

Health and Social Care HND/BSC
Complimentary Therapies. BMHP5001
Chinese Herbal Medicine
1000 word Supporting Paper
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Chinese Herbal Medicine

Chinese Herbal medicine is part of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), which has been used for hundreds of years. TCM is included in the complimentary therapies umbrella.

Complimentary therapies can be used as additional treatments that patients can use alongside conventional treatments. They are used mainly to improve healing and recovery after surgery and a good way to ease complications of conventional treatments (Adams, 2010).

The NHS recognises complimentary therapies and offers them alongside mainstream treatments which is governed and supervised (Lindquist, Tracy and Snyder, 2017).

Hippocrates also known as the godfather of medicine was known for using herbal medicines alongside traditional medicine (Louis, 2014). His work is still seen as important literature which emphasises the potential of herbal medicine as a vital complimentary therapy to be used alongside Orthodox treatments.

Chinese Herbs which are more recognised such as Ginseng and Garlic are very popular in the UK (The Association of Traditional Chinese Medicine, 2020).

Many trials have been done using Chinese Herbal Medicine for the treatment of eczema with positive conclusions on the benefits of its use in helping to maintain the disease and in reducing the use of strong emollients and corticosteroids (sheehan et al, 1993). Hon *et al*, (2008) found that Chinese herbal medicine was efficacious in reducing the use of corticosteroid which improved the patient's quality of life.

There has been an increase in the use of plant based complimentary therapies for chronic illnesses with research proving that plant-derived chemo-preventative compounds have the capacity to develop into the treatment of cancer (Treasure, 2005).

Safarzadeh, *et al*, (2014). Concluded that Herbal Medicine reduces stress and provides relaxation, improves the body's immune system, helps with a better quality of life, reduces side effects from Radio/Chemotherapy, helps in the prevention of cancer cell growth and provides hope for a cure.

Xuedong *et al* (2012) did a recent study into Chinese Herbal Medicine being used to treat chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and found that the herbal treatment was effective in improving the quality of life of the patients.

Even though there have been many trials on the effectiveness of Chinese Herbal Medicine in treating many illnesses there have also been many cases of adverse reactions and side effects including 11 cases of liver damage as a result of using Herbal Medicine (Perharic *et al*, 1995). There was even a case of severe cardiomyopathy as a reaction to taking Herbal Medicine to treat Eczema (Ferguson *et al*, 1997).

There have been cases of mislabelling on Chinese Herbal Medicine which have had serious complications. And Chinese Herbs have been found to be contaminated with toxic composites which include heavy metals and pesticides.

With Chinese Herbal Medicine there is not enough scientific data/evidence, It's not as easily accessible, it does not work as a substitute to western medicine, can cause serious side effects and can be unsafe for certain people especially the Aged (Hu *et al* 2011).

However, when you compare the risk factors to current orthodox treatments and the side effects that can occur from western medicine there is no wonder that there is an increase in the use Chinese Herbal Medicine In the Western world especially by patients with chronic illnesses. In 1999 20% of people in the UK reported having used Chinese Herbal Medicine. With 45% having used for the treatment of dermatological conditions (Baron *et al* 2004).

The rise in users is due to patients not being satisfied with orthodox medicine (Galor and Benzie , 2011).

A systematic review was done by Nankervis *et al* (2016) about Orthodox treatments for Eczema. Although the study did acknowledge that the topical medicine did

maintain the Eczema it shows that the topical medicine needed to be used twice daily in order to maintain the results.

Chinese Herbal Medicine has been used for over 10,000 years in comparison to Western Medicine which has been around a few hundred years and the fact that a lot of western medicine has been created from these herbs (Thomas et al 1996) shows that Chinese Herbs are effective.

Chinese Herbal Medicine is the use of ingredients found in nature which is non-evasive providing healing techniques to treat underlying conditions. Whereas Orthodox medicine refers to the mainstream practise of medicine where health professionals and doctors provide treatment based on symptoms. The medicine prescribed acts as a symptom suppressor so never really treating the underlying cause of the illness.

Chinese Herbal Medicine is a good alternative for many illnesses/diseases with low cost and no need for a prescription. Although they can be effective the reactions to combined usage with other medication needs to be researched more, there are so many benefits to Chinese Herbal medicine the only thing that's lacking is adequate evidence and intense research.

Both Chinese herbalist and Western Orthodox practitioners need to work together to create a collaborative, combined supportive trial. The efficacy is deficient because most studies have been of inadequate quality that the conclusion cannot be taken seriously, and larger scaled trials need to be conducted to gain further evidence on the safety and quality of Herbal Medicine (Hon *et al* 2012).

Group work

Working in a group for the presentation I think we all worked well together in general as we all picked a section each and did our work separately and Sabina merged the presentation onto one document as she naturally took lead. However, there were concern with two members of the team (John and Hasna) who had to do thier slides twice also we wanted to be organised so wanted the document merged a couple of days before however John decided to amend his slides late so we couldn't add them

as it was too late apart for those hiccups I think we were successful in our presentation.

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