

EXPLORING THE HERBAL PHARMACOLOGICAL BASIS OF THE TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE CLASSICS ON INFERTILITY TREATMENTS DURING THE QING DYNASTY (AD 1644-1911)

Julie Chuyuan Chen

Abstract

Background:

Modern western medicine has been successful in treating infertility by different methodologies such as intrauterine insemination (IUI) and in vitro fertilization (IVF). For thousand of years Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) has treated also female infertility. Modern western medicine in conjunction with TCM classical theories and treatments may be able to increase the successful rate of artificial reproduction even in patients with natural conception.

Objective:

To review the pharmacological basis of infertility treatments by analyzing 60 infertility formulas from six gynecological classics, and to explore the regulations and the frequency of single herbs during the Qing Dynasty.

Methods:

All research informations were identified using the Wan Fang database, the Chinese knowledge database, the library of the American College of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine, and six gynecological classics from the Qing dynasty. An analysis and calculations of 60 formulas was conducted to find any characteristics or special regulations in the topic.

Results:

Several factors were found to be associated with female infertility: (1) Dang Gui (21/34), Shu Di Huang (18/34) and Bai Shao (15/34) were the most common herbs found in 34

infertility due to qi, blood, yin and yang deficiency. (2), Dang Gui (8/12), Bai Shao (6/12), Rou Gui (6/12), Chuan Xiong (5/12) and Xiang Fu (5/12) were the most common herbs found in 12 infertility formulas due to internal cold with qi stagnation. (3) Fu Ling (7/7), Ban Xia (5/7), Shen Qu (5/7), Xiang Fu (5/7), Chuan Xiong (5/7) and Bai Zhu (5/7) were the most common herbs found in seven formulas for infertility due to damp-phlegm accumulation. (4) Dang Gui (2/2), Ren Shen (2/2), Rou Gui (2/2), Niu Xi (2/2), Hou Po (2/2) and Fu Ling (2/2) were the most common herbs found in two formulas for infertility due to blood stasis. (5) Dang Gui (34/55), Fu Ling (25/55), Bai Shao (23/55), Chuan Xiong (22/55), Bai Zhu (22/55) and Shu Di Huang (21/55) were the most common herbs that were used in the six gynecological classics after summarizing the studied formulas.

Discussion:

According to the summary of the classical formulas from the six gynecological classics that were reviewed and analyzed in this study, a “yes baby formula” was created, which may be used to treat habitual miscarriages, incipient miscarriages and infertility. The formula not only is able to treat patients who have infertility due to qi, blood yin and yang deficiencies, but it also can treat patients who have infertility due to blood stasis, qi stagnation, internal cold and damp-phlegm accumulation. There is a paucity of research on a large number of the existing clinical researches that have been conducted. If time and resources permit, more research on the topic is currently needed.

Key Words: Chinese medicine, Acupuncture, Infertility, Qing dynasty, Herbs, Formulas, TCM Gynecology