

KAIM Clinical Report: Evidence Data & Case Studies - (5)

Stephania and Astragalus Decoction for Gonarthrosis (Knee Arthritis)

At a certain advanced age, pains and aches in joints of the body occur most often. Nowadays, especially a knee aching or pain is an increasing problem. There were remarkably few Japanese people who complained of knee pains and aches in former times. This was attributable to the life style of living in the traditional Japanese house. The present Japanese having living habits of the American /European style now face same knee problem as Americans and Europeans do. Called knee arthritis, this disease is responsive to several Kampo medicines. Representative is *Stephania and Astragalus Decoction*. This prescription has been used over several decades for knee arthritis and a great deal of experience is accumulated.

Evidence Data 1: *Stephania and Astragalus Decoction* is Effective for Knee Arthritis.

Ohya T., Matsumoto H. Kawakubo M., et al.: Clinical Efficacy of *Stephania and Astragalus Decoction* for Knee Arthritis, Journal of Tokyo Knee Society, 18:31-33, 1998

Stephania and Astragalus Decoction alone was administered to 137 patients with knee arthritis, who were observed for six months. Severity of pains was assessed in five grades using a visual analogue scale with the results of improvement in 45 patients (3.28%) after 4 weeks and 59 patients (43.1%) after 6 months.

Evidence Data 2: *Stephania and Astragalus Decoction* is Effective for Knee Arthritis.

Mizuno M., Hayashi Y., Ohno T., Haimot H., Matsuhisa E., Hiramatsu H., Mori T., Nakamura R.: Clinical Epidemiology of *Stephania and Astragalus Decoction* for Knee Arthritis. Φυτο, 8(1):6-10, 2006

In order to identify the ratio of effectiveness and factors contributing to the efficacy of *Stephania and Astragalus Decoction* for knee arthritis, *Stephania and Astragalus Decoction* was administered to 64 patients with persistent pains for 3 months (male 8, female 57, age 72.9±8.9). The effectiveness ratio included 31.3% of more than effective and 57.8% of slightly effective.

Multivariate analysis revealed the definitive factors for the effect: (1) within one year since the onset, (2) joints swelling, and (3) 25 or less BMI.

Case Report 1: Hirono T.: Three Cases of Knee Arthritis with the possibility of weaning off NSAID's treated mainly with *Stephania and Astragalus Decoction*., Pains and Kampo, 9:40-44, 1999

[Case 1] Patient: 87-year old, female, height 145, weight 53 kg. At the age of 83, the patient had pain attacks in the left knee joint. Since then NSAID's and steroids had been injected and walking was virtually impossible. Then, the regular use of NSAID's was switched to oral dosages and with instructions being given to the patient to restrict between-meal eating at the start of the administration of *Stephania and Astragalus Decoction*, a non-weight bearing exercise was applied for lower extremities. The results

showed gradual and steady weight loss by 3kg after 3 weeks, 5kg after 2 months, and 8kg after 2 years with alleviated pains and walking became possible with a walking stick.

[Case 2] Patient: 67-year old, female. Pains in the right knee joint started 11 years ago. NSAID's and steroids were injected once a month. After that, although the physician recommended surgical operations, the patient desired to have nonsurgical procedures and visited the clinic. At the time of the initial visit, the patient's height was 154 cm, weight 68 kg with varus deformation and edema in the joint. The patient was instructed to reduce weight, resulting in a 3 kg reduction after 3 months and extended walking hours from 20 minutes to 40 minutes. After this, the patient felled and had the right epicondylus ossis femoris fractured. At the time, however, pains in the knee had already reached a remission. After 2 years and 7 months, a relapse of pains in both right and left knee joints occurred. *Stephania and Astragalus Decoction* was used with oral NSAID's, resulting in pains subsided in 3 months and an increase in walking level to one hour.

Case Report 2: Kamano T.: About *Stephania and Astragalus Decoction* for Arthritis Joint Knees. *Jyuntendo Medicine*, 31 (4): 570-574, 1985

[Case 1] Patient: 56-year old, female. The patient's diagnosis was the left knee arthritis. At other clinic, she received treatments of needling into the joint and the administration of antiphlogistic analgetics, which led to a gastric disorder and the use of the agent was discontinued. At the time of the initial visit to the clinic, the patient's height was 150 cm, weight 63 kg with an obese body type and could hardly sit on her heels. *Stephania and Astragalus Decoction* was administered, increasing the frequency of urination. The patient reported that she had the sense of the body being lightened. In the three months measurements, weight loss was observed by 4 kg, allowing her to sit on the heels and pains subsided.

[Case 2] Patient: 60 year-old, male, height 164cm, weight 54kg without obesity. After playing golf, the patient felt a pain when going up and down the stairs and visited the clinic. Diagnosed as having arthritis in the left knee, the patient received the prescription of *Stephania and Astragalus Decoction*. After a one-month use, pains were alleviated. At the time, guidance was given to wear knee protectors. After two-month administration, local swelling and pains were improved and healing was observed.

[Case 3] Patient: 58-year old, female without obesity, complaining of pains in the right and left knee joints. The patient was diagnosed as having arthritis in both knees. The physic was 160cm in height with 58kg in weight. Findings of medical examinations included pains in the internal sides of both knee joints, inability of sitting on the heels, pains in getting up and walking, and moderate accumulation of fluids in the joints, which were not drained with a needle. Then, *Stephania and Astragalus Decoction* was administered with an instruction to apply a cold compress. After 4 weeks administration, edema in the joints was improved and after 8 weeks, pains in the knee joints were alleviated. After 10 weeks, symptoms subsided and healing was observed.