

# Jin Qinglei's Experience in Treating Bile Reflux Gastritis

Ting Liu, Weiping Wang, Qinglei Jin\*

Suzhou Wuzhong District Traditional Chinese Medicine Hospital, Suzhou 215100, Jiangsu, China

*\*Author to whom correspondence should be addressed.*

**Copyright:** © 2026 Author(s). This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (CC BY 4.0), permitting distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is cited.

**Abstract:** Bile reflux gastritis is a common disease in gastroenterology. Western medicine treatment is often repeated, which seriously affects the patient's quality of life. Traditional Chinese medicine has shown unique therapeutic effects in the treatment of reflux gastritis. This article aims to summarize the experience of Jin Qinglei, a famous traditional Chinese medicine practitioner, in using Zuojin Pills and Wendan Decoction to treat bile reflux gastritis. When treating bile reflux gastritis, Jin Lao started from the liver, gallbladder, spleen and stomach, and proposed a treatment method focusing on regulating Qi in the liver and regulating phlegm in the stomach. The effect was remarkable and provided an important reference idea for the clinical treatment of bile reflux gastritis.

**Keywords:** Bile reflux gastritis; Zuojin pill; Wendan decoction

**Online publication:** March 26, 2026

## 1. Introduction

Bile reflux gastritis is a common digestive system disease. It is caused by the reflux of bile into the stomach, resulting in damage to the gastric mucus barrier, which in turn causes various inflammatory changes in the gastric mucosa. Clinical manifestations include abdominal fullness, heartburn, hiccups, acid reflux, belching and other symptoms<sup>[1]</sup>. The disease has the characteristics of recurring attacks, which can lead to gastric mucosal atrophy and intestinal biochemistry under long-term effects, increasing the risk of gastric cancer. In the treatment of the disease, gastric mucosal protective agents, gastrointestinal motility drugs, etc., are often given for treatment, but there are problems such as drug dependence and a high recurrence rate<sup>[2]</sup>. Although there is no name for the disease "bile reflux gastritis" in traditional Chinese medicine, according to its clinical manifestations and characteristics, it can be classified into the categories of "epigastric pain", "hiccup", "vomiting", "gallbladder", "pimple syndrome" and other diseases.

Jin Qinglei, deputy chief physician of traditional Chinese medicine, was born in a family of traditional Chinese medicine. He is the 11th-generation inheritor of the Wu School of Medicine. He is the first batch of instructors for the inheritance of academic ideas and experience in the inheritance workshop of famous old traditional Chinese medicine experts of the Wu School of Medicine in Suzhou City. He is also the third batch of instructors for the succession of traditional Chinese medicine practitioners in Wuzhong District, Suzhou. He has been engaged in clinical work of traditional Chinese medicine for more than 60 years. He has rich clinical experience and has unique insights into the

---

treatment of bile reflux gastritis.

## 2. Cause and pathogenesis

There are many discussions on the etiology and pathogenesis of this disease in ancient books throughout the ages. “Lingshu-Four Seasons of Qi” says: “The evil is in the gallbladder, and the inversion is in the stomach. If bile fluid is released, the mouth will be bitter, and if the stomach Qi is inverted, vomiting will be bitter.” It shows that the location of the disease is in the gallbladder and stomach, and the cause is that bile Qi invades the stomach and stomach Qi goes up and down. “Su Wen Zhi Zhen Yao Da Lun” states: “All kinds of vomiting and acid vomiting, heavy injection and downward pressure, all belong to heat.” It is believed that vomiting and acid vomiting are due to the invasion of heat evil, the loss of balance in the stomach, and the rise of sour and rotten gas. Jin Lao believes that this disease is caused by dysfunction of the liver, gallbladder, spleen, and stomach. Normally, the liver and spleen function by ascending, the gallbladder and stomach function by descending. The liver is normal, the Qi movement is smooth, the bile circulates in the normal channels to help the stomach digest, and the contents in the stomach can be transmitted to the small intestine to secrete clear and reduce turbidity. This disease is often caused by stagnation of liver qi, failure of the liver to dissipate and drain the liver, Qi stagnation turning into fire, gallbladder stagnation and phlegm heat, bile not following the normal path to help the spleen and transformation, and backlash against the stomach, resulting in many symptoms. The treatment is suitable for clearing the gallbladder and harmonizing the stomach, soothing the liver and lowering the Qi.

## 3. Prescriptions and medicines explain the truth

Zuojin Pill and Wendan Decoction is Jin Lao’s experience prescription for treating bile reflux gastritis. Zuojin Pill is composed of *Coptis rhizoma* and *Evodia fructus*. Wendan Decoction consists of pinellia, tangerine peel, poria, ginger, bamboo root, *Citrus aurantium*, jujube, and licorice. Additions and subtractions according to the syndrome: For dry stools, add rhubarb; for diarrhea, add coix seed; for obvious acid reflux, add calcined octopus and calcined corrugated seeds; for chest and flank pain, add bupleurum and alpinia; for obvious vomiting, add ocher. For those with gallstones, add Hai Jin Sha and *Gallus gallus* L. *Coptis chinensis* is used heavily in Zuojin Pills to clear liver fire and purge stomach fire, taking into account both symptoms and root causes; *Evodia rutaecarpum* soothes the liver and relieves stagnation, regulates Qi, harmonizes the stomach and reduces nihilism, guides the meridians and is used as medicine, and can prevent the cold of *Coptis chinensis* from damaging the middle yang. When the two medicines are used together, the pungency and the bitterness are relieved, and the liver and stomach are treated simultaneously. Modern pharmacological research has confirmed that *Coptidis coptidis* has choleric, bacteriostatic, and immune-regulating effects <sup>[3]</sup>, and *Evodia evodia* has analgesic and anti-inflammatory effects <sup>[4]</sup>. Relevant researchers isolated and identified chemical components such as berberine, coptisine, evodiamine, evodiocarpine and fanghepine from Zuojin Pills. Research has found that berberine, as a proton pump inhibitor, can effectively inhibit gastric acid secretion. Berberine and evodiocarpine inhibit gastrointestinal motility by directly antagonizing choline receptors or inhibiting cholinesterase activity. Moreover, the alkaloids in Zuojin Pills have anti-inflammatory effects and can effectively inhibit the production and secretion of inflammatory cytokines <sup>[5]</sup>. *Pinellia ternata* in Wendan Decoction is pungent and warm in nature. It is a monocular medicine. It mainly removes dampness and resolves phlegm, harmonizes the stomach and relieves vomiting. Bamboo Ru is sweet in taste and slightly cold in nature. It is a ministerial drug. It mainly clears away heat and resolves phlegm, relieves irritability and relieves vomiting. The two medicines are used together to relieve vomiting, relieve irritability, resolve phlegm and calm the stomach. Tangerine peel removes dampness and resolves phlegm, regulates Qi and stagnation. *Citrus aurantium* reduces Qi stagnation, resolves phlegm and eliminates pimples. *Poria cocos* strengthens the spleen and removes dampness, ginger and jujube harmonize the spleen and stomach, and roasted licorice harmonizes various medicines. The comprehensive prescription regulates Qi, resolves phlegm, harmonizes the stomach and promotes

choleresis. Modern pharmacological research has confirmed that: *Pinellia ternata* can significantly inhibit gastric juice secretion, tangerine peel can significantly inhibit gastric ulcer occurrence and gastric juice secretion, *Poria cocos* can reduce gastric juice secretion, bamboo root has anti-inflammatory effects, ginger can inhibit gastric juice acidity and gastric juice secretion, and *Evodia* can reduce gastric acid secretion, anti-HP activity, and choleric and antiemetic effects<sup>[6,7]</sup>.

#### 4. Use Chinese ginseng and Western medicine to maintain health

Jin Lao believes that diagnosis and treatment should be combined with modern medicine to identify diseases. If necessary, gastroscopy, abdominal color ultrasound, CT, tumor markers, electrocardiogram and other examinations should be completed to rule out severe cases. In addition, attention should be paid to prevention and care:

- (1) Keep a regular and healthy life to avoid the invasion of wind, cold, heat, dampness, filth and turbidity;
- (2) Patients need to learn to channel their emotions and keep their mood happy and stable. You can relax, relieve stress and anxiety, and promote physical and mental health by resting, exercising, listening to music, reading, etc.;
- (3) Pay attention to diet. Patients should avoid eating too greasy and irritating foods, such as fried foods, spicy foods, strong tea, coffee, etc., to avoid irritating the gastric mucosa and aggravating gastric discomfort. It is not advisable to eat too much raw or cold melons and fruits, as it may damage the Zhongyang. Control the amount of food you eat at each meal to avoid excessive satiety;
- (4) Patients should try to avoid staying up late, overworking and bad living habits, ensure adequate sleep time, arrange work and life reasonably, and maintain a good living condition<sup>[8]</sup>.

#### 5. Typical cases

Zhu, a 53-year-old female, went to the hospital because of recurrent epigastric pain for more than 3 years. The patient has been experiencing epigastric pain for more than three years, with occasional abdominal distension, acid reflux, and bitter and dry mouth. An electronic gastroscopy was performed, which revealed chronic non-atrophic gastritis with erosion and bile reflux. *Helicobacter pylori* test: negative. Oral administration of omeprazole enteric-coated capsules, sucralfate suspension and other drugs was not effective. Symptoms: epigastric pain, occasional bloating, acid reflux, bitter mouth and dry mouth, palpitations, nausea, poor sleep, irregular urination, slightly dry stool, red tongue, white and greasy coating, stringy and thready pulse. TCM diagnosis: epigastric pain (stagnation of liver and stomach heat, gallbladder evil revolting against the stomach syndrome). Treatment principles: Soothe the liver and harmonize the stomach, clear the gallbladder and lower the gallbladder. Give Zuojin Pills and Wendan Decoction plus or minus 7 doses. Second diagnosis: The patient complained that the epigastric pain and abdominal distension were relieved, his sleep improved, and his stool was normal, but he still had a bitter mouth and dry mouth, a red tongue, a slightly greasy coating, and a stringy and thin pulse. In addition to the above: Forge jellyfish and corrugated fruit to produce acid and relieve pain. Third diagnosis: all symptoms subsided, with occasional dull pain in the epigastrium, abdominal distension and acid regurgitation when eating carelessly, pale red tongue, thin white fur, and stringy and thready pulse. Add *Atractylodes macrocephala* and *Amomum villosum* to the front to strengthen the spleen and stomach. Fourth diagnosis: All symptoms disappeared, sleep was restored, and bowel movements were normal. In order to consolidate the curative effect, the dosage is added or subtracted and continued for 7 days. Follow-up visit half a year later: no recurrence of symptoms was found, and a repeat gastroscopy showed chronic non-atrophic gastritis. Experience: This patient's main symptoms include epigastric pain, abdominal distension, acid reflux, bitter mouth, dry mouth, and palpitations. Combined with a red tongue, white and greasy coating, and a stringy and thready pulse, the syndrome of liver and stomach heat stagnation and gallbladder evil reversing the stomach can be identified. The initial diagnosis is mainly to soothe the liver, regulate Qi, harmonize the stomach and resolve phlegm, and choose Zuojin Pills and Wendan Decoction. During the second diagnosis, the patient's epigastric pain and abdominal distension had been relieved, his sleep had improved, and his bowel movements were normal, but he still had a bitter taste

in the mouth and dry mouth. Therefore, he added calcined jellyfish and calcined corrugated seeds to produce acid and relieve pain, and he was treated accordingly. During the third diagnosis, the patient improved further and occasionally felt dull pain in the epigastrium, abdominal distension, and acid reflux. *Atractylodes macrocephala* and *Amomum villosum* were added to strengthen the spleen and stomach. The patient was also instructed to eat a light diet to avoid the symptoms caused by an improper diet.

Diseases demonstrate the preventive thinking of traditional Chinese medicine of “treating the disease before it’s too late”. This case embodies Jin Lao’s idea of soothing the liver, regulating Qi, harmonizing the stomach and resolving phlegm in the treatment of bile reflux gastritis. It starts from the liver, gallbladder, spleen and stomach, and treats the disease according to the syndrome. It prevents the disease before it is diagnosed, so it can be effective.

## About the author

Liu Ting (1991.07-) female, Han, native place, Yancheng, Jiangsu, master's degree candidate, professional title attending Chinese medicine practitioner, Wuzhong District Traditional Chinese Medicine Hospital, Suzhou City, research direction: Internal Medicine of Traditional Chinese Medicine

Jin Qinglei, deputy chief physician of traditional Chinese medicine, research direction: Internal Medicine of Traditional Chinese Medicine

## Disclosure statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

## References

- [1] Chen L, Zhu G, She L, et al., 2021, Analysis of Risk Factors and Establishment of a Primary Bile Reflux: A Single-Center Retrospective Study. *Frontiers in Medicine (Lausanne)*, 10(8): 758771.
- [2] Zhang ZM, Ye WY, Zhang XY, et al., 2022, Tian Delu, a Nationally Renowned Traditional Chinese Medicine Doctor, Has His Experience in Treating Bile Reflux Gastritis with “Qingjiang Theory”. *Beijing Chinese Medicine*, 41(12): 1384–1386.
- [3] Su WJ, Wang J, Xie Y, et al., 2023, The Efficacy of Huanglian Wendan Decoction Combined with Polyprezinc Granules in the Treatment of Bile Reflux Gastritis and Its Effect on Serum GAS and 5-HT Levels. *Progress in Modern Biomedicine*, 23(12): 2263–2266, 2290.
- [4] Kong YD, Qi Y, Cui N, et al., 2023, Research Progress on the Chemical Components and Pharmacological Effects of Evodia Evodia. *Traditional Chinese Medicine Information*, 40(5): 79–83, 89.
- [5] Li YW, Liu ZQ, Yi ZX, et al., 2019, Zuojin Pill Active Ingredient-Target-Multidimensional Action Mechanism. *Chinese Patent Medicine*, 41(5): 1022–1031.
- [6] Zheng JJ, Huang B, Guo SJ, et al., 2022, Meta-Analysis of the Clinical Efficacy and Safety of Soothing the Liver and Harmonizing the Stomach Method in the Treatment of Bile Reflux Gastritis. *Shaanxi Traditional Chinese Medicine*, 43(11): 1638–1642.
- [7] Yu XY, 2022, Meta-Analysis and Prescription Characteristics of Treating Bile Reflux Gastritis by Soothing the Liver and Harmonizing the Stomach, thesis, Hubei University of Traditional Chinese Medicine.
- [8] Wang ZY, Lian Y, Wang F, 2022, The Efficacy of Modified Shugan Jianpi Jiangni Decoction Combined with Aluminum Phosphate Gel in the Treatment of Bile Reflux Gastritis and Its Effect on Changes in Serum CCK and NF-κB Levels. *Sichuan Traditional Chinese Medicine*, 40(4): 74–76.

### Publisher’s note

*Whioce Publishing remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.*