



Chinese herbal medicine promising for menstrual pain

Clinical Question	How effective is Chinese herbal medicine (CHM) for primary dysmenorrhoea (PD)?
Bottom Line	Compared to placebo, no treatment, conventional medicine such as non-steroidal antiinflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) and the oral contraceptive (OC), acupuncture and heat compression, CHM reduced menstrual pain in the treatment of PD. It also improved overall symptoms and reduced the use of additional medication.
Caveat	These findings should be interpreted with caution due to the generally low methodological quality of the studies. There was no accurate description of the herbal preparations. The practice of Chinese medicine uses clusters of related symptoms to determine appropriate treatment and there are five or six different patterns of Chinese diagnostics which may correspond to the Western concept of PD.
Context	Dysmenorrhoea is a common complaint. NSAIDs and the OC have been used successfully but more women are looking for non-drug therapies. CHM has been used for centuries in China, and is commonly used in public hospitals in China for the treatment of PD.
Cochrane Systematic Review	Zhu X et al. Chinese herbal medicine for primary dysmenorrhoea . Cochrane Review 2007, Issue 4. Art No : CD005288.DOI : 10.1002/14651858. CD0005288.pub 2. The review contains 39 trials involving 3,475 participants, 36 of the trials were conducted in mainland China, one in Taiwan, one in Japan and one in The Netherlands.
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