



News Release

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ATS Press Room: 303-228-8473 (May 15-18)

Session time: Monday, May 16, 2:00- 4:30 p.m.

Location: Room 601 (Street Level), Colorado Convention Center

Chinese Herbal Paste May Help Prevent Exacerbations of COPD

ATS 2011, DENVER – A traditional Chinese herbal paste known as Xiao Chuan, or XCP, may help reduce winter exacerbations of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), according to a new study conducted by researchers in Beijing. The paste has been used to treat breathing difficulties in China for more than a thousand years.

The study results will be presented at the ATS 2011 International Conference in Denver.

“We had performed observational studies of XCP which had shown the paste decreased the frequency of COPD exacerbations, but this study is the first randomized controlled trial showing the effectiveness and safety of XCP in the prevention of COPD exacerbation,” said study author Yongjun Bian, MD, clinical researcher in the respiratory department of Gunag’anmen Hospital in Beijing. “These data confirmed the beneficial effect of XCP on the prevention of winter COPD exacerbations.”

Xiao Chuan paste has been used in China for centuries to aid in breathing disorders, including COPD and asthma. To treat winter exacerbations of COPD and other breathing problems, the paste is applied in the summer on specific acupuncture points on the back.

“The herbs contained in XCP and natural remedies may have some immune regulation properties, which in turn may aid in their ability to prevent COPD exacerbations,” Dr. Bian said.

The researchers enrolled 142 patients and randomized them to receive either XCP or a placebo paste. Both pastes were applied on the same back points four times during the eight-week period of July and August.

For the study, exacerbations were defined as either a worsening of respiratory symptoms resulting in the patient taking oral steroids or antibiotics, or a hospital admission for an acute respiratory complaint. Patients were monitored for exacerbations from November through February. Adverse events were evaluated using the Chinese Herb Skin Stimulation Classification.

“Treatment with XCP significantly reduced the frequency of winter exacerbation compared with patients treated with placebo,” Dr. Bian said. “XCP patients experienced statistically significant reductions in steroid use and episodes of shortness of breath, and XCP patients also reported an improved quality of life compared to those treated with placebo.”

The incidence of adverse events was two percent in treatment group, and all patients who experienced an adverse event recovered without intervention after stopping the medication. There were no adverse events in placebo group.

“Although this treatment has been used in China for thousands of years, no scientific studies had been performed on this conventional Chinese natural therapy,” Dr. Bian said. “This study results helped us standardize the treatment protocol and avoid adverse events in future clinical practice.” The primary ingredients of XCP are *Ephedra vulgaris*, *Asarum heterothroides* and *Acorus gramineus Soland*, all plants which are native to China.

Dr. Bian said future research should include longer follow-up times to evaluate the long-term efficacy of the paste in treating COPD exacerbations, and also should explore the mechanisms at play in reducing exacerbations.

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“Safety And Efficacy Of The External Herb Paste (Xiao Chuan Paste) In Summer To Prevent Chronic Obstructive Lung Disease Winter Exacerbation” (Session B109, Monday, May 16, 2:00-4:30 p.m., Room 601 (Street Level), Colorado Convention Center; Abstract 18759)

** Please note that numbers in this release may differ slightly from those in the abstract. Many of these investigations are ongoing; the release represents the most up-to-date data available at press time.*

Abstract 18759

Safety And Efficacy Of The External Herb Paste (Xiao Chuan Paste) In Summer To Prevent Chronic Obstructive Lung Disease Winter Exacerbation

Type: Scientific Abstract

Category: 15.02 - Integrated Care/Disease Management (PR/CP)

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Abstract Body

Rationale:

Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) is one of the most common chronic diseases worldwide and is a frequent cause of hospital admissions and readmissions. COPD exacerbations are more common in winter months from November to the end of February. Prevention of acute exacerbations of COPD is one of the key objectives of managing chronic stable COPD. Xiao Chuan Paste applied in summer on the specified back acupuncture points had been taken as one of major modality to prevent the exacerbation of COPD in winter for thousand years in China. These herbs and natural remedies may have some immune regulation properties, in their ability to aid in the prevention of COPD exacerbations.

Methods:

This is a multi-center randomized prospective double blinded clinical trial to evaluate the efficacy and safety of Xiao Chuan Paste (XCP) on preventing COPD winter exacerbation. All enrolled patients were randomized to treatment group (real XCP) or placebo group. Both pastes were applied on the same back points (BL13, BL15, BL17) four times a year in summer from July to August. The primary outcome will be the frequency of COPD exacerbation in winter from November to February. An exacerbation was defined as (1) a worsening of respiratory symptoms resulting in the patient starting oral steroids and/or antibiotics, (2) a hospital admission for an acute respiratory complaint. The adverse event was evaluated according to Chinese Herb Skin Stimulation Classification.

Results:

142 patients received XCP treatment during a two month summer time in 2007. 25 patients lost follow-up in the subsequent winter time. 64 patients were given the real XCP and 61 patients were given the placebo. No significant differences were observed on age, gender and the baseline severity of disease between two groups. Treatment with XCP significantly reduced the frequency of winter exacerbation compared with placebo group (3.0 vs. 4.2). Statistically significant reductions in steroid use, dyspnea scores, and numerical benefits on quality of life were seen in XCP compared with placebo group. The incidence of adverse events was 2% in treatment group and all patients recovered from skin reaction after stopping the medication without further dermatology treatment.

Conclusion:

The incidence of adverse events was low and mild in XCP treatment group. XCP is more effective than placebo at reducing the rate of winter COPD exacerbations. These data confirmed the beneficial effect of XCP on the prevention of winter COPD exacerbations.

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