

KAIM Clinical Report: Evidence Data & Case Studies - (3)

Ephedra Decoction for Influenza

The standard treatment of influenza provides an approach to the use of antiviral agents, such as Oseltamivir. It may, however, be difficult to obtain such agents when outbreaks of influenza are rampant. Or there may be some cases in which acquired tolerability may antagonize the effect of antiviral agents. Meanwhile, TCM has several thousand years of versatile experiences in the treatment of patients with influenza. Especially “Shang Han Lun” suggests many useful hints as to the treatment of this disease. Japanese Herb Medicine based on the “Shang Han Lun” formulates various preparations including *Ephedra Decoction* and *Major Blue Dragon Decoction* by making full use of the classic prescriptions. Below are the advanced influenza treatments by the herb medication.

Evidence Data 1: *Ephedra Decoction* is effective for influenza. (1)

Kubo T., Nakata H.: Effect of *Ephedra Decoction* for Child Influenza

Abstracts of Japan Society for Oriental Medicine Science Council No. 56 p204 2005

Kubo et al. investigated the treatment effects on 49 patients (male:female=24:25) with an age ranging from 5 months to 13 years with influenza-like symptoms including high fever of over 38 °C by dividing them into an Oseltamivir group of 18 patients, an Oseltamivir and *Ephedra Decoction* group of 14 patients and an *Ephedra Decoction* group of 17 patients.

Among these patients, the patients over one year of age diagnosed using a quick diagnostic kit as having influenza were randomly assigned into (1) a group treated with Oseltamivir (brand name: Tamiflu® 4 mg/kg for 2 days), (2) a combined therapy group treated with *Ephedra Decoction* (Ephedra extract 0.18 kg for 3 days) and Oseltamivir, and (3) a group treated with *Ephedra Decoction* alone for the patients below one year of age and the patients that were negative for influenza. Guardians were requested to supervise the actual application of the drug and record measurements of body temperature. Then the duration to attain defervescence (below 37.2 °C) was compared between the individual groups. Differences in background factors were not observed: average age at the initiation of the treatment, male-female ratio, duration of the fever prior to the treatment, degree of the fever, and history of vaccinations, etc.

The duration from the start of the treatment to defervescence was accounted for an average of 31.9 hours in the Oseltamivir group, an average of 21.9 hours in the combination therapy group of *Ephedra Decoction* and Oseltamivir, and 17.7 hours in the *Ephedra Decoction* group. Side effects or adverse events were not observed in all groups.

Evidence Data 2: *Ephedra Decoction* is effective for influenza. (2)

Fukutomi O., et al.: Experience in using *Ephedra Decoction* Effective for Alleviating Symptoms of Influenza. *Kampo Igaku* 29 (5): 28-30, 2005

Fukutomi et al. divided 24 patients diagnosed with influenza using the quick diagnostic kit from winter 2003 to spring 2004 into two groups and treated them with a regimen similar to that described above. The results showed that the combination therapy group of Oseltamivir and *Ephedra Decoction* Extract had shorter days of duration in headache and general malaise than the Oseltamivir alone group (significantly different).

Evidence Data 3: *Ephedra Decoction* is effective for influenza. (3)

Kimoto H., Kuroki H.: Combined Effects of Oseltamivir Phosphate and *Ephedra Decoction* for Influenza, *Kampo Igaku* 29 (4): 16-19, 2005

Kimoto et al. compared the clinical course of the patients diagnosed, during the period from January to March 2004, with influenza using the quick diagnostic kit and administered Oseltamivir in combination with either *Ephedra Decoction* or other ordinary western medication. The concomitant use with *Ephedra Decoction* showed earlier defervescence by about 12 hours than that with the western drug medication, with also early improvement of malaise, dizziness and loss of appetite. Three patients in the group in combination with western medication showed an increase in the levels of CRP, whereas the increase was not observed in the *Ephedra Decoction* combined group.

Case Report 1: *Ephedra Decoction* for influenza.

Oribe K.: A case where *Ephedra Decoction* was Highly Effective for the Treatment of Influenza, (B), *The Journal of KAIM* Vol. 1 No 1 pp18-19

Patient: age 32, male. About 9:00 am of January 13, 2005, the patient suddenly felt chills over the back, followed by shaking of the entire body that the patient could not control voluntarily. After a while, he started to feel feverish, developed a headache, and joints and muscles throughout the body started aching. At the same time, he became enervated. He was diagnosed with type B influenza using the quick diagnostic kit.

The patient was instructed to take *Ephedra* extract (2.5g/package) with warm water at intervals of four hours and to cover the body until warmed to perspire. After taking three packages, the body temperature conversely went up above 39 . The patient continued the medication and after 30 minutes, perspiration was observed over the entire body, which triggered a drop in the body temperature and disappearance of the headache and joint aches. The patient felt refreshed and was cured.