

Randomized Trial of Tian Jiu Therapy in San Fu Days for Patients with Chronic Asthma

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Abstract : Background: Tian Jiu Therapy (a medicinal vesiculation therapy according to traditional Chinese medicine theory) in San Fu Days (the three hottest days in a year is calculated by the Chinese ancient calendar) is widely used by patients with chronic asthma in China although from modern medicine perspective there is insufficient evidence of its effectiveness and safety issues. We investigated the efficacy and safety of Tian Jiu Therapy compared with placebo in patients with chronic asthma. Methods: Patients with chronic asthma were randomly assigned to Tian Jiu treatment group (n=165), placebo control group (n=158). Registered Chinese Medicine practitioners, in Orthopedics-Traumatology, Acupuncture, and Tui-na Clinical Centre for Teaching and Research, School of Chinese Medicine, The University of Hong Kong, administered Tian Jiu Therapy and placebo treatment in 3 times over 2 months. Patients completed questionnaires and lung function test before treatment and after treatment, 3, 6, 9, and 11 months, respectively. The primary outcome was the no of asthma-related sub-healthy symptoms and the percentage of patients with twenty-three symptoms. Results: 451 patients were recruited totally, 111 patients refused or did not participate according the appointment time and 17 did not meet the inclusion criteria. Consequently, 323 of eligible patients were enrolled. There was nothing difference between Tian Jiu Therapy group and placebo control group at the end of all treatments neither primary nor secondary outcomes. While Tian Jiu Therapy as compared with placebo significantly reduced the percentage of participants who are susceptible waken up by asthma symptoms from 27% to 14% at 2nd follow-up ($P < 0.05$). Similarly, Tian Jiu Therapy significantly reduced the proportion of participants who had the symptom of running nose and sneezing before onset from 18% to 8% at 2nd follow-up ($P < 0.05$). Additionally, Tian Jiu Therapy significantly reduced the level of asthma, the proportion of participants who don't need to processed during asthma attack increased from 6% to 15% at 1st follow-up and 0% to 7% at 3rd follow-up ($P < 0.05$). Improvements also occurred with Tian Jiu Therapy group, it reduced the proportion of participants who were spontaneously sweating at 3rd follow up and diarrhea after intake of oily food at 4th follow-up ($P < 0.05$). Conclusion: When added to a regimen of foundational therapy for chronic asthma participants, Tian Jiu Therapy further reduced the need for medications to control asthma, improved the quality of participants' life, and significantly reduced the level of asthma. What is more, this benefit seems to have an accumulative effect over time was in accordance with the TCM theory of 'winter disease is being cured in summer'.

Keywords : asthma, Tian Jiu Therapy, San Fu Days, triaditional Chinese medicine, clinical trial

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