

Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), developed over a period of at least 3000 years, is becoming more acknowledged and accepted in the West, as more people are becoming familiar with the use of Chinese herbs, acupuncture, Tai Ji, and Tuina (Chinese massage). More and more physicians are making referrals to practitioners of Chinese Medicine for difficult conditions such as generic pain, postoperative issues, chemotherapy nausea and vomiting, headache, asthma, diabetes, low immune function and drug addictions.

#### Special Effects of TCM on Cancers

1. **The accessory therapy of TCM:** Research studies show that TCM can directly inhibit carcinoma. Some herbs, such as Bai Hua She She Cao (Herba Hedyotidis Diffusae), Xiang He Cao (Herba Agrimoniae) and Jiang Huang (Rhizoma Curcumae Longae), E Zhu (Rhizoma Curcumae Ezhu)(1), have a relatively strong in vitro inhibitory effect against carcinoma cells. However, TCM has a more obvious function as an accessory therapy in clinic. It may improve the nutrition of carcinoma patients before their surgery, helping them pass through the surgical process. Post operative patients may heal quicker through acupuncture and the use of Chinese herbs that tonify Qi and blood, Qi and Yin, as well as stomach and spleen.

Therapy integrating TCM may increase tumor radio-chemo sensitivity, reduce side effects of chemo, prevent metastasis of cancers, and prolong patient survival rates.

Specific efficacy of herbs:

- \* Herbs that invigorate blood may improve the circulation to the outside surface of cancers, increasing the effect of chemotherapy.
- Dan Shen (Radix Salviae Miltiorrhizae)(2) may significantly increase the anticancer actions of cyclophosphamide...
- Jiang Huang (Rhizoma Curcumae Longae), and San Qi(*Panax notoginseng*)(3) may increase the cancer's susceptibility to radiotherapy.
- Herbs that nourish Yin and clear heat may treat and even prevent pneumonia caused by radiation.
- Herbs that clear heat and cool blood may treat and even prevent cystitis and prostatitis caused by radiation.
- Herbs that tonify kidney, strengthen spleen, tonify Qi and blood may prevent decrease of immune function and WBC caused by chemotherapy.
- Herbs that regulate stomach and strengthen spleen can treat and may prevent nausea and vomiting caused by chemotherapy(1).

2. **Inhibiting Cancer in Slow but Long Term Improvement:** There are Chinese herbs that have been proven, in research studies, to effectively inhibit cancers. Bai Hua She She Cao (Herba Hedyoyidis Diffusae) has shown an inhibitory effect in vitro on liver cancer cells. A 57.4% inhibitor effect was shown against sarcoma-180 in mice. With applications of concentration of Teng Li Gen(*Actinidia arg-uta* Planch)(4) over 45 and 60 days, the survival rate of the mice was respectively 75% and 66.9%. After injecting the same cancer cells into the mice that had stopped the herb treatment, only two of the 25 mice had cancer and, after 25 days, all of them were surviving. All of the 25 mice in the control group that had not been given herb treatment were dead. This means that the herb may increase the body's defense against cancer. Numerous studies have shown similar results. In additional clinical trials, Chinese acupuncture and Chinese herbs for

cancers have shown a mild positive effect. Long term treatment is needed and the longer the treatment, the more effective.

**3. Benefiting various functions of the whole body:** Chinese medicine not only benefits immune function but also positively affects the function of nerve, endocrine, hematopoiesis, digestion and metabolism. By stimulating the hematopoietic function of the bone marrow, herbs that strengthen spleen and kidney, such as Gui Pi Tang(5), Liu Wei Di Huang Wan (6), may promote the function of phagocytes, build the function of T cells, increase the WBC and prevent the decrease of WBC caused by chemotherapy. Yin Yang Huo (Herba Epimedii), Huang Qi (Radix Astragali Membranaceus)(7) may stimulate the function of superoxide dismutase (SOD), and reduce free radical damage, lowering the incidence of cancers by prevention of halmatogenesis of normal cells and preventing normal cells turning malignant(8).

**4. Fewer and milder side effects:** Most of the TCM therapies that treat malignancy have far fewer and much milder side effects than those accompanying Western treatment. Acupuncture and herbs treat illness individually, depending on each patient's exact manifestations and signs. With this individualized combination of TCM treatments, the therapeutic effect is significantly increased and side effects are prevented. No research has yet proven that acupuncture has any obvious side effects, though it may occasionally cause mild bruising or minor pain at needle sites. No research in herbal pharmacology has found acute or chronic toxic effects due to the use of Chinese herbs that tonify patient's vital Qi.

**5. Improving symptoms and quality of life:** TCM effectively improves patients' symptoms, and reduces suffering. With acupuncture or Chinese herbs for strengthening the spleen and stomach, patients' digestive manifestations such as poor appetite, abdominal bloating, and diarrhea may be improved. With acupuncture or Chinese herbs for strengthening the Qi and blood, patients' anemia manifestations, such as tiredness, dizziness, and palpitations, are improved. With acupuncture, Chinese herbs or Qigong for strengthening the constitution, patients' mental attitudes are significantly enhanced, including their perception of and ability to handle pain. Other symptoms, such as chronic pain, low-grade fever, cough, and chest distress also may be relieved with acupuncture and Chinese herbs.

**6. Low incidence of relapse:** TCM treatment for tumors is different in its mechanism from other therapy. TCM is not aimed at directly killing malignant cells or treating symptoms, but, instead, harmonizes the function of internal organs, stabilizes the internal environment at its best condition, and enhances patients' natural ability to eliminate malignant cells. There is extensive research that has shown that patients have a much lower incidence of relapse after being healed by TCM.

Differences between Mainstream Medicine and TCM Treatment for Cancers

	TCM	Mainstream Medicine	TCM integrated with Mainstream Medicine
Diagnostic focus	Individual personal whole body, macrocosmic	Group human local, microcosmic	Whole body and local, macrocosmic and microcosmic
Anti-cancers	Herbs directly kill cancers, and with acupuncture help regulate immune function. There is longer effect.	Surgery, chemo-radiotherapy stronger in directly killing cancers. There is shorter effect.	Comprehensive -- kills cancers and regulates immune function. Best in effectiveness.
Relieve symptoms	Relieves symptoms of whole body.	Improves single symptoms.	Comprehensive Relief
Improvement of life quality	Excellent	Significant side effects Fair	Excellent
Concurrent effects	Fair	Good	Excellent
Long term effects	Good	Fair	Excellent

**References:**

1. Chen, JK. Chinese Medical Herbology and Phamacology\_Portland. 2004.
2. Chang LC, Wu CL, Liu CW, et al. Preparation, characterization and cytotoxicity evaluation of tanshinone IIA nanoemulsions. J Biomed Nanotechnol. 2011 Aug;7(4):558-67.
3. Yan Z, Zhu ZL, Wang HQ, et al. Pharmacokinetics of panaxatrol disuccinate sodium, a novel anti-cancer drug from Panax notoginseng, in healthy volunteers and patients with advanced solid tumors. Acta Pharmacol Sin. 2010 Nov;31(11):1515-22.
4. Zhong ZG, Zhong WY, Zhang FF, et al. Research on the Extracts of Chinese and Vietnamese Teng Li Gen Anticancers in Vitro. Jurnal of Matriel Medica. 2005,28(3): 215—218.
5. Han ZY. Clinical observation on Guipi decoction on cancer chemotherapy with anemia and increase quality of life. Clinical Journal of Chinese Medicine.2010,02,18.
6. Li PW. Clinical Observation on Inhibitory Effect of Liu Wei Di Huang Pill on Serious Esophageal Epithelium Proliferation, Report of 211 Cases. Chinese Journal of Integrated Traditional and Western Medicine. 2007, 05
7. Taixiang W, Munro AJ, Guanjian L. Chinese medical herbs for chemotherapy side effects in

colorectal cancer patients. Cochrane Database Syst Rev. 2005 Jan 25;(1):CD004540.

8. Johnston MF, Ortiz Sanchez E, Vujanovic NL, et al. Acupuncture May Stimulate Anticancer Immunity via Activation of Natural Killer Cells. Evid Based Complement Alternat Med. 2011;481625.