

Chinese herbs for endometriosis

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Chinese herbal medicine (CHM) may relieve symptoms in the treatment of endometriosis. A systematic review by Cochrane Researchers found some evidence that women had comparable benefits following laparoscopic surgery and suffered fewer adverse effects if they were given Chinese herbs compared with conventional drug treatments.

Endometriosis is a gynaecological disorder affecting as many as one in six women of reproductive age. It can cause pelvic pain, irregular and painful periods, and infertility. Surgical treatments do not always lead to long-term improvement in symptoms and drug treatments can have unpleasant side effects such as hot flushes, acne and weight gain.

The researchers conducted the first English language systematic review of CHM for treatment of endometriosis. Two trials, which together focused on a total of 158 women, were included in the review. In one trial, CHM provided symptomatic relief comparable to that provided by the hormonal drug gestrinone, but with fewer side effects. In the other trial, CHM was more effective than the hormonal drug danazol, and also resulted in fewer side effects.

"These findings suggest that Chinese herbs may be just as effective as certain conventional drug treatments for women suffering from [endometriosis](#), but at present we don't have enough evidence to generalize the results," says lead researcher Andrew Flower of the Complementary Medicine Research Unit at the University of Southampton in the UK.

110 studies were originally considered for review but most were of poor methodological quality and had to be excluded. The researchers stress the need for Chinese researchers to adopt more rigorous methods in carrying out trials and reporting them. "Poor quality reporting has the potential to confuse and undermine research in Chinese herbal medicine," says Flower.

Source: Wiley

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