

Clinical Report 2 (Japan)

Infant Crying at Night

Zen'ichiro Watanabe
Fuji Niko-Niko Clinic

Case: One year and two months old, male infant, weight 9.8 kg

Main complaint: Night crying

Past history & Birth history: Unremarkable

Present history: Two months ago, the patient began to cry weakly and quietly three to four times during the night. When picked up in mother's arms and fed with breast milk, he falls back to sleep. However, as soon as he is left on the bed, he starts crying. So the mother stays up to hold him up. Although baby food has been introduced since he was 5 months old, he eats so little with a little weight gain.

Oriental medical finding

[Inspection] Physical constitution: On the slim side, lack of energy with an anxious impression. Tongue: Pale white.

[Listening] No special mention

[Interview] Stools: Slightly loose. Mother: Looked a little tired and frustrated.

[Palpation] Abdominal region: Distended with slightly strained rectus muscles and a slight sense of coldness. Pulse: Weak.

Diagnosis: Night crying due to heart-spleen (mental status-digestive function) vacuity.

Therapy: *shokenchuto* (morning and evening) and *kambakutaisoto* (instructed same dosage for mother and the child before bedtime.)

Course: The night crying reduced to once on the third day of the administration, and he could eat up. Since the 7th days he has stopped crying. In the interview of a later date, it was found that the mother had felt mother-in-law stress. After the treatment, the mother could have room to breathe and did not feel uneasy with every word her mother-in-law spoke. Her complexion has become bright.

Discussion: The author considered that the infant

patient with weak spleen and stomach (digestive function) was involved in his mother's mental stress, inducing him to feel anxious and start crying at night. The treatment was made to recover the spleen and stomach with *shokenchuto* and to alleviate anxiety with *kambakutaisoto*. The author also considered that ingredients with high sweetness in these formulas of malt sugar, Chinese date, and licorice root acted to ease tension.

From the standpoint of Chinese medicine, the patient type is deficiency-cold in the spleen and stomach and susceptible to negative emotions. Cold in the abdomen of such type of infants congeals, leading to qi stagnation, thus causing abdominal pain based on the principle of "qi blockage causes pain. Furthermore, as cold belongs to yin, it tends to become worse during the night. Reduced movement or transportation and transformation of spleen qi often cause throwing up milk, diarrhea, eating so little. The sound of crying is weak due to yang deficiency, which is treated by warming the spleen and dissipating cold with formulas such as *shokenchuto* and *ninjinto*.

Patients having anxiety are sensitive to even a small change in their environment and readily recognize that they are separated from their mother, a safety zone for them. And this kind of separation becomes quite a burden to such infants, who then suddenly start crying. Therefore, for the reasons above, such infants as the subject patient, who look asleep in the arms of their mothers, start crying as soon as mothers put them into bed. Complexion has little color due to anxiety. For these patients, treatment is performed aiming to induce sedation and tranquillization (settle fright and quiet the spirit) using *sanseinto*, *kambakutaisoto*, and *keishikaryukotsuboreito*.

We have studied other 11 cases of infants crying at night. For night crying caused by physical disorders such as pharyngitis, tympanitis, nasal stuffiness, asthma, itchy skin, or constipation,

treatments for symptoms were performed with formulas such as *kakkontokasenkyushin'i*, *makyokansekito*, *hangekobokuto*, *shofusan*, and *ogikenchuto*. For termination of breastfeeding, food stagnation, and infants who always wanted to be in the mother's arms (high need baby), lifestyle guidance was given to the mothers.

For the infants of the spleen-heart deficiency type that had influences on the heart qi causing shallow sleep, difficulty falling sleep, lack of energy, and poor appetite with nervous temperament, and soft stools, formulas such as *kihito* and *kamikihito* were administered to invigorate the spleen (digestive-function) and calm the mind. For the infants of the exuberance type of heart-liver fire, who got excited after a parenting school or a festival, and had the heat qi overly agitated by the accumulation of sweet, hot, and rich taste food, causing them to keep awake, moving around even in the midnight and to cry in a loud voice, and in a louder voice in the light, and for infants who were red-faced and had constipation, treatment was made to clear the heated heart (excited emotion) and calm the mind with formulas such as *ryutanshakanto*, *saikokaryukotsuboreito*, *orengedokuto*, and *yokukansan*. For those with yin deficiency in the liver and kidney who got easily angered and could not sleep due to a sense of exaltation, yin was nourished with *rokumigan* and *seishinrenshiin*.

In diagnosing infants, physicians should know not only the patients conditions, but also the mothers (family) conditions and the relationship between the infants and mothers (family). In most cases infants night crying is often triggered by their sensing abnormal conditions of the mother, and thus treatments are necessary for both infant patients and the mothers and how to take the same herbal medicine at the same time is effective.