

Neuropathies Can be Treated Successfully

For years now I have been getting countless numbers of patients in with progressive sensory neuropathies of the feet and lower legs. Almost all of them echo a fatalistic sense that there is nothing that can be done for them because their doctor has deemed that it is incurable.

A condition of neuropathy can be described as a syndrome where a disease or impingement of the nerve leads to dysfunction of a single nerve called a mononeuropathy up to a group of nerves which is called a polyneuropathy. While I treat many mononeuropathies of the upper limbs due to impingements of the shoulders and neck quite commonly, it is the polyneuropathy of the lower legs that we are most concerned with in this article.

The main reason most doctors think about this as incurable is that they are looking at this as an operative condition of the feet and not as the extension of the relative health of the patient. You see, the name of the game is circulation and where you don't have blood circulation, you don't have adequate nerve enervation.

Because this is most commonly a disease of advancing age, the first thing to remember is that age is not a disease, but as we grow older we do have to adapt to our aging condition. One of the most common problems in this respect is that we naturally become more kidney energy deficient as we grow older. In China there is a natural age where people start adding kidney tonifying herbs to their daily dietary regimen. In the west, however, the doctor might insinuate that to have added pain and discomfort as we grow older is just natural, and that we just have to learn to put up with it.

Basically, kidney deficiency can be looked at from two different parts. There is Yang deficiency that can be represented by bone pain, especially in the low back, knees or ankles, a certain sensitivity to coldness, and frequent and clear urine and just plain stiffness in the morning. The other part, kidney yin deficiency, is more common with neuropathies. With kidney yin deficiencies we are more prone to be hot at night even to the point of night sweats, a fairly consistent dryness of the mouth with some of the same achiness of joints, but add to that some heat and swelling.

Yin deficiencies can include in its western disease nomenclature diabetes mellitus. As an interpretation the blood is drying up a bit and gradually becomes less fluid and flowing, less ready to penetrate the microcirculation of the peripheral appendages, particularly the feet.

For some patients it is as minor an irritation as not being able to feel your feet as you touch the ground. Sometimes there is added to this just a grating bit of irritation and tingling to the touch, like the weight of the bed covers as they drape over your toes at night. Still for others the main problem can be not only a numbness, but the constant and unbearable burning hot stabbing pain behind the toes that not even the most serious pain medications begin to assuage.

If this were all the patient had to worry about, living with the aid of morphine and sleeping pills may not be so bad, but frequently the problem gets progressively worse.

When your sensory neurons are lost, walking or moving around can be a chore, but when you start to lose your motor neurons, it starts becoming difficult to tell your legs which way to move and sometimes they just spasm on their own. If the circulation continues to go downhill a certain level of necrosis can ensue. This can eventuate the necessity to amputate the leg altogether. In most cases the patient will have already started kidney dialysis by the time things have gotten this far, so that one thinks back to a time when holistically redeeming the kidney energy and the circulation in the legs was within reach. Hopefully, all of us have the wherewithal to think preventively when the body starts making signals that it is helplessly falling out of balance.

Most of us are unaware of the changes taking place in our bodies until it reaches a crisis point. At that point we find ourselves at the doctors getting pills to control the pain or some other form of dependency. As things degrade over time, we are just taking more pills. There is a critical juncture in our lives when we have to fight for our health in order to avoid becoming the victims of progressive illnesses. I have had a good deal of success in pulling people back from the throes of neuropathy and once they can walk again, they should ask themselves why they can't run.