

Stages of Qi Deficiency

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Sources/Lineage

- Dr. John Shen
- Dr. Leon Hammer
- Jeffrey C. Yuen

Basics

- Qi: everything is composed of and defined by its Qi.
- The Chinese didn't distinguish b/w matter and energy and some people define Qi as matter on the verge of becoming energy and energy on the verge of becoming matter. Also defined as a 'relationship'
- Qi is a continuum: it is the point of materializing. It is perceived functionally: by what it does
 - a. Condensed Qi: gives rise to matter: birth
 - b. Dispersed Qi: gives rise to energy: death
 - c. Human is product of Qi of heaven and Qi of earth
 - d. Types of Qi:
 - Pre-Natal Qi / Congenital Qi
 - 1. stored in KI
 - 2. inherited at birth (or more accurately, conception)
 - 3. essential for growth of embryo and fetus
 - 4. imp after birth for growth (jing)
 - 5. gets used up during lifetime (can be supplemented by good post-natal Qi)
 - Post-Natal Qi
 - 1. assoc w/ ST

Basics

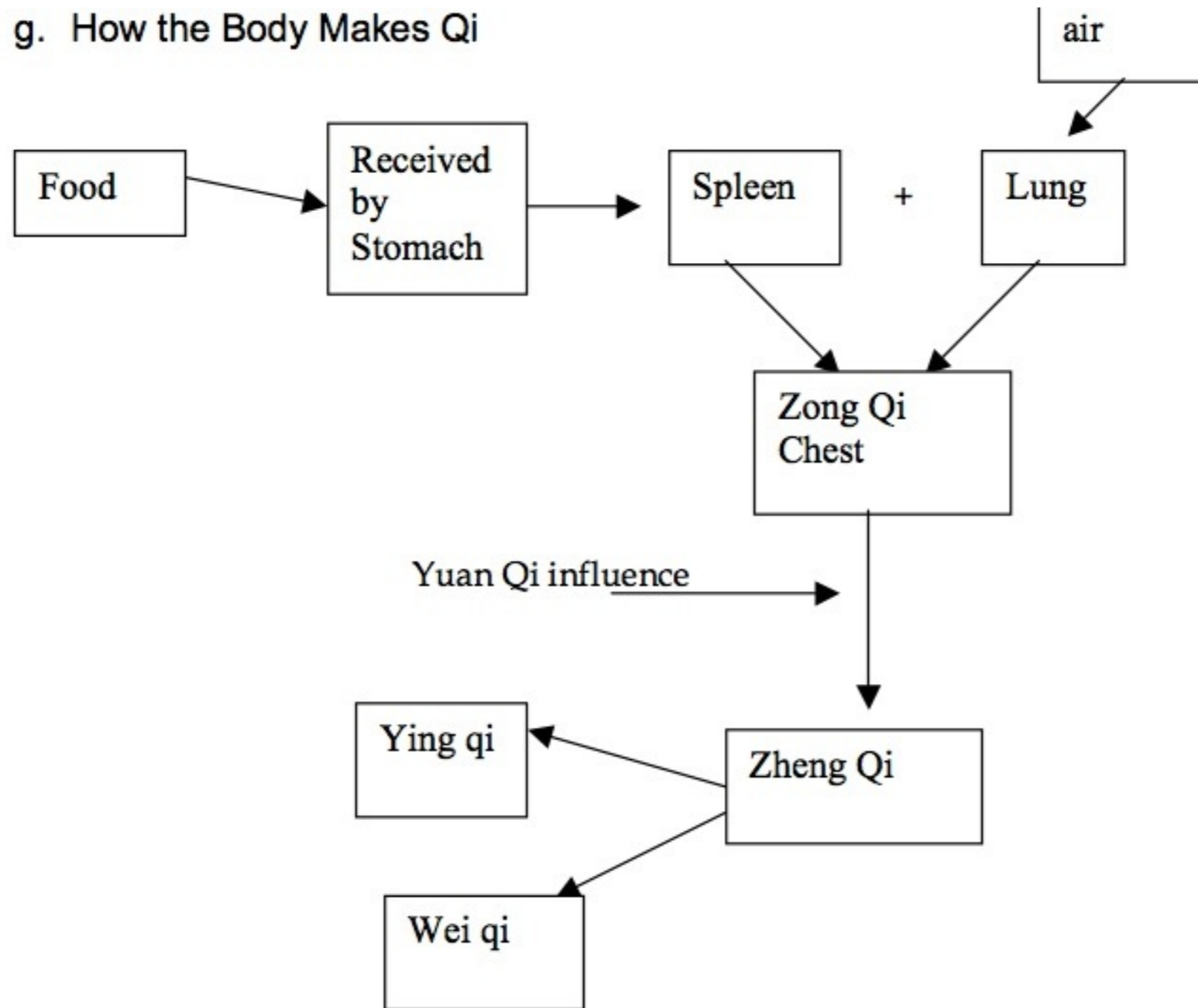
- 5 Functions of Qi
- Movement: Qi is source of all movement and all movement is accompanied by Qi. This includes voluntary as well as involuntary and even mental/emotional functions (dreams, ideas, etc.)
 - Basic Movements:
 - a. up/ascension
 - b. down/descension
 - c. inward/entering
 - d. outward/leaving/exiting
- Warming: body temp, metabolism (LU/KI as major component)
- Protection: Qi gives body ability to resist outside influences and prevents us from getting sick; and maintains internal homeostasis. (major component of LU qi/Wei qi; SJ)
- Transformation: food is digested, transformed and assimilated under influence of Qi in order to make needed substances (blood, body fluids, and more Qi). Fluids are transformed into tears, sweat, saliva, urine, breastmilk, etc. (GI as major)
- Holding/Retaining/Containing: holds blood in vessels, holds fluids in the body, holds organs in place, etc. (SP as major: pulses that tell about lack of holding, ie squirmy; pulses regarding hemorrhage, ie tight HFO rapid

Types of Qi

- i. Organ/ZangFu Qi
- ii. Meridian orChannel/JingLuo Qi
- iii. Nutritive/Constructive/Ying Qi
- iv. Defensive/Protective/Wei Qi
- v. True/Upright/Correct/Zhen Qi
- vi. Chest/Ancestral/Essential/Zong Qi
- vii. Original/Source/Yuan Qi
- viii. Evil/Xie Qi
- ix. Food/Grain/Gu Qi
- x. Clean Air/Cosmic/Qing Qi

Basics

g. How the Body Makes Qi



Pathologies of Qi

- i. Qi Deficiency/Vacuity: Qi is insufficient to perform its functions
 - 1.Movement: causes stagnation
 - 2.Warmth: leading towards yang defic
 - 3.Protection: Wei Qi insufficient to prevent external pathogenic influences (LU Qi defic)
 - 4.Transformation: poor appetite, gas, bloating, loose stools w/undigested food (SP Qi defic)
 - 5.Holding/Retaining/Containing: hernias, prolapsed bladder, uterus, hemorrhoids, bleeding, etc.
- ii. Qi Deficiency/Qi Collapse: associated w/SP not being able to hold/retain/contain. Can also be associated w/depression. (spiritual prolapse)
- iii. How does the Qi become deficient?
 - 1. constitution
 - 2. taxation-fatigue
 - no sleep, excessive activity (work, mind, sex)
 - 3. irregular eating, poor nutrition
 - 4. illness
 - 5. poor air, pollution, environmental toxins

Pathologies of Qi

- HT: pulse: slow rate, rhythm problems, change of intensity over entire pulse. Sx: fatigue, cold hands and feet, anxiety, palpitations, insomnia
- SP: pulse: diminished, yielding, reduced substance, empty at right middle; squirmy; Sx: digestive (gas, bloating, retention of food, loose stools), fatigue, hemorrhoids, poor memory, prolapses, memory
- LU: pulse: right distal; Sx: SOB, frequent colds and flus, cough, wheezing, spontaneous sweats, fatigue, allergies
- LV: pulse: left middle; Sx: post mono, Epstein barr virus, fatigue (severe chronic fatigue syndrome), depression, lack of aim/direction, inability to recover energy
- KI: pulse: proximal positions; Sx: back pain, joint pain, infertility and other reproductive problems, asthma, frequent urination
- Qi Stagnation: 1. From deficiency (movement function); 2. From excess: excess of 7 emotions cause disturbance of Qi dynamic and circulation, causing oppression, distention, pain, discomfort, sighing, irritability. a. Anger: ascends; b. Mania/joy: lazy; c. Overthinking: knots; d. Fear: descends; e. Grief: weakens
- Rebellious Qi/Qi Counterflow:
 - Weakness, invasion
 - 1. ST: nausea/vomiting (possibly LV invading ST) (distinguish from ecology and ridding pathogen)
 - 2. LU: coughing (distinguish from ecology and ridding pathogen)
 - 3. SP: hemorrhoids, prolapse, diarrhea (poss LV invading SP), dizziness (phlegm, poor ascension of clear yang)

Earth School

- Earth School. Li Dong-Yuan (Li Gao). Deals with internal diseases from etiology perspective. Emotional causes (SP gives us awareness of our emotions, feelings, and gives us ability to evaluate and give appraisal to what one is feeling, and ability to control the directionality/vectors, ie action-propensity).
 - All Dr. Hammer's herbal treatments include treating the Earth
- Faultiness of appraisal/evaluation according to Li Dong-Yuan; need to reflect on thoughts and actions that come from those emotions. If can't express, ie, Confucian society, can cause yin-fire.
- Dietary factors (how food imbalances SP/ST). (Dietary therapy webinar)
- Lifestyle factors (choices we make from our LR/GB and middle burner; choices should sprout into something worthwhile).
- Become ill b/c lose ability to create new opportunities. Need GB to engender the qi to sprout new opportunities. (pulse: tight, tense, wiry, slippery...)
- SP/ST as axis and center of existence: imbalance here is root cause of illness.
- Chronic diseases are diseases that have internalized. First area of internalization occurs at ST/yang ming to SP/tai yin.
- If root is strong, won't contract external influences.
- LU meridian originates at center of ST; allows LU qi to be strong to deal with external pathogens.

Earth School

- GI model is evaluation of:
 - ingestion
 - digestion
 - elimination
- All three of these are about SJ together. (Right side of pulse as whole and Dr. Shen's Systems Model)
- From Zang Fu view, KD Qi goes to SP Qi to ST Qi (and tight wiry (Tense) pulse in Earth can indicate that energy stag) so not moving to LU Qi.
- chest issues can be about ST/SP not harmonized, can use Chen Pi, Zhi Ke for ex, as go to chest, to abd area, can use Zhi Shi, and Sheng Jiang harmonizes. Herbs to address both chest and abd stag, Mu Xiang, Xiang Fu, or Wu Yao.
- Huang Lian used for heat from this stagnation, and Huang Qin also used though less emphasis. Both go to upper and mid burner. Both address dampness responding to heat.
- For food stagnation: Qi stag can be connected to food stag which can cause blood stag. “The 5 stagnations originate in middle heater.” Heat—pain Damp—Fullness Cold—Firmness Wind—Distention.
- So, deficiency in the middle burner can create stagnations of varied sorts...

Earth school ideas

- So, as we are evaluating deficiency, we can check SP/ST pulse first, and from there evaluate etiology/cause, etc.
- To practice this, need to evaluate Right Guan position:
- In terms of treatments, we make sure:
 - Does formula (acu/herb/eo) open ST?
 - Decend St Qi
 - Harmonize
 - Clear ST heat
- Addressing diet with food stag and other reasons for this
- Regulate the Qi of ST (like descending the Qi)
- On Cun position, working on Da Qi, Lu Qi, exercise etc.
- eval LU Qi
- open/regulate diaphragm
- clear LU heat.
- For L side, guan position, look at LR and GB. Needs to feel free, needs to be unobstructed. GB needs to move via Li Dong Yuan, so more on moderate level on Guan position. If GB tight, hard to make descision, sinews need to be involved. If not expressed, creates Yin fire, KD Yin used to finance this fire.
- A complete tradition onto itself. Can be skin issues, headaches, etc.

Volume: Reduced Qualities

- These qualities generally refer to conditions of deficiency of qi and Yang (and blood).
- They include:
 - Qi depth Yielding;
 - Suppressed;
 - Diminished and Absent Qi depth;
 - Flooding Deficient;
 - Flat;
 - Diminished Blood depth; Blood depth Spreading;
 - Reduced Pounding;
 - Reduced Substance;
 - Diffuse;
 - Feeble or Absent;
 - Deep;
 - Muffled.

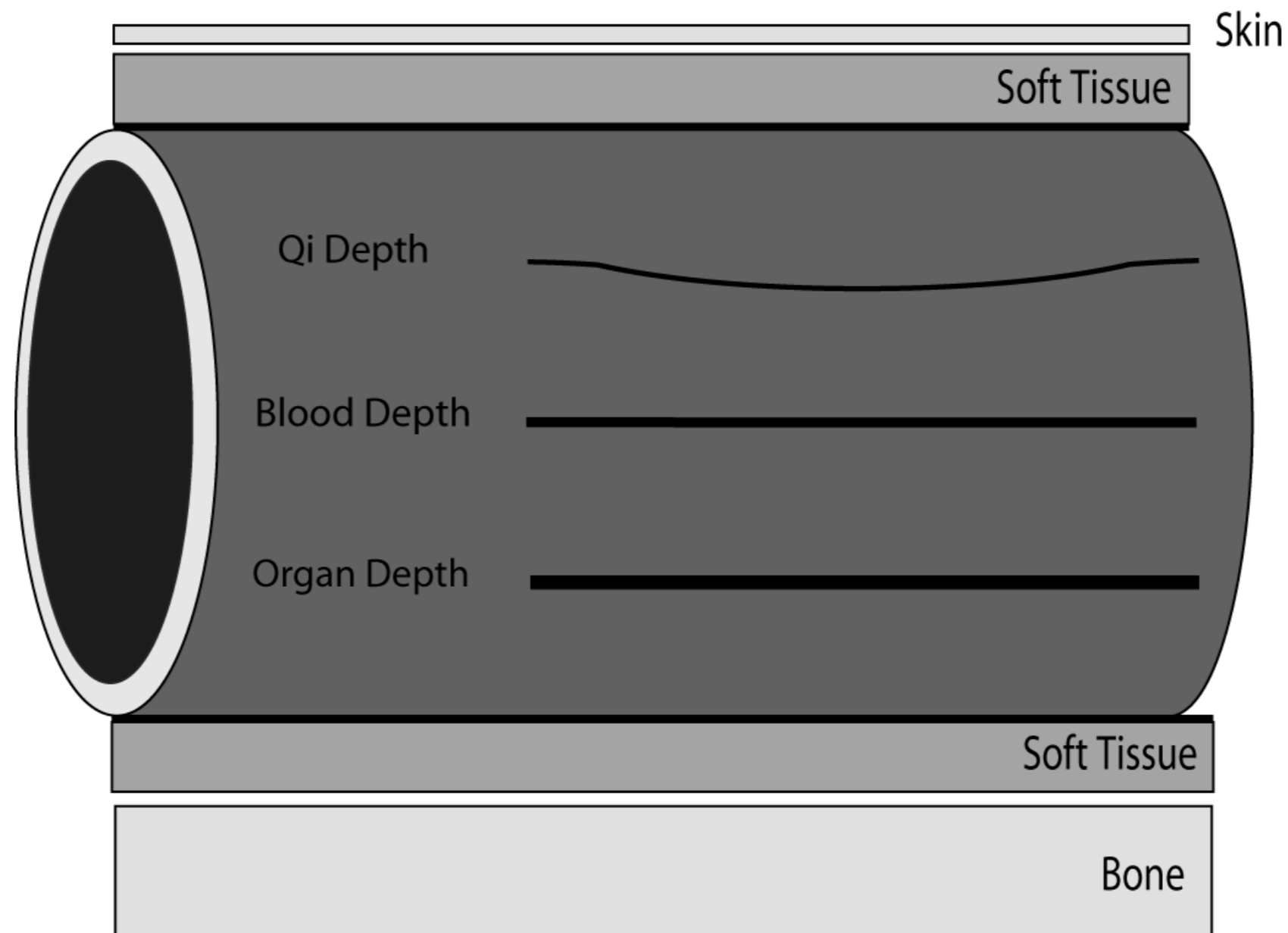


Qi Depth Yielding

- Sensation: The Qi depth is more pliable on gentle pressure
- Interpretation: Yielding at the Qi depth is the earliest sign of qi deficiency, such as derives from working beyond one's energy, moderate illness, or insomnia.
 - Rest is indicated



Qi Depth Yielding Cont'd

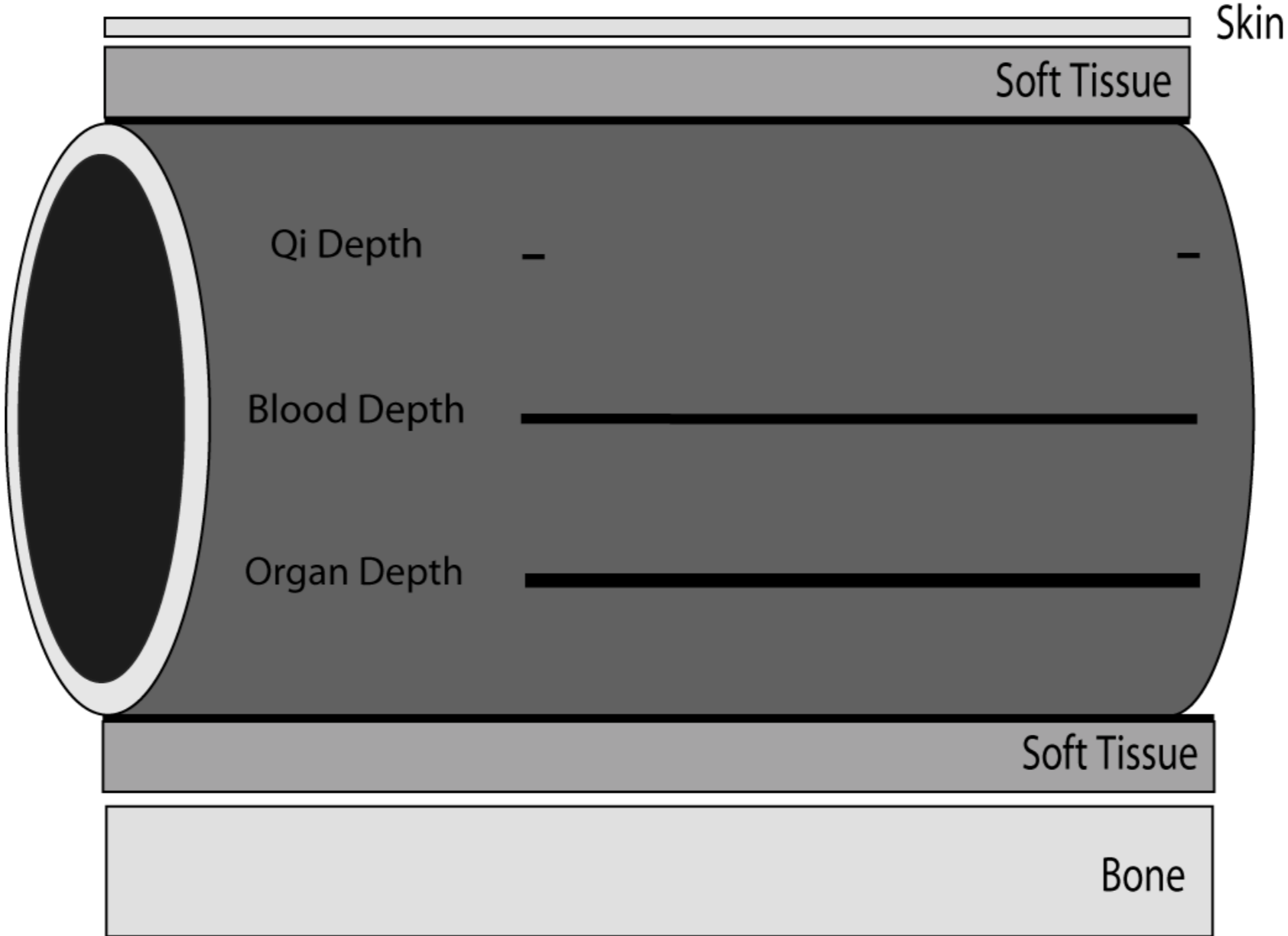


Qi Depth Diminished/Absent

- Sensation: The Qi depth is either Feeble or not present
- Interpretation: This category indicates the subtle change in degree that indicates the progression of mild qi deficiency. In the hierarchy of deficient qualities is represents the second stage of Qi deficiency



Qi Depth Diminished/Absent Cont'd

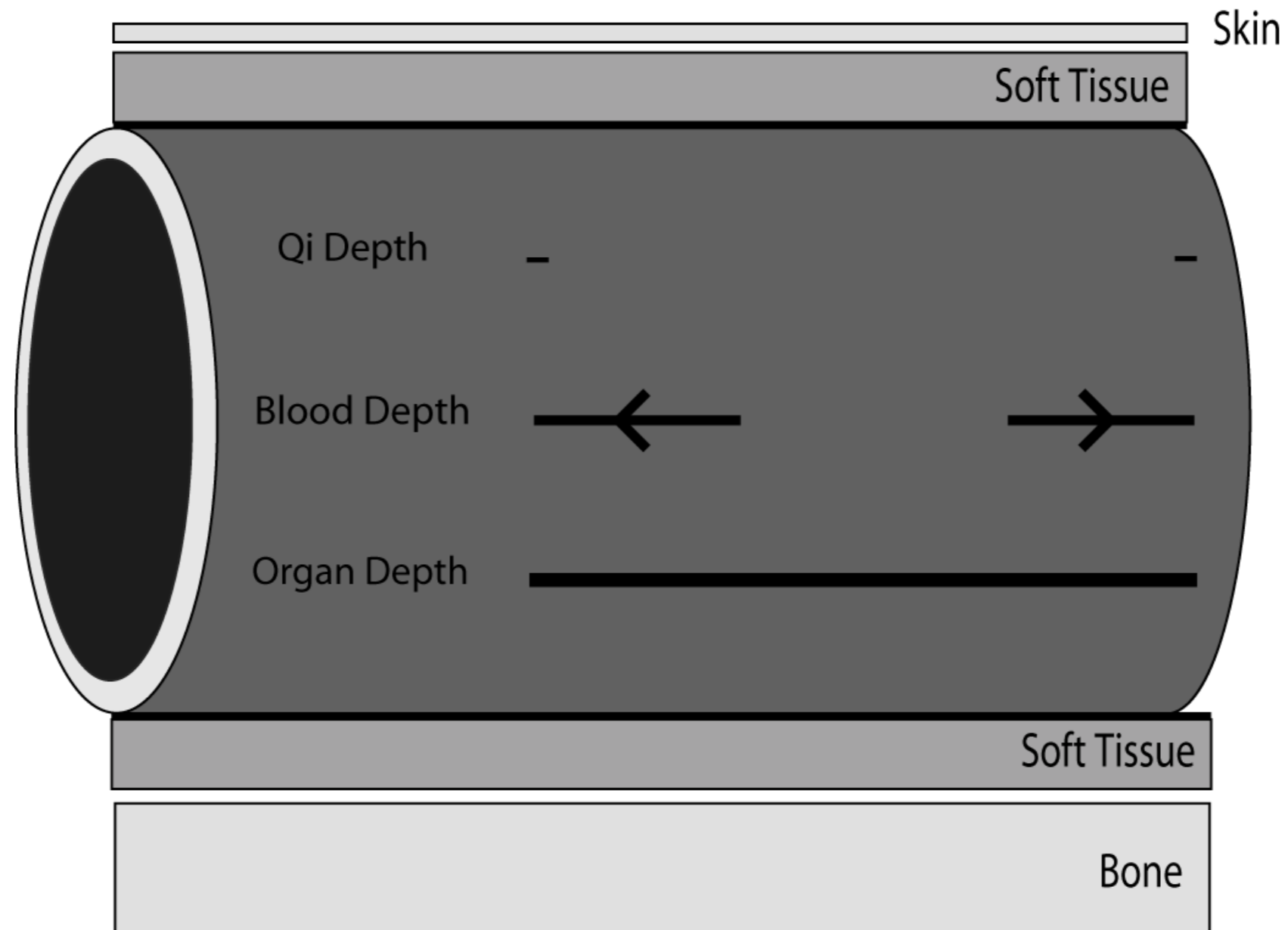


Spreading

- Sensation: Qi depth yielding or absent and the blood depth separates to sides of fingers with pressure
- Interpretation: While this quality represents the third stage in the progression of qi deficiency, it also indicates that this process has progressed to include qi and blood deficiency, indicating a condition of longer duration or some other reason for depletion of both vital substances



Spreading Cont'd

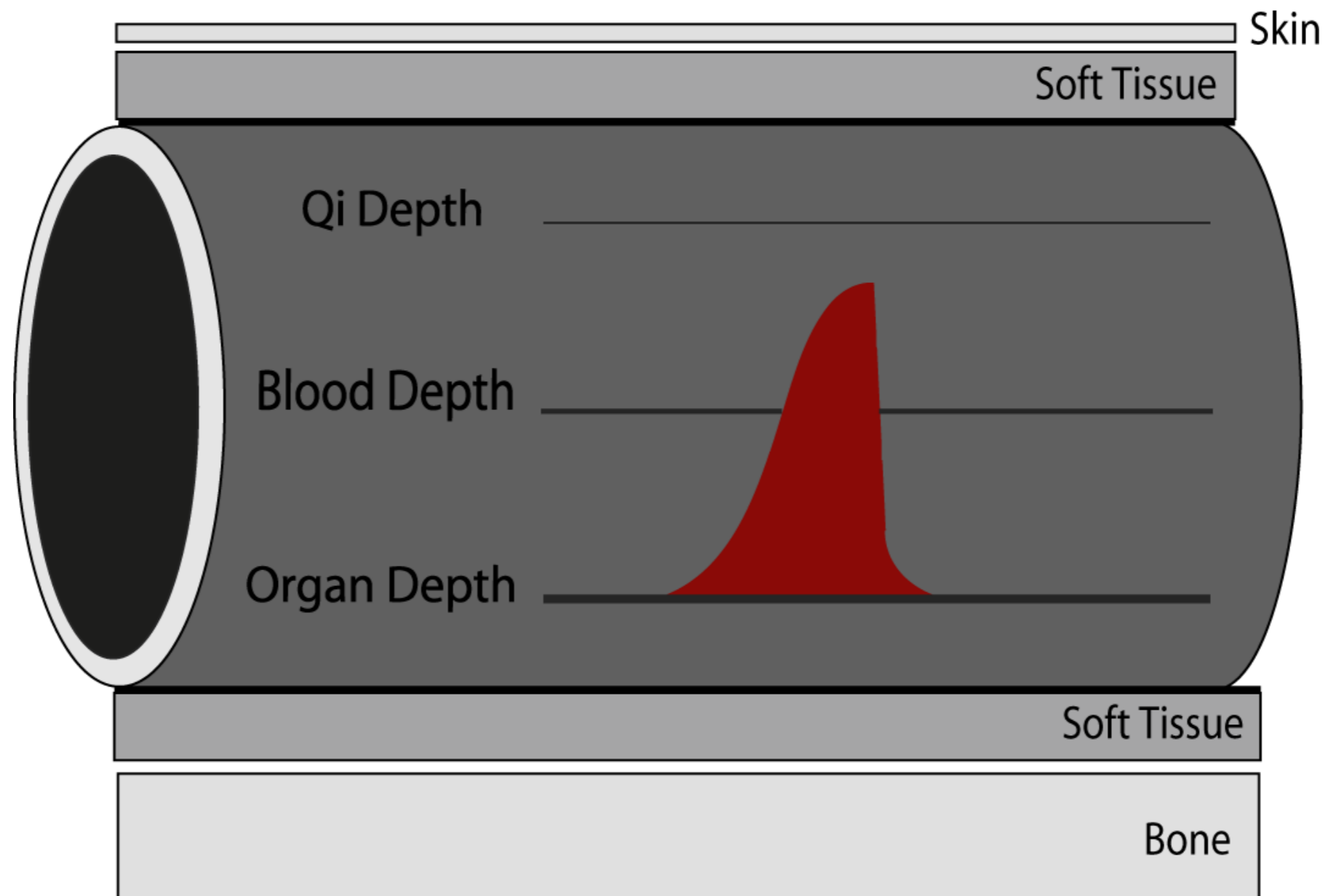


Flooding Deficient

- Sensation: The front part of the sine curve is normal, reaches or almost reaches the Qi depth and then falls or precipitously drops out from beneath fingers
- Interpretation: The Flooding Deficient quality is a sign of qi deficiency of the Yin organs.
 - Dr. Shen called this quality a “Push Pulse.”
 - As such it denotes physical overwork or work beyond one’s energy.
 - It is also a sign of mild qi deficiency reaching the fourth stage



Flooding Deficient Cont'd



Reduced Pounding

- Sensation: Beats against finger without force, energy or vigor. It may at first give the impression of force commonly associated with more Robust Pounding, but it does not retain this strength
- Interpretation: As the fifth stage in the progression of Qi deficiency this quality represents a compromised ability to maintain function



Reduced Substance

- Sensation: Vessel wall lacks integrity. Pulse lacks substance, strength, elasticity, buoyancy and resilience when compared to the Normal pulse.
 - Reduced Substance can be found over the entire pulse, at an individual position or at different depths.
 - This is an example of a Wide sensation demonstrating qi deficiency.
 - “Reduced substance is a sensation somewhere between Normal and Feeble.” (Hammer, 209).
- Interpretation: Reduced Substance suggests advancing qi deficiency (sixth stage).
 - It represents a “slightly less qi deficient quality” than Feeble



Diffuse

- Sensation: Boundary of vessel partially or completely obliterated; blends in with connective tissue
 - Often found with other qualities such as Reduced Substance or less often, Tense, Tight or Thin felt in the middle.
 - This is another example of a Wide qi deficiency quality
- Interpretation: Diffuse suggests advancing qi deficiency (7th stage) with blood deficiency

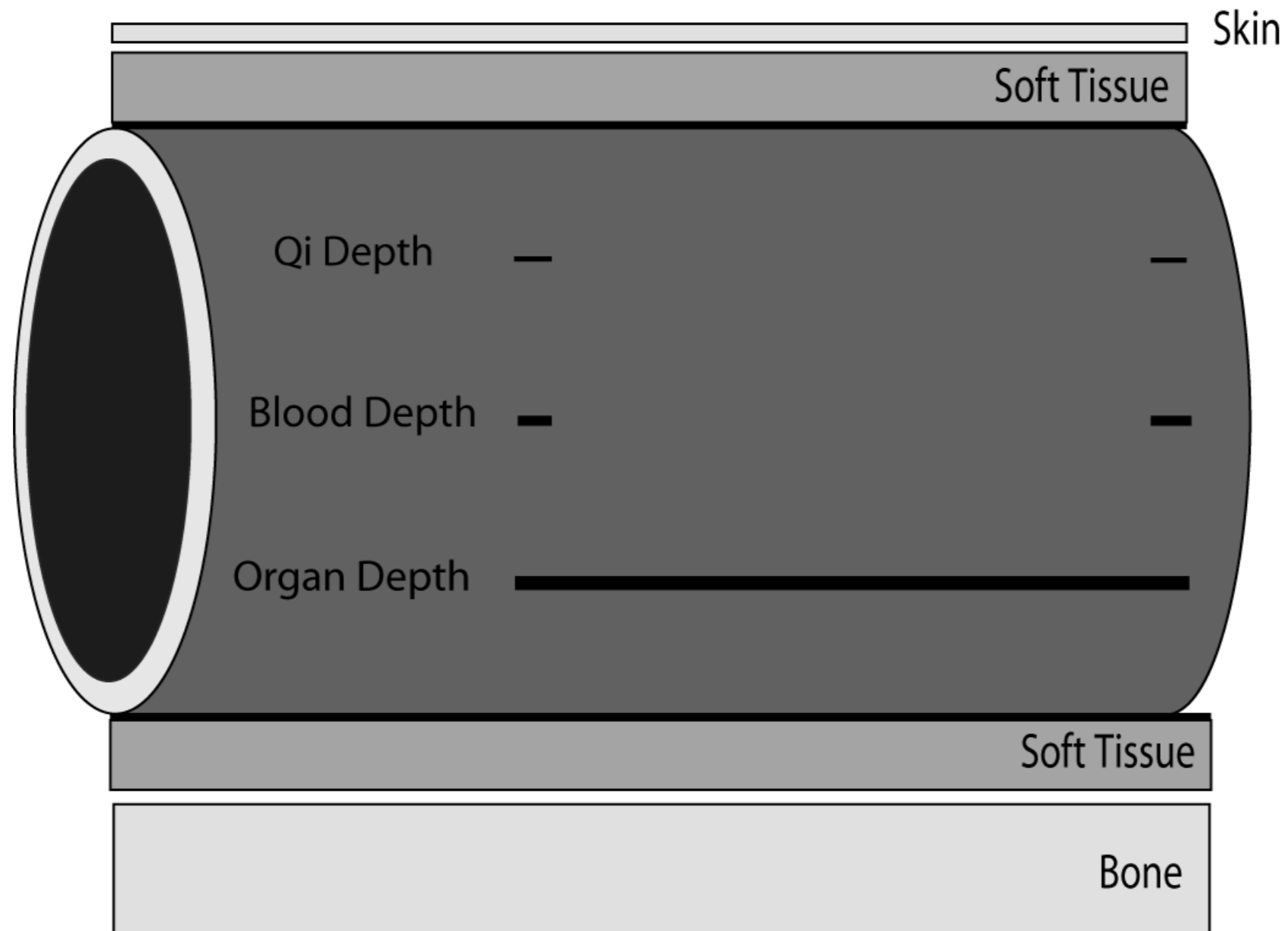


Deep

- Sensation: Qi and Blood depths Absent
- Interpretation: The Deep quality is a sign of advanced qi or Yang deficiency (8th stage).
 - In the proximal positions this quality suggests a propensity to life-long (endogenous) depression



Deep Cont'd

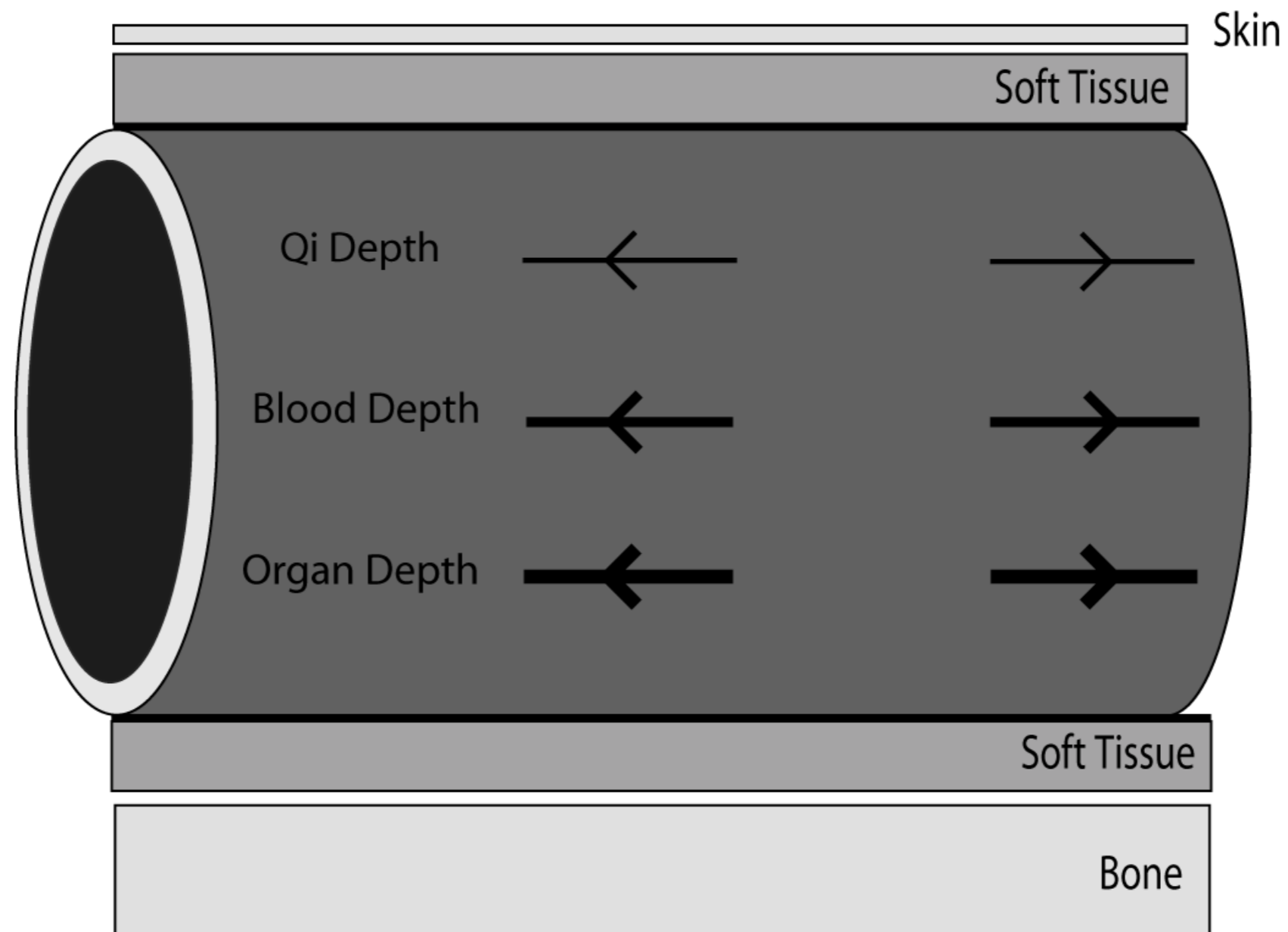


Feeble-Absent

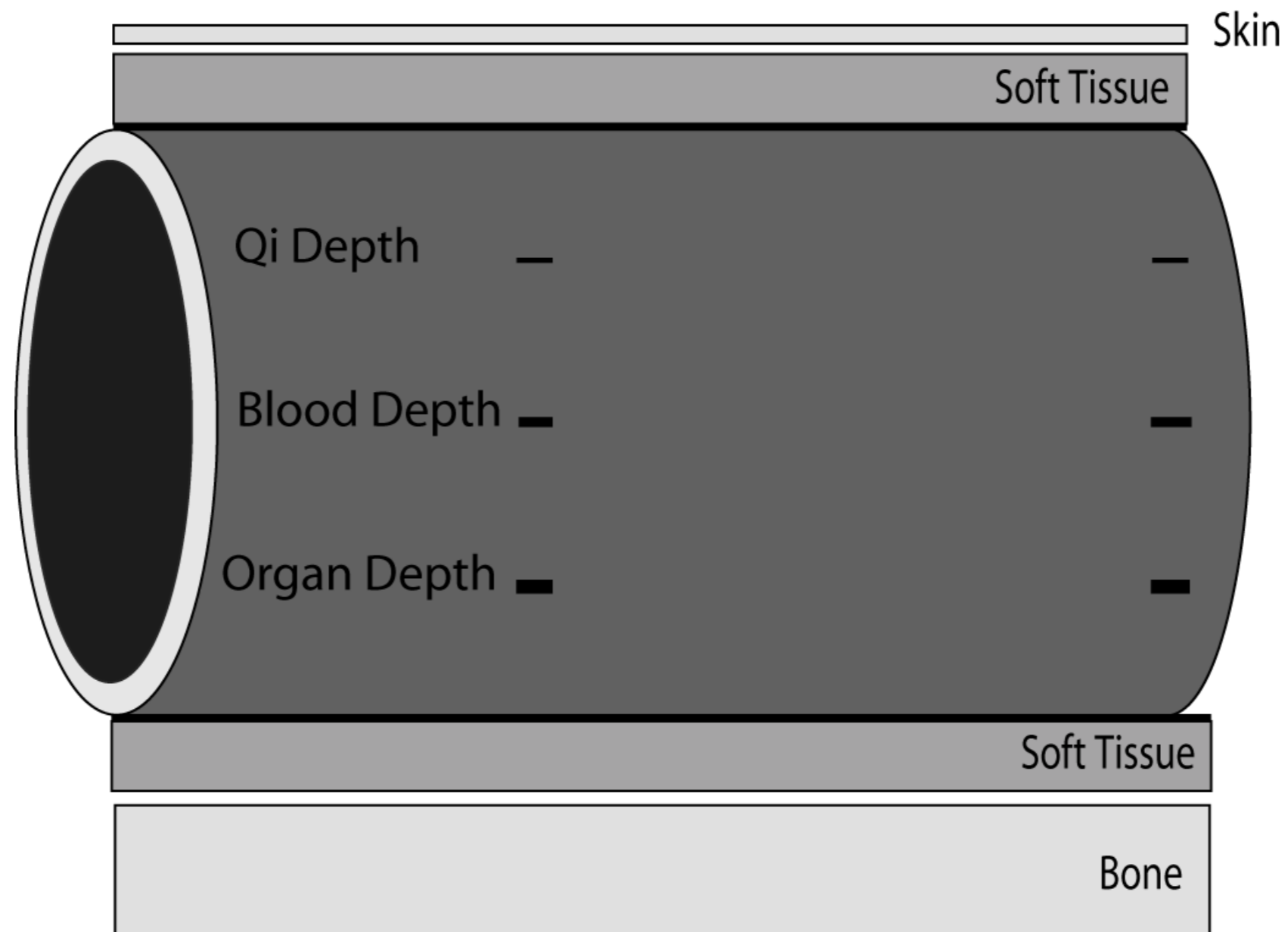
- Sensation: All depths Separating or Absent.
 - Feeble sensations at other depths may be referred to by other names, and so this term refers especially to the feeling of insubstantial sensation and the absence of sensation found deeply.
 - Consult the description in Dr. Hammer's text, page 216, for a fuller treatment of the terminology as it relates to the sensation
- Interpretation: The pulse which is uniformly Feeble-Absent and deep in all positions reflects primarily a deficiency of true qi, and a deficiency of qi and Blood in all of the related yin organs



Feeble



Absent

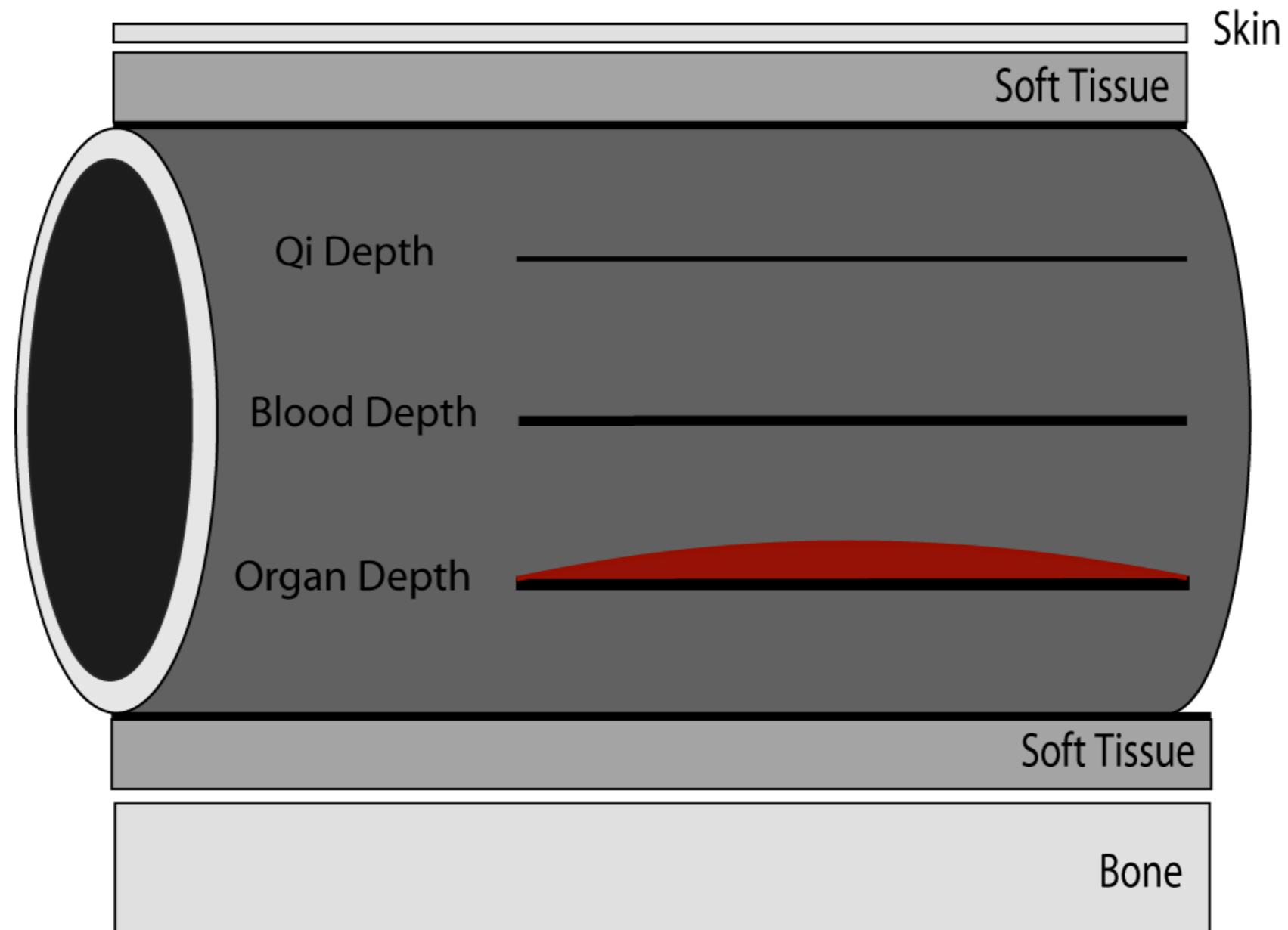


Flat

- Sensation: Found in a single position at Organ depth, no qi or blood depth and stifled and squashed, with a very small or even no wave
- Interpretation: The Flat quality reflects an energetic situation in which qi cannot penetrate into the organ. Obtained when the patient is weak, suggests significant insult to physiological function. Due to the vulnerability of organs in a weakened state, the results are a kind of diminishment in the (cang) storing capacity.
 - The Flat quality is found most commonly in the upper burner, especially the left distal position, where it suggests emotional trauma early in life, birth trauma (as in cord around the neck), or physical trauma at a time when the body condition is weak.
 - The Heart is Closed in Dr. Shen's terminology (a term most closely resembling Heart Qi Stagnation).
 - The Flat pulse can also represent an emotional shock during a vulnerable period, as exemplified by a young person losing a parent or loved one while immature



Flat Cont'd

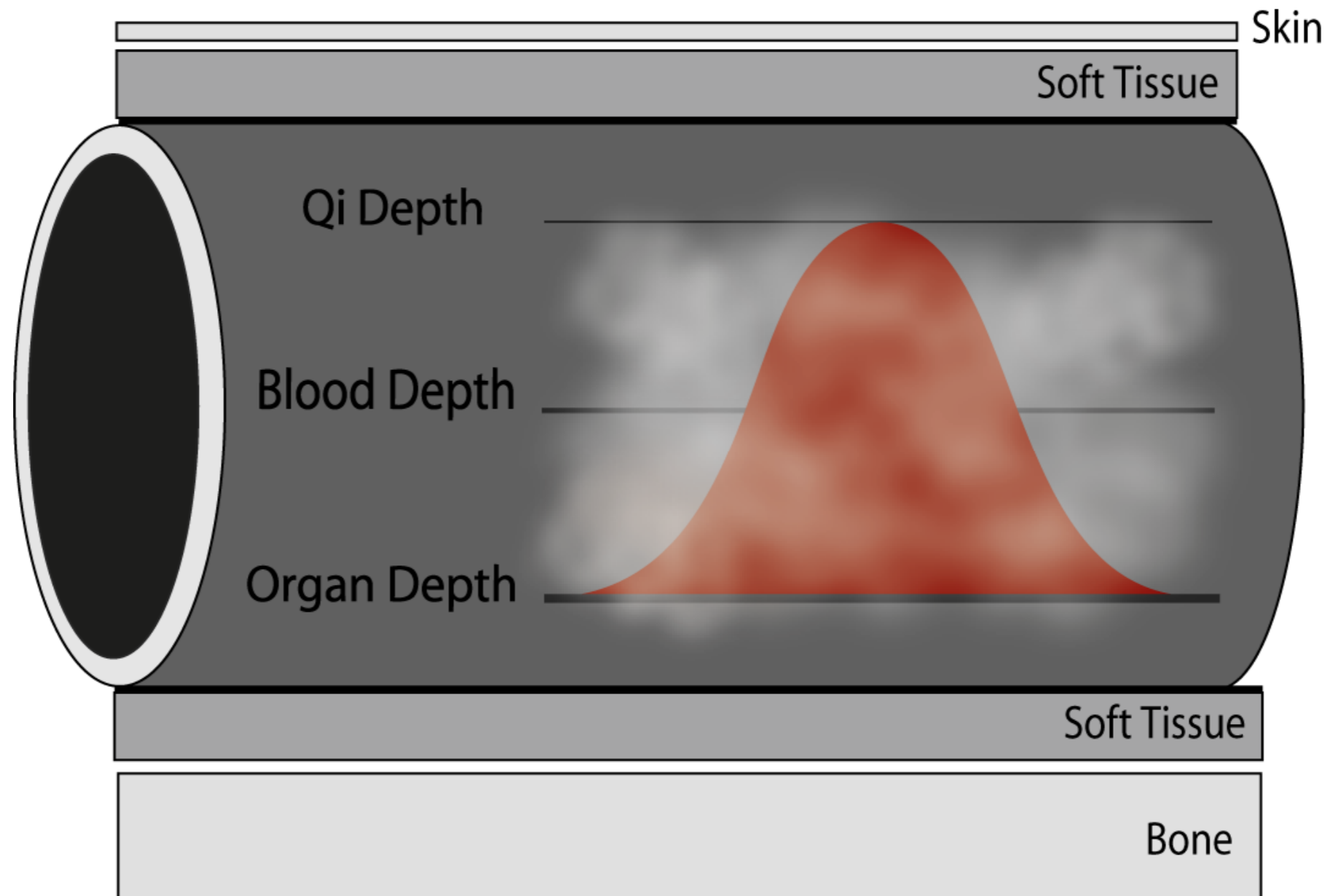


Muffled

- Sensation: Feels obscured as if being felt through layers of cloth. The sensation is muted and unclear
- Interpretation: The Muffled quality indicates stagnation of all substances, neo-plastic activity, breakdown of cellular function.
 - A low degree of Muffled on the whole pulse is associated with depression.
 - At the left distal position, it is indicative of heart depression characterized lack of joy.
 - In the Pelvis/Lower Body position it suggests severe qi and blood stagnation, and has been associated with findings of uterine and ovarian tumors.
 - Muffled has also been reported following surgery, and is typically found in the pulse positions most closely reflecting the anatomical location



Muffled Cont'd



Dead

- Sensation: sensation of a presence and substance that is lacking in movement. Like touching a dead animal...
- Interpretation: infrequent, but associated with advanced malignancy

Non-Fluid Qualities: Hard

- These qualities represent processes that involve
 - qi stagnation,
 - heat (excess and deficient) and
 - Yin deficiency



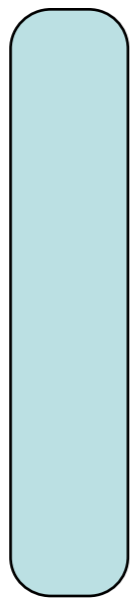
Taut-Tense-Tight-Wiry

- Sensation: characterized by increasing hardness and tension. The Taut-Tense-Tight-Wiry pulses are on a continuum; the Wiry pulse is the hardest and the least in diameter
- Interpretation:
 - **Taut:** Qi stagnation
 - **Tense:** Qi stagnation with excess heat
 - **Tight:** Yin deficiency, pain, or cold.
 - In the complementary positions: inflammation and irritation.
 - **Wiry:**
 - Yin-Essence deficiency
 - severe pain,
 - nervous tension
 - Liver wind,
 - cerebrovascular accident (high blood pressure and Wiry over the entire pulse),
 - pain and
 - cold (not common).
 - also associated with incipient diabetes (proximal positions, and left proximal and left middle positions simultaneously)



Taut-Tense-Tight-Wiry

» qi stag; qi stag w/ heat; yin defic; essence defic



Squirmy

Sensation: The Squirmy pulse is identified by its elusive nature in relation to pressure. It requires the practitioner to constantly readjust one's pressure and direction of palpation. There are three different types I have identified:

i. Squirmy 1

sensation in which entire vessel moves or squirms away from pressure requiring pulse taker to trap vessel prior to exertion of pressure,

ii. Squirmy 2

sensation in which vessel moves less dramatically as in (i) above, but moves lateral/medial when constant fixed pressure is applied (and principal impulse shifts),
and

iii. Squirmy 3

sensation which is also characterized by a wandering vessel. This can often be accompanied by a markedly Ropy pulse.

Interpretation: The Squirmy pulse is associated with varying degrees of pathology to the connective tissue, possibly with a Spleen-Kidney yang deficient root. I have associated without exception some degree of the following: prolapses of all sorts and degrees, including: Stomach prolapses, valve prolapses, bladder prolapses, cervical prolapses, depressions (shen prolapse), connective tissue and autoimmune diseases, poor and low muscle tone and sagging, weak flaccid muscles, etc. I have recently found a Squirmy pulse in the left middle position in a middle aged man with a parietal brain tumor since birth.

Sticky

- a. Sensation: The primary sensation of this pulse is that it feels waterlogged or rubbery or sticky in that the pulsation of the artery seems to linger on your fingertip. It is a quality of the vessel and its texture and is distinguished from the Leisurely pulse which feels as if its movement is slowed down or exaggerated.

- b. Interpretation: The Sticky pulse is a progression and accumulation of damp-heat. In the Liver, it can reflect damp-heat toxins; in the Stomach and Spleen potentially candida and malabsorption and gluten intolerance. It is most often found in the middle positions, but I have found it mostly everywhere by now... I consider this pulse quality a more recent expression of toxicity in general whereby the lymphatic system attempts to trap pathogenic influences (rather than Choppy which is influencing the blood circulation).

Sinking

- a. Sensation: The Sinking pulse is characterized by a cosine pulse wave (yielding) which has a marked sensation of drawing downwards as if one's finger is being pulled down into a vacuum. It has a palpable descending energetic.

- b. Interpretation: The Sinking pulse is associated with Water imbalances and significant deficiencies.

Clinical Differentiations

- Stages of Qi defic based on pulse quality felt
- Not linear progression necessarily
- Can occur simultaneously
- Muffled as rooted in deficiency
- Flat underlying weakness (deficiency vs. insufficiency)
- Squirmy, Sticky and Sinking as advanced weakness

Stability

- The capacity of an organism to return easily to equilibrium after stress, and to its capacity to maintain operational parameters within functional limits over time
- Apart from the regularity of the pulse, stability is associated with the steadiness of the amplitude, intensity, qualities, and rate, as well as the balance of Yin and Yang, and balance between pulse positions.



Stability Cont'd

- Balance and constancy are important measures of function. Lack of stability is an indication that the fundamental functioning of the organism is severely compromised.
- Instability can manifest in the Heart and Circulation, the blood and the Qi.
- From the pulse it is possible to ascertain the fidelity of these essential systems and substances.



Stability of the Heart and Circulation

- Heart stability is reflected in a steady rhythm and rate.
 - Instability of the Heart and Circulation creates a potential for cardiac episodes or heart attacks.
 - Constant Change of Intensity and large variations in rates during a pulse exam are signs of Heart instability.
 - **(Hollow) Interrupted Intermittent**
 - Sensation: Rate not measurable, misses beats irregularly.
 - Interpretation: Severe Heart Qi, blood and Yang deficiency.



Stability of the Blood

- Stability of the blood is ascertained by the lack of bleeding or extravasation of blood from the vessels and capillaries.
 - With instability of the blood the person is vulnerable to bleeding disorders.
 - **Leather like Hollow and Rapid**
- Sensation: Qi depth hard and thick, like leather, Blood depth absolutely absent.
- Interpretation:
 - With Rapid rate – Sign of imminent hemorrhage e.g. gastrointestinal bleeding.
 - With Slow rate – Hemorrhage has just occurred, and can reoccur.
 - **Very Tense-Tight and Hollow (Full-Overflowing)**
- Interpretation: Imminent stroke



Stability of Qi

- The stability of Qi is manifested in the contact between Yin and Yang.
- Yin supplies the substance and information and
- Yang the activity to all biological processes.
- If these factors are out of touch it is a sign that the fundamental processes that are critical for the survival of the organism have been corrupted.



Stability of Qi Cont'd

- Feeble quality is a sign of significant deficiency wherever it is found, however Yin and Yang, although very weak, are still in contact.
- Conversely, Yin and Yang are out of contact in the Empty quality, where the Yin is not able to anchor the Yang.
 - When this quality occurs in only one position, it is a sign of extreme dysfunction of the organ represented by that position (Separation of Yin and Yang).
 - When the Empty quality is found on the entire pulse, Yin and Yang are out of contact in the entire organism.
 - This condition is referred to as '*Qi Wild*', one in which the person is at great risk of serious debilitating diseases such as cancer, autoimmune or degenerative conditions of the central nervous system.



Stability Cont'd

– Change of Intensity

- **Whole pulse**
 - » Sensation: a variation in strength and amplitude of the impulse (if found on First Impression).
 - » Interpretation: Heart Qi deficiency
- **Principal Position**
 - » Sensation: A variation in strength and amplitude of the impulse in a principal position
 - » Interpretation: Mild Separation of Yin and Yang of the organ associated with that position.
- **Complementary Position**
 - » Sensation: A variation in strength and amplitude of the impulse in a complementary position
 - » Interpretation: Impaired function of the organ associated with the position.



Stability Cont'd

– Change of Qualities

- Sensation: An example of a Change of Quality is the relatively hard Tense quality changing to the Feeble-Absent quality. Changes along the Taut-Tense-Tight-Wiry continuum do not constitute a Change of Quality.
- Interpretation:
 - **Individual position:** Separation of Yin and Yang in the organ, extreme deficiency of Yin organ Qi and blood.
 - **Whole Pulse:** 'Qi wild'



Stability Cont'd

- 'Qi Wild': condition of extreme functional weakness in which, for one reason or another, the Yin and Yang of the entire organism have lost operative contact and are unable to support each other.



'Qi Wild' Cont'd

- 'Qi Wild' can occur as a result of:
 - significant physiological insult to the fetus or newborn,
 - severe early environmental deprivation,
 - excess physical labor prior to age 10,
 - sudden cessation of excess,
 - exercise beyond a persons energy in early life,
 - substance abuse and
 - iatrogenic.



'Qi Wild' Cont'd

- 'Qi Wild' qualities include:
 - Changing Qualities in most of the principal positions or
 - Changing Qualities on the entire pulse;
 - Empty;
 - Leather;
 - Minute;
 - Scattered and
 - Yielding Hollow Full-Overflowing and Rapid.



'Qi Wild' Cont'd

- Interpretation:
 - Severe instability of the qi of the organism,
 - serious illness imminent.
- The 'Qi Wild' person is highly vulnerable to serious and fast spreading, even life-threatening disease of a specific organ or entire organism within a short time (one to three years according to Dr Hammer).

