

# First randomized trial of traditional Chinese medicine for heart failure shows benefit

August 28 2023

No.	Ingredients	Scientific Name	English Name	Plant sources	Used part of Plant
1	Astragali Radix	<i>Astragalus membranaceus</i> (Fisch.) Bge. var. <i>mongholicus</i> (Bge.) Hsiao or <i>Astragalus membranaceus</i> (Fisch.) Bge.	Milkvetch Root	<i>Astragalus membranaceus</i> (Fisch.) Bge. var. <i>mongholicus</i> (Bge.) Hsiao or <i>Astragalus membranaceus</i> (Fisch.) Bge.	Root
2	Ginseng Radix et Rhizoma	<i>Panax ginseng</i> C. A. Mey.	Ginseng	<i>Panax ginseng</i> C. A. Mey.	Root
3	Aconiti Lateralis Radix Praeparata (heishunpian)	<i>Aconitum carmichaeli</i> Debx.	Prepared Common Monkshood Daughter Root	<i>Aconitum carmichaeli</i> Debx.	Root
4	Salviae Miltiorrhizae Radix et Rhizoma	<i>Salvia miltiorrhiza</i> Bge.	Danshen Root	<i>Salvia miltiorrhiza</i> Bge.	Root and rhizome
5	Descurainiae Semen	<i>Descurainia Sophia</i> (L.) Webb ex Prantl	Pepperweed Seed	<i>Descurainia Sophia</i> (L.) Webb ex Prantl	Ripe seed
6	Alismatis Rhizoma	<i>Alisma orientale</i> (Sam.) Juzep.	Oriental Waterplantian Rhizome	<i>Alisma orientale</i> (Sam.) Juzep.	Tuber
7	Polygonati Odorati Rhizoma	<i>Polygonatum odoratum</i> (Mill.) Druce	Fragrant Solomonseal Rhizome	<i>Polygonatum odoratum</i> (Mill.) Druce	Rhizome
8	Cinnamomi Ramulus	<i>Cinnamomum cassia</i> Presl	Cassia Twig	<i>Cinnamomum cassia</i> Presl	Young branch
9	Carthami Flos	<i>Carthamus tinctorius</i> L.	Safflower	<i>Carthamus tinctorius</i> L.	Flower
10	Periplocae Cortex	<i>Periploca sepium</i> Bge.	Chinese Silkvine Root-bark	<i>Periploca sepium</i> Bge.	Root bark
11	Citri Reticulatae Pericarpium	<i>Citrus reticulata</i> Blanco	Dried Tangerine Peel	<i>Citrus reticulata</i> Blanco	Pericarp

Table 1: Ingredients of qiliqiangxin. Credit: European Society of Cardiology

The traditional Chinese medicine qiliqiangxin reduces hospitalization for heart failure and cardiovascular death in patients with heart failure and a reduced ejection fraction (HFrEF), according to late breaking research

presented in a Hot Line session August 26 at [ESC Congress 2023](#).

Qiliqiangxin is a traditional Chinese medicine extract obtained from 11 types of herbs (see Table). In a pilot study, qiliqiangxin reduced N-terminal pro-B-type [natriuretic peptide](#) (NT-proBNP) levels and improved [heart failure](#) symptoms in patients with HF<sub>r</sub>EF when added to established heart failure treatment. Preclinical studies have also indicated that qiliqiangxin has beneficial effects on attenuating myocardial fibrosis and cardiac remodeling.

The QUEST trial evaluated the clinical efficacy and safety of qiliqiangxin on major heart failure outcomes in HF<sub>r</sub>EF patients. The trial was conducted at 133 hospitals in mainland China and Hong Kong SAR of China.

The trial enrolled adult HF<sub>r</sub>EF patients with a [left ventricular ejection fraction](#) of 40% or below and NT-proBNP of 450 pg/ml or higher who had been on a stable standardized baseline treatment regimen for at least two weeks prior to enrollment. Patients were randomized in a 1:1 fashion to receive qiliqiangxin (four capsules, three times daily) or placebo on top of standard medications for [chronic heart failure](#). The primary endpoint was a composite of rehospitalization for worsening heart failure or cardiovascular death.

A total of 3,110 patients were included in the analysis, with 1,555 randomized to qiliqiangxin and 1,555 randomized to placebo. The average age was 62 years and 72.1% were men. At baseline, the mean left ventricular ejection fraction was 32%, and the median NT-proBNP was 1730.80 pg/ml.

During a median follow up of 18.3 months, the primary endpoint occurred in 389 patients (25.02%) in the qiliqiangxin group and in 467 patients (30.03%) in the [placebo group](#) (hazard ratio [HR], 0.78; 95%

confidence interval [CI], 0.68 to 0.90; p

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