



Efficacy Of Danshen Formulae For Supporting Cancer Treatment

WHAT IS DANSHEN & TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE?

Traditional Chinese medicine is a complex and holistic system which addresses overall health and wellbeing, rather than focusing on individual ailments as isolated incidents. It involves the use of therapeutic techniques such as acupuncture, cupping and herbal medicine to restore the body's inner balance and promote a flow of qi, or vital energy, through the body. Danshen is one such herb that has been used in traditional Chinese medicine for over 2000 years, either on its own or alongside other herbs.

Our Purpose

Our purpose is to be a global facilitator of health and wellness through access, education and advancement of Traditional & Complementary Medicine (T&CM). The World Health Organization (WHO) advises that lifestyle-related diseases (or non-communicable diseases) are responsible for more than 70% of deaths worldwide each year.

Knowledge represents empowerment. By sharing this evidence-based, peer-reviewed research, we aim to support everyday people to take ownership of their wellness, by making informed decisions and choices in conjunction with their health professional.

How This Study Could Help Support Your Cancer Treatment

In 2018, cancer was [estimated by the WHO to be responsible for one in six of all deaths](#) worldwide, making it second only to cardiovascular disease as a leading cause of mortality. This review explores the benefits of Danshen formulae, which are herbal preparations used in traditional Chinese medicine, for the treatment of cancer, and is titled:

DANSHEN FORMULAE FOR CANCER: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW AND META-ANALYSIS OF HIGH-QUALITY RANDOMIZED CONTROLLED TRIALS.

You can read the full study here: <https://www.hindawi.com/journals/ecam/2019/2310639/>



Why Is This Study Important?

Although there are many ways of treating and managing cancer, there is still no outright cure. Side effects are among the greatest problems of cancer treatment using conventional methods such as chemotherapy and radiation treatment: these include damage to healthy cells, blood toxicity and other complications.

The side effects of treatment weaken the body and add to the difficulty of fighting the cancer itself. This is why researchers are looking for ways to make conventional treatments more effective, as well as seeking ways to reduce the side effects and support the body's natural healing abilities.

What Does This Mean For My Wellness?

Only one of the studies reviewed involved using Danshen formulae alone for the treatment of cancer; the other 12 involved Danshen in combination with surgery, chemotherapy and/or radiotherapy. For people undergoing conventional treatment for cancer, this review suggests Danshen formulae may offer “statistically significant benefits” for improving the effectiveness of treatment, while also reducing side effects.

One of the strengths of this review was that it focused on clinical studies, and excluded animal studies and laboratory experiments. Previous lab-based research was quoted by the authors to explain how active ingredients in the formulae kill cancer cells and inhibit the spread of cancer to other parts of the body, but this was not included as part of the review. In other words, all the results of this study were obtained from human patients undergoing treatment for cancer in real-life settings.

For people unfamiliar with the terms used to describe cancer treatment, a [five-year survival rate](#) might seem like a grim statistic. However, considering the unpredictable and recurrent nature of cancer, an improvement in five-year survival rate is a good indication of an effective treatment.



How Does This Relate To Traditional Chinese Medicine?

The Danshen preparations investigated in this review were mainly made up of nine herbs used in TCM remedies, the key ingredient being Danshen root (*Salvia miltiorrhiza*). Besides its potential benefits for supporting cancer treatment, Danshen root is reported to reduce inflammation. This may allow it to help fight infection and liver injury that might take place during cancer treatment.

In 2019, researchers affiliated with Shandong University in China published a systematic review and meta-analysis of 13 studies involving 1045 participants, examining whether Danshen formulae could improve the effects of conventional treatment on leukaemia, and various types of cancer such as those of the lung, liver, breast, colon and stomach.

The formulations used in the 13 articles reviewed by the researchers also included additional herbs which varied from study to study. Due to the varying composition of the different formulae, the researchers noted that the review did not reveal which of the ingredients had the most powerful anti-cancer properties, and recommended further research to investigate this in detail.

Key Findings About Efficacy of Danshen Formulae for Supporting Cancer Treatment

- The evidence suggests “Danshen formulae provide statistically significant benefits” in improving the response of patients to cancer treatment, and is potentially effective alongside conventional treatment
- The findings also suggest that Danshen formulae may improve the patient survival rate after one, three and five years.
- Danshen formulae were reported to significantly reduce side effects of chemotherapy and radiotherapy.
- The authors noted that Danshen formulae may be effective in the treatment of leukaemia and liver cancer, but “did not show obvious beneficial effects” for lung cancer or gastric cancer.

Disclaimer: The above does not constitute medical advice, and as with any exercise or wellness program, please consult your medical professional before taking Danshen formulae or any other kind of herbal medication.

[Evidence-Based Complementary and Alternative Medicine](#) seeks to apply scientific rigor to the study of complementary and alternative medicine, emphasizing on health outcome, while documenting biological mechanisms of action.

Quoted from journal description

References

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