

Chinese medicine formula found effective against type 2 diabetes

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Lai Jung-nien (賴榮年). CNA file photo

Taipei, March 15 (CNA) A team of researchers in Taiwan said Sunday they have determined that an ancient Chinese medicine compound known as Six-Flavor Rehmanni can help reduce the risk of kidney failure in patients with type 2 diabetes.

In a study conducted among people in Taiwan with type 2 diabetics, it was found that the risk of kidney failure was 31 percent lower among patients who had been taking the Chinese medicine formula than among those who had not been receiving such treatment, said Lai Jung-nien (賴榮年), head of the research team at the Institute of Traditional Medicine of National Yang-Ming University in Taipei.

The study used data from the National Health Insurance Research Database and examined the treatment of type 2 diabetes among 40,163 patients in Taiwan from 1997-2008, Lai said at a Taipei Chinese Medical Association conference.

Among the 40,163 patients, 15,405 developed kidney failure and 1,346 of them received the treatment of dialysis over the 10-year period, he said.

It was found that those patients who had been taking the Six-Flavor Rehmanni formula as well as Western medicine did not require dialysis treatment until a year after the patients who had not been taking the formula, he said.

In the case of patients who had been taking modern Western medical treatment along with Chinese medicine that did not include Six-Flavor, dialysis was delayed for about six months, Lai said.

He said that over the 10 year period, 90 percent of the type 2 diabetes patients in the study were treated with Western medicine and those who visited Chinese medicine clinics were mostly prescribed the compound, a patented formula also known as "Liu Wei Di Huang Wan" (六味地黄丸).

Chinese medical doctors would also recommend type 2 diabetes patients regularly do the Ba Duan Jin exercise -- a form of medical qigong for health -- and refrain from eating ice products or frozen foods as extremely cold foods are believed to be harmful to the kidney.

Lai said he hoped that the study would help alter the biased views against Chinese medicine, as it proves that some chronic diseases can be effectively treated with the integrated use of traditional Chinese and modern medicine.

Liu Wei Di Huang Wan, an ancient Chinese medicine compound made of six different herbs, is frequently prescribed by Chinese medicine doctors for the treatment of type 2 diabetes.

The study was published in volume 156 of the Journal of Ethnopharmacology in October 2014, he said.

(By Chen Ching-fang and Elizabeth Hsu)
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