

A Brief History of Kampo Extract Formulations for Prescription in Japan

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Abstract : Background: Kampo (Japanese Traditional medicine) is a medicine traditionally practiced in Japan, based on ancient Chinese medicine. Most Kampo doctors have used decoction of crude drug pieces for treatment. 93% of the Kampo drugs sold in Japan are Kampo products nowadays. Of all Kampo products, 81% of them are Kampo extract formulations for prescription, which is prepared in powdered or granulated form from medicinal crude drug extracts mixed with appropriate excipient. Physicians with medical license for Western medicine prescribe these Kampo extract formulations for prescription in Japan. Objectives: Our study aims at presenting a brief history of Kampo extract formulations for prescription in Japan. Methods: Systematic searches for relevant studies were conducted using not only printed journals but also electronic journals from the bibliographic databases, such as PubMed/Medline, Ichushi-Web, and university/institutional websites, as well as search engines, such as Google and Google Scholar. Results: The first commercialization of Kampo extract formulations for general use (or OTC (over-the-counter) Kampo extract formulation) was achieved after 1957. The number of drugs has been subsequently increased, reaching 148 Kampo extract formulation for prescription currently. Conclusion: We provide a history of Kampo extract formulations for prescription in Japan. The originality of this research is that it analyzes the background history of Kampo in parallel with relevant transitions in the government and insurance systems.

Keywords : health insurance system, history, Kampo, Kampo extract formulation for prescription, OTC Kampo extract formulation, pattern corresponding prescription (Ho-sho-so-tai) system

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