Explorations in
MEDICAL ASTROLOGY
by Robert Weinstein

Editor’s Note: The author is a trained and licensed medical provider; he uses astrology only as a supplement to many years of professional training in Chinese medicine. Medical astrology is not a substitute for professional medical diagnosis and treatment. If you have a medical condition, please seek care from a licensed medical professional.

Astrology is a profound source of information and insight on many aspects of life, including self-understanding, relationships, career, and money. Of course, the realms of health and wellness, illness and disease are no exception. With 15 years of experience as an acupuncturist, herbalist, and astrologer, I have noticed that the natal aspects of Mars, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune can be of special importance in understanding our constitutional nature and our potential for good health as well as chronic illness.

It is also important to look at many other factors in the chart to assess the health and potential illness of a client: planets in signs, especially the Sun, Moon, and Ascendant; the elemental balance or imbalance present; and factors affecting houses, especially the 1st, 6th, and 12th houses. It can be helpful to look at the sign/body part correlations as well, Aries being the head, Pisces being the foot, and so on. However, for the purposes of this article, we will examine mainly the natal and transiting “hard” aspects, which I define as the conjunction, square, and opposition.

To begin to study the astrological correlations for health and wellness, it is essential to go over some of the basic meanings and symbolisms of the planets involved, from the medical astrology perspective.

Mars
Mars in the natal chart represents a very yang, dynamic energy. Its astrological symbolism encompasses the adrenal glands, the immune system, sexual organs, sexual vitality, and, together with the Sun, the overall state of our life force energy and constitution. By trine and sextile, Mars can indicate healthy vigor, athletic ability, resilience, and strong life force or Qi (the Chinese medicine term for the vital force). For example, in the chart of the great basketball player Michael Jordan, we can see a very tight Mars–Moon trine, indicating athletic vigor, a possible love of competitive sports, and leadership ability. (See Chart 1, following page.)

By square and opposition, Mars can give vigor but often indicates overstimulation or irritation to a system, as well as what I call “pathogenic heat,” which can be summed up mainly as a tendency toward infections, injuries, inflammation, and the inefficient use of the life force. We can see a Mars–Pluto square in the chart of the great...
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fighter Muhammad Ali (Chart 2, below right); this symbolism suggests both the fierce, competitive spirit to be one of the greatest boxers of all time and the incorrect use of energy leading to severe chronic injuries due to violence.

Saturn

The old troublemaker Saturn, on the other hand, often indicates “pathogenic cold” problems. Overall, it represents our bones, teeth, and skeletal, structural system. By soft aspect, it can indicate stability and consistency in our health and offer the benefits of great endurance and stamina. Once again, in the chart of Muhammad Ali — one of the greatest athletes of the 20th century, famous for his stamina and physical prowess in the boxing ring — we can see a Saturn trine to the Sun, as part of a grand trine in earth (with Neptune), showing enormous physical endurance.

By hard aspect, however, Saturn often represents chronic, serious, or deep-seated health problems in the systems represented by the planet it aspects. It can indicate an array of different problems, including a general restriction of the life energies, a wasting illness, blockages of all kinds, inflexibility, and stiffness, such as arthritis and rheumatism. For example, in the case of Saturn squaring the Sun, we might see a lifelong chronic illness or a specific problem with the heart function as represented by the Sun in medical astrology.

In the chart of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt (not shown), who was left permanently paralyzed after a polio infection, a lifelong illness is symbolized by Saturn in Taurus square his Sun–Venus conjunction in Aquarius. Vice President Dick Cheney has another Sun–Saturn square in Aquarius–Taurus, which is clearly symbolic of chronic heart disease resulting in multiple heart surgeries (chart not shown).

Uranus

Uranus represents issues involving the electrical currents in the body and the nervous system. By soft aspect, it can add strength to the life energies, sometimes providing sudden and/or explosive energy reserves, but even these are usually inconsistent. By hard aspect, it often indicates overstimulation of the planet being aspected, and seems to cause the system represented by the planet being aspected to become less reliable and less consistent in its function.

For example, when Uranus is in a square to the Moon — the Moon symbolizing, among other things, female fertility and menstruation — this might suggest an erratic menstrual cycle and a hormonal imbalance. Jane Ridder-Patrick, in A Handbook of Medical Astrology, says that the combination of Uranus and the Moon often indicates that “there can be menstrual irregularities, pain at ovulation, and dysmenorrhea” (painful period). I have seen this aspect in patients in my clinic who present with endometriosis and painful intercourse. According to Judith Hill, hard Uranus aspects can represent disturbances in the body’s electrical field, imbalances of the nervous system and organ systems, and general problems with the electrical currents in the body.

Given its reputation for the unconventional, natal hard Uranus aspects may represent illnesses with a unique, unusual, distinctive, or particularly idiosyncratic character. For example, we can see a Uranus square to Mars in the chart of President John F. Kennedy (Chart 3, following page). As mentioned earlier in this article, we can think of Mars in medical astrology as being related to the fight-or-flight mechanism; it represents the immune system, the adrenal glands, sexual desire/response, sex organs, and sex hormones. Uranus in hard aspect to Mars could indicate a disruption in any of these functions, such as adrenal disease or dysfunction, or a tendency for problems with sexual arousal or disease of the sex organs. In the case of JFK, the Mars–Uranus square
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correlates quite closely with his history of Addison’s disease, a severe dysfunction of the adrenal glands in which they cease to secrete the adrenal hormone cortisol.

It is a well-documented fact that JFK suffered from terrible chronic low back pain as well as Addison’s disease. It’s also well known that JFK was a serial womanizer with a grand sexual appetite and perhaps excessive sexual activity, symbolized here by a Jupiter–Mars conjunction — or his wartime traumas and injuries may have been a factor in depleting the adrenal glands. It probably didn’t help having the Sun in Gemini, a sign of mutable air, which can often give a slightly weaker constitution, with a delicate, easily depleted nervous system. Of course, he died from an assassin’s bullet, and it’s interesting to note that a square from Uranus to Mars on the 8th-house cusp is consistent with death from sudden, unexpected gun violence.

Neptune

Neptune is a fascinating planet in the realm of medical astrology, as it can indicate an almost divine grace in health by trine and sextile. If we look again at the chart of Michael Jordan (Chart 1), we can see his unique, legendary grace on the court represented by a Neptune–Jupiter trine and a Neptune–Venus sextile. As mentioned earlier, Muhammad Ali (Chart 2) has Neptune in a grand trine with the Sun and the Saturn–Uranus conjunction, indicating not only his strength, but also his almost “supernatural” grace in the boxing ring. He famously said that he could “float like a butterfly, sting like a bee.”

In conjunction and hard aspect, Neptune is overly yin; it has a cooling, wet, confusing, and boundary-dissolving quality that can cause serious problems with the hot, fiery, dynamic planets like the Sun and Mars, dissipating and diffusing their life energy. Neptune’s boundary-dissolving qualities can cause allergies, immune dysfunction, and general oversensitivity to environmental factors.

In hard aspect to other planets, Neptune is associated with a general impairment, a leaking-away, or a diffusion of the energy of the planet involved. In the case of President Ronald Reagan, who was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease in 1994, his natal Neptune in Cancer opposing Mercury in Capricorn (chart not shown) was activated by transits of both Neptune and Uranus during that year. This seems to have correlated with impaired cognitive function later in his life and the onset of dementia (although many suspected that Reagan was impaired before he left office).

Neptune in the 6th house or in hard aspect to inner planets, especially those in the 6th house, is famous for chronic, weird, confusing, mysterious, and difficult-to-diagnose health problems. These Neptune placements can indicate highly sensitive patients with ESP. Neptune can also be associated with latent viral infections and even illness of a spiritual nature or origin or due to black magic.

Pluto

Pluto is yet to be fully understood because it has not made a complete cycle through the entire zodiac since its discovery in 1930, but it does appear to have an intensifying effect on whatever it touches. Jane Ridder-Patrick says that Pluto “has been described as a triple strength Mars”; it is “related to the cycle of nature — birth, growth, maturity, death and rebirth — and is said to be linked with kundalini energy. Pluto aspects give a degree of violence and ruthlessness to the body processes regulated by whatever planet it touches.” Pluto has been theorized to be associated with cancer and other serious illnesses that have a quality of breakdown and decay.

Over my 15 years as a licensed Chinese medicine practitioner, I have seen many interesting cases with fascinating
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astrological correlations. These cases often include a complex mix of planetary placements and aspects; however, for the purposes of this article, I have selected several cases with examples of relatively clear astrological correlations. All names have been changed to protect patient privacy.

Clinical Case Study #1

This patient, “John,” came to see me with a case of chronic lifelong headaches and jaw pain that had defied all treatment both conventional and alternative. His health history intake revealed head trauma from participating in junior high and high school football. John had been a high school football star in his hometown, and his team made it to the state playoffs. He remembers having only one or two concussions, but he may have sustained multiple, undiagnosed, repetitive concussions or had trauma from playing full-contact football. His headaches did not respond to a series of five acupuncture treatments at all, not even temporarily, which is unusual, so I ran his natal chart to see if I could find more information on the underlying energy patterns.

I thought the most interesting finding was the difficult conjunction of the Moon and Saturn in Aries, which is opposed by Mars in Libra. (See Chart 4, below right.) Because Aries is said to represent the head in traditional medical astrology, and Saturn represents chronic, hard-to-treat problems, this alignment closely matched the symptoms. Jane Ridder-Patrick says that “health problems linked with Aries include headaches and migraines and accidents especially to the head.”? The emotionally expressive Moon is seldom seen as compatible with Saturn, and while this placement could also indicate very stubborn emotional patterns that are resistant to change, the Moon in Aries certainly correlates with chronic problems (Saturn) that are affecting the head (Aries), possibly originating in childhood or youth (Moon). The Moon could also indicate that there is a strong emotional component to the chronic headaches.

When we add the opposition of Aries ruler Mars in John’s chart — which, as earlier mentioned, can pertain to inflammation, injuries, physical trauma, and pain, by hard aspect — we have a very difficult astrological pattern. The Mars opposition to both the Moon and Saturn can be seen as “afflictions” from the medical astrology point of view, and many astrological texts relate that hard aspects between Mars and Saturn, the two “malefics,” may be some of the most challenging of all natal aspects. Unfortunately, in John’s case, the astrological combination of Mars opposing the Moon–Saturn conjunction correlated with a very deep-seated, stubborn, chronic headache condition that did not respond to a series of acupuncture treatments or several other holistic therapies. However, this patient decided to embark on a multi-year training in the traditional Chinese healing system known as Qigong, and while this has helped to reduce the symptoms, it has not resolved the condition at the time of this writing.

Clinical Case Study #2

A patient whom I will call “Lisa” came to see me in January 2018 with somewhat early-onset menopausal symptoms such as hot flashes, mood swings, and lowered sexual desire. A course of five acupuncture treatments and the classic Chinese herbal remedy for hot flashes, Rheumania and Scrophularia formula (Zhi Bai Di Huang Wan), helped to moderate the symptoms.

When I looked at her natal chart (not shown), the first thing I noticed was that Saturn’s transit of her natal Moon at 4° Capricorn was corresponding to the onset of menopausal symptoms. Both Judith Hill and Jane Ridder-Patrick relate the Moon to the menstrual cycle, mammary glands, fertility, and biological rhythms. As we know, Saturn rules aging, maturity, and endings and is also quite drying. It appeared that Saturn’s transit to her natal Moon was an astrological indication of an end to fertility and the menstrual cycle and the beginning of a new phase of maturity. Lisa’s natal chart also reflects a lack of the water element, possibly indicating a tendency toward dryness and a deficiency of body fluids, including menstrual blood.

I noticed that her menopausal symptoms became much more severe in late January 2018 on Saturn’s initial exact pass to the natal Moon, at which time she also complained of a very sore knee from hiking and snowshoeing in the

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mountains — and Capricorn’s body correspondence is the knee. The menopausal symptoms intensified again in June during Saturn’s retrograde pass to her Moon. Besides the menopausal symptoms, this time the patient reported severe anxiety related to a serious (Saturn) illness in her family (Moon): Her sister was diagnosed with a rare form of cancer. I continued treatment with acupuncture and European drainage homeopathic remedies for hormonal regulation (female hormones), for liver detox, and for anxiety.

Lisa’s menopausal symptoms resolved after this course of treatment, but returned once again around Saturn’s last pass in November 2018. I prescribed the Gemotherapy remedy, Vaccinium Vitis, for hormonal balance, and her hot flashes and menopausal symptoms resolved. They have not recurred so far after the third and final transit of Saturn over her natal Moon. Additionally, her sister had a successful surgery for her cancer and was given an excellent prognosis, so the family illness also resolved after Saturn’s final pass.

Clinical Case Study #3

This patient, “Jennifer,” came to me for the treatment of chronic and severe migraine headaches, particularly triggered by hormones and food sensitivity. When the results of the acupuncture treatment offered only some temporary relief but did not provide a deeper resolution of the symptoms, I turned to astrology to provide more insight. (See Chart 5, following page.)

Three aspects stood out to me in this chart: The first is the almost exact opposition of Saturn to the Sun, a classic indicator of blockage or weakness in the vital force or life energy of the person. The good news — on this aspect, at least — is that Saturn problems are typically worse in youth and improve slowly as one ages. The second aspect is a partile (exact to the degree) square of Uranus to Mercury. In medical astrology, Mercury represents the nervous system; this square indicates an unbalanced nervous system that is in a state of overstimulation, and perhaps an excessive electrical charge due to Uranus. That these planets are in fixed signs also reflects the fixed and stubborn nature of the headaches. The key in this case would be to include soothing tonics for the nervous system. Mercury–Uranus people often enjoy a lot of variety and excitement — otherwise they can easily become bored. However, they can also get “burned out” from an unbalanced lifestyle of seeking this kind of stimulation.
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Lastly, the opposition of Mars to Neptune is further indicative of weakened and dispersed life energy. I have found the squares and opposition of Neptune to Mars to be especially debilitating in terms of medical astrology, as the strong and dynamic energies of Mars are easily dissipated by the wet, cooling, and dissolving energy of Neptune. In such cases, we often see energy leaks, depression, chronic fatigue syndrome, or debilitating illnesses of unknown origin that are especially difficult to diagnose.

On the positive side, a grand trine between Mars, Pluto, and Mercury is providing some very important balance, strength, and stability. The trine of Venus to a Jupiter–Chiron conjunction could also be supportive here, but Jennifer may have to pay extra attention to her health and wellness throughout her life, to manage these very close, difficult hard aspects.

Clinical Case Study #4

“Lillian” came to see me primarily because her menstrual cycle had stopped; she was experiencing some early menopausal symptoms and a wide variety of other health concerns, including fatigue, brain fog, digestive upset, and neck pain. She had a long history of international travel for work, which can be very depleting over time, and I suspected adrenal fatigue. When I initially tried to treat her using regular acupuncture treatment and herbal medicine, she responded fewer needles used, less stimulation, and of shorter duration than most of my other patients.

After working with her and getting to know her for several months, I felt that there was a lot going on under the surface that I couldn’t see. Of course, I had a feeling that running her natal chart would help both of us to better understand what was going on with her complex health problems. A quick look revealed a t-square involving a Mars–Neptune opposition from the 12th to the 6th house and an apex Moon. (See Chart 6, below.) The position of Neptune in the 6th, famously associated with weird and difficult-to-diagnose health problems, was very informative. (Also, the opposition of Jupiter to the Sun may account for her extreme and excessive reactions to the treatment.) The squares to the Moon correlated closely with her weakened female hormones and her interrupted menstrual cycle. The opposition of Neptune to Mars helped to confirm a diagnosis of adrenal fatigue.

It is interesting to note that the stellium in the 12th house, including Saturn, is often indicative of hidden problems, difficult past-life karma, or unconscious psychological problems — especially together with Neptune hard aspects. This also showed the very deep nature of the health problems, so on the basis of these planetary positions, I referred her to a psychotherapist to help her work more skillfully with the mind–body connection and the unconscious mind. The fixed earth sign of Taurus, the most physical and material of all the signs, often indicates our relationship to the physical body itself.
all the signs, often indicates our relationship to the physical body itself. I took the fact that all the 12th-house planets are in Taurus as symbolizing that her unconscious mind tends to manifest in physical symptoms.

Also interesting is that Lillian initially came to see me just as Saturn began a transit of her 6th house of health, and she became ready to take more responsibility for her health and well-being. Although Saturn made several oppositions to the stellium in the 12th, which would usually trigger a crisis, I am happy to say that, in time, with acupuncture and herbal medicine and astrological insights, she made a lot of progress, and her health improved a great deal over the two years I treated her. Her menstrual cycle, however, never did return.

It is my hope that this brief article provides an easy-to-understand introduction to the importance of certain hard aspects in medical astrology, and offers useful insights for laypeople and practitioners alike.

Chart Data and Sources
(in order of appearance)

Michael Jordan, February 17, 1963; 1:40 p.m. EST; Brooklyn (Kings County), NY, USA (40°N38', 73°W56'); AA: BC (birth certificate) in hand.

Muhammad Ali, January 17, 1942; 6:35 p.m. CST; Louisville, KY, USA (38°N15', 85°W46'); AA: BC in hand, Steinbrecher.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt, January 30, 1882; 8:45 p.m. LMT; Hyde Park, NY, USA (41°N47', 73°W56'); AA: quoted birth record from father’s diary.

Dick Cheney, January 30, 1941; 7:30 p.m. CST; Lincoln, NE, USA (40°N48', 96°W40'); AA: quoted BC, Przybylowski.

John F. Kennedy, May 29, 1917; 3:00 p.m. EST; Brookline, MA, USA (42°N20', 71°W07'); A: mother’s memory.

Ronald Reagan, February 6, 1911; 4:16 a.m. CST; Tampico, IL, USA (41°N38', 89°W47'); DD: Various birth times are given, none verified; however, the date and location are accurate.

The birth data of the clinical case studies are confidential, but their sources are birth certificates, as verbally relayed to me by my patients.

References and Notes
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., p. 76.
5. Ibid.
7. Ibid., p. 95.
8. Healing reactions are a temporary worsening of symptoms due to treatment, as the body’s innate healing ability is stimulated. This is common with acupuncture and homeopathy.

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