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Use of saengkan-hwan for treatment of elevated hepatic function biomarker levels in musculoskeletal disease inpatients

Me-riong Kim

Jaseng Spine and Joint Research Institute, Republic of Korea

Background: For centuries, various herbs have been used as natural remedies for prevention and/or treatment of liver diseases in traditional and complementary medicine. The proportion of patients seeking CAM practitioners who prescribe herbal medicine or Korean medicine doctors is especially high in musculoskeletal diseases. The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of Saengkan-hwan (SKH), an herbal extract mixture which consists of *Panax notoginseng*, *Curcuma longa*, and *Pharbitis nil*, on liver function biomarkers in patients at risk of liver injury admitted for musculoskeletal diseases.

Materials and Methods: The medical records of inpatients hospitalized due to spinal diseases at 6 locations of Jaseng Hospital of Korean Medicine between August, 2007 and June, 2014, a) prescribed with Saengkan-hwan for liver function test abnormalities or liver related comorbidities and b) with at least 2 liver function tests taken before and after commencement of Saengkan-hwan treatment were retrieved and reviewed retrospectively. The statistical significance before and after Saengkan-hwan intake was evaluated using paired t-test, with results expressed as the number of patients who recovered to within normal range.

Results: The mean age of the 247 patients included in this study was 43.8 ± 11.4 years and average length of hospital stay was 13.5 ± 8.2 days. The proportion of males was higher with 171 male patients (69.2%). After Saengkan-hwan treatment, serum gamma-glutamyltransferase (GGT), t-bilirubin, albumin, t-protein, aspartate aminotransferase (AST), alanine aminotransferase (ALT), and aluminum phosphide (ALP) activities significantly decreased 34.1 ± 73 , 0.11 ± 0.3 , 0.06 ± 0.3 , 0.11 ± 0.5 , 13.4 ± 42.3 , 16.9 ± 61.7 , and 7.7 ± 32.9 , respectively (all, $p < 0.05$). The percentage of patients who returned to within normal range was 32.2% for GGT(29/90), 88.2% for t-bilirubin(15/17), 48% for albumin(12/25), 75% for t-protein(9/12), 57.4% for AST(85/148), 25.3% for ALT(56/221), and 8% for ALP(6/76).

Conclusions: These results suggest that Saengkan-hwan has hepatoprotective effects in musculoskeletal disease patients at risk of liver injury.

Biography

Me-riong Kim received her KMD from Kyunghee University School of Korean Medicine in 2010 and completed her residency in Korean medicine rehabilitation at Jaseng Hospital of Korean medicine (2011-2013). She is trained in traditional Korean herbal medicine, acupuncture, pharmacopuncture, and spinal manipulation. Her main area of interest in research is pain management and integrative medicine. Currently she is associated with Jaseng Spine and Joint Research Institute, Jaseng Medical Foundation, Seoul, Republic of Korea

theodorian@naver.com