Pathogenesis of Heart Heat

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Heart heat is the result of excessive internal friction that accumulates over a period of time. “Hurrying” is a general term that describes the varied causes of heart heat.

The heart, alone of all the organs in the human body, is constantly and continuously working as long as we live. All other organs rest from time to time. We can even hold our breath and stop the lungs for a minute or two, but the heart never takes a break. Friction and heat are normal features of the heart, but this organ will be the first to be overwhelmed by excessive friction and thus manifest heat-related pathology which include inflammatory diseases, autoimmune diseases, and manic personality disorders.

Our Chinese heart (*xin)* houses the *shen,* that substance which determines behavior by gathering information from external and internal sources. Agitated behavior of a chronic nature is usually the first and principle indication of heart heat.

Too much wakefulness robs the heart of necessary yin-time that is so essential for nourishment and recovery. The human body/mind needs 12 hours of yang – “up-time” – and 12 hours of yin – “down-time” every 24 hours in order to lead a balanced, healthy life. People who have to drag themselves out of bed every morning or then just work through their fatigue during the day are injuring their heart yin by creating excessive internal friction. Workaholics who won’t take breaks and only make time for work-related activities are flirting with disease and danger. Every battery needs recharging or it dies. So it is with the human body/mind.

Scurrying through life, bouncing from one commitment to the next, is another root cause of heart heat. Over-scheduling, devotion to the “keeping-busy” mantra, multi-tasking, and maintaining unrealistic expectations of oneself fuel this kind of frenzied behavior that inevitably leads down the ugly path to heart heat. This problem is especially true for many women and single parents, who simultaneously juggle money-earning jobs, child care, and household chores like cooking and cleaning.

Excessive speed generates excessive friction. Driving fast and tailgating, running fast, walking fast, talking fast, working fast, and thinking fast – all the time – build up dangerous formations of heat that will inevitably invade the heart. Constant racing and multi-tasking rattle the *shen* and confuse judgment, too often causing accidents that have serious consequences.

When excess yin is lost from shrinking fat cells through the process of GDP, excess yang is also released and will heat up the heart. In addition, as GDP helps people stop using food to sedate their excess heat which is caused by “hurrying,” that heat will regularly set up headquarters in the heart.

A chronic heat condition generated by other organs can also contribute to heart heat, the most common and serious of which is called “liver heat.” Our Chinese liver (*gan*) is tasked with maintaining a free flow of *qi* throughout the body. When the *qi* is blocked by stagnated thinking and/or sedentary living, it slams against the barrier in its attempt to get past. The continuous collision of qi against that obstacle generates tremendous friction. The resulting heat travels upward as all heat does, frequently passing through and injuring the heart and disturbing the *shen*. ☯