

Blepharoptosis and Myasthenia

Blepharoptosis

Shang Bao Xia Chui (Upper Eyelid Dropped Down)

Qin Feng (Wind Invaded)

Jian Fei (Useless Eyelid)

Blepharoptosis, or ptosis for short, is a condition in which usually both upper eyelids sag, possibly interfering with vision. The disorder is most commonly seen in elderly people as the muscle fibers in both eyelids naturally weaken with advancing age. The condition can deteriorate if there is lack of sleep or fatigue in the afternoon. Newborns can be affected by ptosis in both eyes due to kidney *essence* deficiency causing genetic defect. Children and young adults can also experience blepharoptosis but in one eye only due to severe infection, eye injury, or tumor. In this book, we will focus on blepharoptosis in the senior.

Causes of Blepharoptosis in Seniors¹

Spleen *qi* deficiency prevents the *yang qi* from rising, resulting in a lack of power to lift up the eyelid. If the spleen *qi* fails to move and transform the *qi*, *damp* obstruction and *phlegm* development can occur. Then *wind-phlegm* blocks the network vessels (*luo mai*) with a resultant slowing down and weakening of movement of the eyelid's muscles, finally causing the eyelids to drop down.

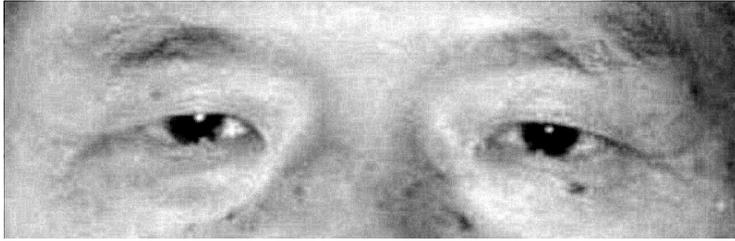


Figure 15 Example of Early Stage Blepharoptosis: Both Eyelids Sag

Examination

When both eyes are looking straight forward, the margin of the upper eyelid normally covers the top 1/5 of the upper portion of the cornea (not beyond 3 mm), which means the margin of this eyelid cannot go beyond the 10 to 2 o'clock position.

Blepharoptosis is indicated if the upper eyelid extends beyond 3mm from the upper edge of the cornea. In a severe case, it may fully cover the cornea. Looking at this type of patient's face, the hairs of the eyebrows will appear straight and there will be many wrinkles on the forehead from his/her efforts to keep the eyelids up. When the space between the upper and lower eye margins is narrower than normal (average is 7.54 mm), it indicates the upper eyelid has dropped.

Symptoms

Based on the above mentioned exam, in some cases, patients often need to raise their head, lift up their eyebrows, or even use their fingers to lift up an eyelid to help them see better.

However, there are some seniors who look like their eyelids are drooping because they have very loose skin on their eyebrows and eyelids. A simple way to rule out the disease of ptosis is to have them use two fingers to lift up the upper eyelid and check if the margin is still at the normal limit (less than 3mm). Another method is to use a finger and apply pressure at the middle of the eyebrow to check if, when the eyeball moves upward, the upper eyelid is able to lift up. This finding means that the patient does not have a ptosis diagnosis.

If the ptosis occurs suddenly in only one eye, it is most likely caused by the paralysis of the oculomotor nerve (3rd cranial nerve). Further medical examination is needed to exclude the conditions of tumor, stroke, diabetes or injury.

TCM Differential Diagnosis and Treatment²

Herbal Treatment

The first formula is based on the Five Wheels Theory.

Spleen *Qi* Deficiency

Treatment Principle	Tonify the spleen <i>yang</i> and boost <i>qi</i>
Formula 1	Bu Zhong Yi Qi Tang---Codonopsis (Ginseng) & Astragalus Combination ³
	Huang Qi, Dang Shen, Zhi Gan Cao, Dang Gui, Chen Pi, Sheng Ma, Chai Hu, Bai Zhu

Formulas #2 and #3 are based on Eight Principles Syndromes and Six Excessive of Atmospheric Influences.

Deficiency of *Qi* and *Blood*; *Wind Evil* Entering the Vessels (*Luo Mai*)

Treatment Principle	Dispel <i>wind</i> and boost <i>qi</i> to nourish <i>blood</i> flow
Formula 2	Ren Shen Yang Rong (Ying) Tang---Ginseng & Rehmannia Combination ⁴
	Dang Gui, Bai Shao, Shou Di Huang, Dang Shen, Bai Zhu, Fu Ling, Zhi Gan Cao, Rou Gui, Wu Wei Zi, Yuan Zhi, Chen Pi, Da Zao, Huang Qi
For severe cases to expel <i>wind</i> faster add	Qin Jiao, Tao Ren, *Di Long, *Jiang Can

Herbs with an asterisk () indicate an animal product*

Wind-Phlegm Obstructs the Vessels

Treatment Principle	To control <i>wind</i> and expel <i>phlegm</i> ; quicken the <i>blood</i> flow and clear the vessels
Formula 3	Zheng Rong Tang---Reforming Face Formula ⁵ Qiang Huo, #Bai Fu Zi, Fang Feng, Qin Jiao, #Dan (Ting) Nan Xing, #Ban Xia, *Jiang Can, Mu Gua, Gan Cao, Sheng Jiang, Huang Song Jie
For a chronic case, to quicken blood flow and dispel stasis add	Dan Shen, Chuan Xiong, Si Gua Luo, San Qi, *Di Long

Herbs marked with a pound sign (#) are slightly poisonous. These types of herbs are only used in small doses so the formulas are safe.

Acupuncture Treatment

In general, for the treatment of any eye disease with acupuncture, do treatments twice weekly with 10 treatments constituting one course. Choose *either* ocuzone points or filiform needling for the treatment. Note that seven star needling is good to do at any time or in combination with either the ocuzone or filiform techniques.

Acupuncture treatment selections for specific eye conditions will be given in each chapter.

For treating a light case of ptosis or one in its early stage, only use acupuncture treatment as herbs are not needed. Running needle is the most effective acupuncture approach.

For any acupuncture technique always include: Baihui (GV 20).

Running Needles:

Zanzhu (BL 2) -----> Yuyao (M-HN-6 extra point)

Yangbai (GB 14) -----> Yuyao

Sizhukong (TB 23) -----> Yuyao

Taiyang (M-HN-9 extra Point) ----> Tongziliao (GB 1)

Zusanli (ST 36) and Sanyinjiao (SP 6) should be added to any of the above combinations. (Note that these are not running needles).

Filiform Needles: Choose from one of two alternate groups of points:

Group 1: Zanzhu (BL 2), Yangbai (GB 14), Taiyang (M-HN-9), Zusanli (ST 36), Sanyinjiao (SP 6).

Group 2: Yuyao (M-HN-6), Shangxing (GV 23), Muchuang (GB 16), Sizhukong (TB 23), Qihai (CO 6), Hegu (LI 4).

Ocular Needles: Ocuzones Upper Warmer (Zone 5), Spleen (Zone 11).

Note that during ocular observation if you can see some changes in the capillaries in particular ocuzones, add those to zones 5 and 11 or choose the zones with observed changes instead.

Seven Star Needles: Seven Star needling is done following other ptosis treatments. For best results, it is helpful if the patient has a family member who can be taught to do seven star needle tapping for them between visits.

Tap on Five Back Shu Points: Feishu (BL 13), Xinshu (BL 15), Ganshu (BL 18), Pishu (BL 20), Shenshu (BL 23).

The patient can also gently tap on the acupuncture points around his/her eye orbit. Note that this area is very sensitive so the tapping should be gradually increased as tolerated and only up to the point where it still feels comfortable.

Ear Needles: Use press tack needles or magnetic pellets on the ear if the patient cannot come in for treatments as often as desired. Use filiform needles for 30 minutes, then remove and replace them with pellets held with ear tape. The patient should leave the pellets on until he/she feels irritation and can then remove them.

Select Ear Points: Eye, Lung, Spleen, Heart, Kidney

Moxibustion: Used by the patient to supplement his/her other treatments. In the early stage of the disease, moxibustion can be used as a preventive treatment. Remember to use moxa with caution in post-menopausal women or persons with severe *yin* deficiency.

Xuehai (SP 10), Zusanli (ST 36); or

Feishu (BL 13), Pishu (BL 20); or

Baihui (GV 20), Qihai (CO 6)

Prevention and Diet

It is most important for the patient to do self-care massage and moxibustion. Teach them and it can help to delay the progression of eye disease for as long as they live.

The principle for prevention is to supplement the spleen *yang* and *blood*, and keep boosting strong lung *qi* to prevent *wind* invasion.

Self-Care Massage: Knocking on the head; massaging around the orbital edges and ears. Details can be found in Chapter 13, General Prevention for Aging Eyes.

Also massage the Back Shu points; soles of the feet and Yongquan (KI 1).

Moxibustion: Use indirect moxa on Zusanli (ST 36) and Xuehai (SP 10).

Diet

Treatment Principle	Tonify spleen <i>qi</i>
	Shan Yao Bu Pi Congee
	Shan Yao 15 gram + rice 100 gram
Treatment Principle	Tonify <i>Blood</i>
	Ou Jie Bu XueTang
All foods can be added to Shan Yao with rice to make congee	Lotus node (Ou Jie) 1 lb without core, Red Date (Hong Zao) 10 pieces. Dry Longan fruit (Long Yan Rou) 15 -30 gm.