

Prioritizing Chinese Medicine Clinical Research Questions in Cancer Palliative Care: A Two-Round International Delphi Survey

Background

Some Chinese medicine (CM) modalities:
Chinese herbal medicines (CHM) + acupuncture

Promising Effect

In managing the symptoms among palliative cancer patients:
i) Cancer-related fatigue
ii) Chemotherapy-induced nausea and vomiting
iii) Improving quality of life

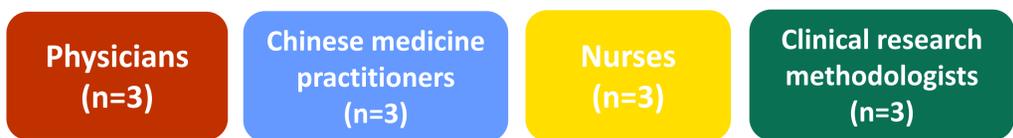
However, methodological limitations among existing clinical trials
→ Uncertainty on the effectiveness of CM modalities

Aim

To prioritize CM clinical research questions for cancer palliative care using a two-round Delphi survey

Methods

Identified research needs from existing overviews of systematic reviews (SRs) and SRs → 29 research questions



International experts in cancer palliative care

In the two-round Delphi survey:

- rate clinical importance of answering the questions on a 9-point Likert scale (ranging from “not important at all” to “of highest importance”)
- provide qualitative comments for supporting the rating
- suggest outcome measures

The study findings will inform rational allocation of scarce research funding for evaluating the effectiveness of Chinese medicine for cancer palliative care, especially on acupuncture and related therapies.



Please scan for full text of the study

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Results

List of research priorities in cancer palliative care identified in the two-round Delphi survey:

(1) Addition of electroacupuncture + oral vitamin B6 (pyridoxine) supplement for reducing paresthesia and dysesthesia

(3) Acupressure provided by CMPs vs self-acupressure for improving insomnia among patients receiving chemotherapy

(5) Addition of manual acupuncture + opioids for reducing pain

(7) Addition of CHM + conventional care (Glycerin suppositories/ Lactulose syrup) for reducing constipation

(2) Addition of manual acupuncture + artificial saliva for reducing xerostomia

(4) Addition of manual acupuncture + conventional care for reducing anxiety

(6) Addition of manual acupuncture + exercise for reducing fatigue

(8) Addition of CHM + conventional care (Blood transfusion/ Erythropoiesis-stimulating agents (e.g. Epoetin)) for improving anemia

Conclusion

- International experts have achieved consensus on eight research priorities in Chinese medicine for cancer palliative care.
- Further research on herb safety and herb-drug interaction should be performed before conducting international trials on CHM.