINE AILMENTS:
CONSTIPATION AND IRRITABLE BOWEL SYNDROME (IBS)**

Like the skin, the intestines are an interface surface that functions as a protective barrier. The intestines sequester bacteria-laden digestive matter from the rest of the abdominal cavity. The esophageal-intestinal tract is a continuous tube, extending from the mouth to the rectum. In addition to food, air and other gases enter this tract. Although oxygen does not undergo oxidation within the gut, gas exchanges and gas production from the intestinal flora do occur. The expulsion of these gases from the tract's terminus thus qualifies the esophageal-intestinal tract, in a metaphorical sense at least, as a secondary site of respiration. In its pairing of

the two organs in theory, TCM recognizes the overlapping function of the lungs and large intestine viscera.

Acupuncture Points as Treatment

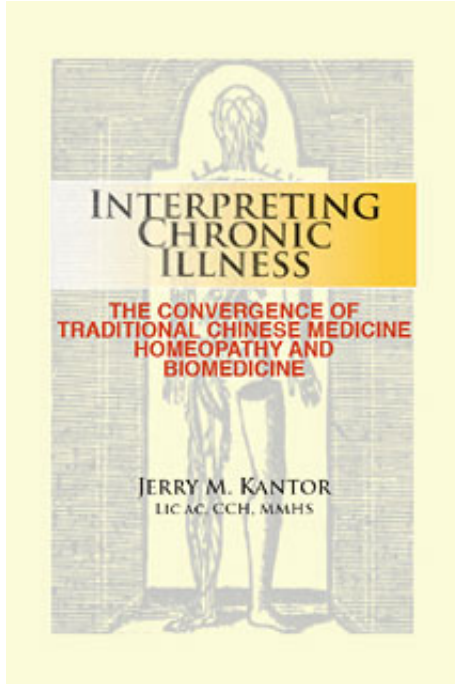
The acupuncture meridians pertaining to the Lungs and the Large Intestine are found positioned side by side on the upper limbs. The key to treating patients who experience symptoms of the Lung and the Large Intestine simultaneously, as well as symptoms of skin conditions, is an acupuncture point (Lung 7), located on the wrist where the two meridians intersect. Another acupuncture point, renowned for its effectiveness in the treatment of skin disorders, is a Large Intestine point located on the outer elbow (Large Intestine 11). Stimulation of an acupuncture point found on the lower leg (Stomach 40) helps the body process excessive mucous, whether it is lodged in the lungs or in the intestines.

SMELL DIMENSION ILLNESSES: LARGE INTESTINE AILMENTS: CONSTIPATION AND IRRITABLE BOWEL SYNDROME (IBS) HOMEOPATHIC REMEDY

Natrum sulphuricum

Healthful bowel activity can be understood as a steady downward and outward movement. According to TCM, dampness, mucous, and excessive dryness afflict the airways and intestines in a similar fashion: Dampness and mucous can cause diarrhea, as well as an uncontrolled urge to move the bowels; dryness produces constipation. The obstruction and dysfunction of the intestines may be construed to be a disordered digestive exhalation. Conversely, for the intestines, the airways, and mental functioning, the feeling of being clear corresponds with a state of health.

Because the diagnosis of irritable bowel syndrome includes a vast number of symptoms, dozens of homeopathic remedies are of potential use. One in particular is noted for its thematic aptness: *Natrum sulphuricum*, also known as sodium sulfate, or Glauber's salt. Its *natrum* component addresses grief (disorientation-in-time); its *sulphurous* component relates to the presence of internal Heat. *Natrum sulphuricum*'s famous keynote, "better after a bowel movement," implies a psychologically driven need to feel clear.



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