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Adjunctive Chinese Herbal Products Therapy Reduces the Risk of ischemic Stroke among Patients with Rheumatoid Arthritis**Hsuan-Shu Shen^{1,2}, Jen-Huai Chiang³**¹Buddhist Tzu Chi Medical Foundation, Hualien, Taiwan²Tzu Chi University, Hualien, Taiwan³China Medical University Hospital, Taichung, Taiwan

Objective: Few studies have explored the association between risk of ischemic stroke (IS) and usage of Chinese herbal products (CHP) in combination with western medicine among patients with rheumatoid arthritis (RA). We performed a retrospective cohort study to investigate the protective effect of CHP against IS in patients with RA.

Method: The data was sourced from the registry for beneficiaries, ambulatory and inpatient care claims, and Registry for Catastrophic Illness from the National Health Insurance Research Database (NHIRD) in Taiwan between 1997 and 2011. Patients who were newly diagnosed with RA between 1997 and 2010 were classified as CHP group or non-CHP group based on adjunctive use of CHP after diagnosis of RA. Cox proportional hazard model was used to estimate Hazard Ratio (HR) for IS after 1:1 matching.

Results: There were 4,148 RA patients in both CHP and non-CHP groups. Patients in CHP group had a significantly lower risk of IS compared to patients in non-CHP group (adjusted HR [aHR]: 0.67, 95% CI: 0.52–0.86). In the CHP group, patients who used CHP for more than 30 days had a lower risk of IS than their counterparts (aHR: 0.61, 95% CI: 0.40–0.91). Moreover, Kuei-Chih-Shao-Yao-Chih-Mu-Tang, Tang-Kuei-Nien-Tung-Tang, Shu-Ching-Huo-Hsieh-Tang, Tu-Huo-Chi-Sheng-Tang exhibited a protective effect against IS.

Conclusion: Use of CHP in combination with western medicine decreased the risk of IS in patients with RA, especially among those who used CHP for more than 30 days. Further randomized control trial is required to clarify the casual relationship of these results.

Biography

Hsuan-Shu Shen is an experienced Chinese medicine physician in Hualien Tzu Chi hospital. I am interested in the effect of the traditional Chinese medicine, especially in treating patients with rheumatoid arthritis and cancer. I am the principal investigator of the project about the efficacy of combined using traditional Chinese medicine among patients with rheumatoid arthritis and willing to make contributions for treating rheumatic disease.

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