

The Role of Traditional Chinese Medicine in Anticancer Therapy

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As everyone knows, one of the diseases that threatens human life is cancer. Annually, there are about 1.5 million people dying of cancers, and the number is increasing. With the changes of the way of life and social environment, the incidence of cancers has been rising in recent years, and more and more young people are likely to develop cancer, such as mammary and colorectal cancers. In order to extend the life of the patients, cancers should be treated timely and effectively.

Nowadays, many doctors treat cancers with surgery procedure, intervention treatment chemotherapy, radiotherapy, and so on. However, none of these approaches is ideal. Although chemical approach kills cancer cells validly, normal cells, such as immune B cells and immunological memory T cells are also killed at the same time. Therefore, the immunity and the physical quality of cancerous person fall seriously due to the side effects of anti-cancer drugs. In other words, cancer patients are more easily infected with other diseases. So, cancer patients' condition will deteriorate further. Undoubtedly, cancer is more likely to drag down the body, and this will greatly shorten the life of the patients with cancer. On this account, we have to turn to use the theory of traditional Chinese medicine to treat cancers.

Unlike western medicine, traditional Chinese medicine does not directly destroy the tumor cells. It puts forward the concepts of "holistic therapy", "in a positive attack evil", and "one tumor coexistence". Traditional Chinese medicine often shows a remarkable curative effect, and could treat cancers, particularly; those are not sensitive to western medicine and more difficult to treat, such as hepatocellular carcinoma, pancreatic carcinoma, small cell lung cancer and so on.

Chemical approach that is used to treat cancers targets at the cancer cells. Even if these tumor cells are killed, there is no change to the environment of tumor cells; therefore, the environment will still generate tumor cells. However, traditional Chinese medicine emphasizes on the overall system and attaches great importance to the position of the cancer. Traditional Chinese medicine acts on many aspects of the tumor, for example, it can adjust the immunization, build up body strength, prevent tumors to drag down the body. The functions of traditional Chinese medicine, including induction of cell differentiation and apoptosis, and killing cancer cells, can obviously inhibit tumor cells proliferation. The functions of traditional Chinese medicine which can destroy the environment of cell growth, cell division and cell proliferation and improve the environment in the human body, can prevent the transfer of cancer cells. This is the most basic common sense in treating cancer.

On the other hand, there are many unsolved problems about the treatment of cancer with traditional Chinese medicine, for example, the ambiguous anticancer effects, the undefined action mechanism and poorly controlled quality of the traditional Chinese medicine itself. Therefore, we should value the modernization of traditional Chinese medicine on the basic of inheritance and development. Meanwhile, combination of traditional Chinese medicine and western medicine should be highly appreciated.

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