

Excerpt from the *Hot Stone Therapy Introductory Course Manual*

2.7 Cold, Dampness and Heat: Typology of Clients

Within the Five Elements system, *Five Climates* correspond to five seasons. If a person shows internal symptoms similar to external climatic conditions, TCM declares that the external climate “lives” inside the person.

Five climates are **Wind, Heat, Dampness, Dryness and Cold.**

Dampness often does not exist by itself but combines with Heat, Wind or Cold.

According to TCM, an imbalance of Heat (Yang) or Cold (Yin) can significantly contribute to any disease.

!!! A deficiency of Heat/Yang is considered to be an important cause of variety of chronic condition in moderately cold climate zones (countries such as Finland, Sweden, Iceland, Canada etc.), especially for females who naturally have prominent Yin (and often are deficient in Heat too) and many urban males. When excess climatic cold is combined with a sedentary type of life (lack of movement) it causes a further depletion of Yang attributes.

COLD

Cold climate slows processes down. It is associated with the Kidney Meridian and the Water element. Cold chills, retards circulation, attacks the skin and muscles, causes shivering and goose bumps. The body may respond with fever (Yang) to resist adverse influences.

- All thermally cold, refrigerated food belongs to Cold. Improper nutrition (especially consuming a lot of ice creams and iced drinks) and exposure to cold climate deplete Yang energy even more.
- Antibiotics (medicine for cold) may even further damage internal heat desperately needed for digestion.
- Prolonged Cold manifests as a weakness of the immune system causing allergies, asthma, colitis, arthritis, eczema and Candida.
- Along with symptoms of cold, there may be a craving for warm food and liquids, feelings of heaviness, weariness and slow circulation.
- The emotion associated with Cold is fear. Fear is heavy, it anticipates a bad outcome, is cynical and critical, and there is usually a preference for loneliness or isolation.

Because of the hardening of the heart due to imbalance of Kidney/Water, arthritis, deafness and senility are highly possible outcomes.

Sometimes, Heat deficiency may bring on symptoms of feeling external cold (feeling chills, goose bumps regardless of the season) also known as the "Deficiency Cold" Syndrome.

Heat in the form of Hot Stone Massage is often introduced to aid with this type of deficiency.

DAMPNESS

Dampness is another condition quite typical for in the northern environments (including the Canadian climate). It is connected to the Spleen/Stomach Meridians and the Earth Element.

Dampness feels like a swamp that builds a feeling of a weight or liquid collection. It appears as a swelling, a sense of heaviness and fullness, sluggishness, dullness regardless of the person being exposed to a humid climate or not.

- Superficially, dampness shows as oily skin, edema, sticky perspiration, and swelling around the joints. Water retention, heaviness and dull pain also refer to an excessive dampness condition.
- Dairy products, starches, gluten, steroids and birth pills as well as watery fruits help to generate even more Dampness so it is advisable to avoid them if one is prone to imbalance of the Earth element (Spleen/Stomach).
- Dampness may contribute to fuzzy thinking, clumsiness, seizures and strokes (when combined with the Wind); dampness can also bring on Shingles, Herpes or inflammations such as Cystitis, ulcer (Damp Heat), and with Cold may increase stiffness, sore muscles and fatigue.
- Emotionally, Dampness relates to over thinking, pensiveness, worries and the person becoming overly concerned with details. Obsessive thinking but also apathy and boredom born from inertia reflect an obstruction/stagnation of Chi on a deeper level. Poor digestion, flabbiness and a heavy feeling may be also outcomes of this quite unpleasant mental state.

HEAT

Heat naturally speeds up BOTH metabolism and circulation. Heat expresses itself via the Fire element and Heart Meridian. Heat moves up, toward the surface so it may show as reddened appearance of the face, neck and eyes and a feeling of warmth. For Heat is not always necessary to record a temperature on the thermometer.

- Heat is expressed through intense emotional outcomes such as anger or happiness.

- Heat may also be associated with dryness, constipation, agitation and aversion to warm food, climate and drinks.
- Sugar, coffee, spicy food and alcohol as well as some thyroid hormones all produce abundance of internal Heat.

Both conditions, cold and dampness, may be successfully treated with heat therapies. Clients from the first two groups (cold and dampness), will be attracted more then often to Hot Stone Therapy treatments while clients with excessive Heat will be drawn to room temperature and to cold stones.

Elements taken from the Five Climates Theory applicable to Hot Stone Therapy:

- In most of the cases your clients will experience excessive cold or excessive dampness prior to the treatment. Pay close attention to the type of condition and see how you can help client with additional dietary advice or cross referrals.
- Excess Cold requires treatment that has to be slow and nurturing, a deep connection with the Kyo has to be established (see description of the Kyo in 2.10).
- Excess dampness requires a lot of movement. Treatment has to be more active, and also combined with lymphatic drainage. Pressure that is too light is not as effective as a strong, steady movement using a warm stone. Dry brushing prior to the treatment for those seriously interested in improvement, can make quite a difference.
- People with excess Heat symptoms may not be your ideal candidates for the Hot Stone Therapy. A majority of clients with excess heat (expressive, reddish complexion and hair, very hot and wiry personality) will usually dislike the hot treatments. However, we can use partial hot stone applications on the lower back or shoulder to release muscle tension while using room temperature stones to draw the heat away from the body.