A systematic review and meta-analysis of a Chinese herbal remedy, Qili Qiangxin, as an adjuvant therapy to patients with heart failure

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Purpose: To evaluate the beneficial effect and safety of a Chinese herbal formula, Qili Qiangxin, for patients with heart failure.

Methods: We searched six electronic databases until June 2014 for randomized controlled trials (RCTs) of Qili Qiangxin for patients with heart failure. After independent identification of included trials and data extraction, we performed data analysis and quality assessment of the included trials using Review Manager 5.2 and GRADEpro software. We conducted the review based on our registered protocol [PROSPERO registration: CRD42013006106].

Results: A total of 121 RCTs (123 publications) published between 2005 and 2014 were included, involving 10,731 heart failure patients aged from 18 to 98 years old. The methodological quality of majority of included trials was poor. Meta-analysis showed no significant difference between Qili Qiangxin plus conventional treatment and conventional treatment alone for mortality (RR 0.48, 95%CI 0.20 to 1.14; n=483 patients). However, Qili Qiangxin plus conventional treatment reduced the major cardiovascular events (RR 0.47, 95%CI 0.31 to 0.70; n=168 patients) and re-hospitalization due to heart failure (RR 0.51, 95%CI 0.37 to 0.70; n=465 patients) compared with conventional treatment alone. Qili Qiangxin improved NYHA levels (RR 1.40, 95%CI 1.30 to 1.50; n=4147 patients) and quality of life (MD -8.48 scores, 95% CI -9.56 to -7.39; n=792 patients) measured by Minnesota Living With Heart Failure Questionnaire (lower scores better). There were no serious adverse events reported to Qili Qiangxin.

Conclusion: Qili Qiangxin appears to be beneficial in reducing cardiovascular events, re-hospitalization and quality of life in patients with heart failure. It appears to be safe. This finding was based on low quality of clinical trials and must be interpreted with caution. Further large, rigorous trials are warranted to confirm the benefit.

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Assessing the concept of patient-centered medicine through acupuncture conjugated fast-track program in gynecological surgery

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Purpose: Complementary and alternative medicine has the original concept of balancing physical, psychological, and spiritual health, and it was incorporated into conventional therapy as part of integrative medicine (IM), so, it can play an important role on the patient-centered medicine as one of health care strategies. Fast-track surgery (FTS) program is a multidisciplinary strategy to enhance recovery after surgery. We aimed to propose that acupuncture enhances recovery programs after gynecological surgery and to evaluate that it improves clinical benefits and patient-reported outcomes.

Methods: To investigate evidence-based IM components for FTS, we reviewed several articles on FTS and organized the main principles of acupuncture related issues. The database of PubMed and EMBASE were retrieved for controlled acupuncture studies on laparoscopy or hysterectomy within one day application. The key words were IM, acupuncture, moxibustion, acupressure, gynecological surgery, hysterectomy, and laparoscopy. Effect differences were extracted and ran ked to show the clinical benefits of acupuncture and summarized clinical outcomes dividing into patient-reported outcomes and clinician-reported outcomes.

Results: We summarized the FTS with main elements in pre-operative, intra-operative, and post-operative steps. The IM therapeutic modalities were applied for PONV, pain, sore throat, gastrointestinal motility, urinary retention, and coldness in post-operative steps, two symptoms, gastrointestinal motility and “coldness” achieved the full improvement rate of 50%. With regard to post-operative nausea and vomiting, three cases were greater than 30% and one case was 16%. Sore throat and urinary retention achieved the mild improvement rate of 16% and 12%, respectively. Acupuncture-related patient-reported outcomes were greater patient satisfaction, reduced pain intensity, increased ailment motility, and relieved pain and “coldness” sensation measured by visual analogue scale.

Conclusion: A gynecological acupuncture conjugated FTS model has the potential for centering patient-reported outcomes, thereby pursuing the concept of patient-centered medicine.

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