

# Chinese medicine could treat Parkinson's: HK study

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Chinese medicine may be effective in battling certain symptoms of Parkinson's disease, and lessening side effects from the drugs used to treat the condition, according to a new study.

Researchers at Hong Kong Baptist University said Gouteng, a traditional Chinese herb used to treat hypertension, helped patients better communicate and made them less prone to depression and sleeping difficulties.

"There is no cure for Parkinson's right now, but the study showed [Chinese medicine](#) can help treat the disease," a university spokesman told AFP Thursday.

Parkinson's is a progressive motor-system disorder which usually affects people over the age of 50, although it can strike earlier, often causing severe symptoms including body trembling, stiffness and [loss of balance](#).

The condition is usually treated with a drug called levodopa, which the brain converts into [dopamine](#) to relieve the symptoms, but it can also cause nausea and [hallucinations](#).

The Baptist University study found that patients who took Gouteng together with [levodopa](#) experienced fewer side effects from the drug while showing a marked improvement in their communication skills.

Li Min, an associate professor who led the study, said the findings could

also help boost the profile of Chinese medicine.

"They provide not only pharmacological proof of the efficacy of Gouteng in treating Parkinson's disease, but will also help promote the effectiveness and safety of Chinese medicine to the international medical arena," she said.

Li -- whose team has applied for a US patent -- told the South China Morning Post that she expects the herb would start being used to treat the disease after the second phase of the study in 2013.

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