

Reporting the Effectiveness of the Agreed Traditional Chinese Medicines' Economic Assessments

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Introduction

Traditional medicine (TM) is an essential and frequently underappreciated component of health services because of its long history of use in health maintenance, disease prevention and disease treatment, particularly for chronic diseases. Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) has become a common type of primary health intervention in China due to its numerous benefits. The theoretical foundation for TCM, which focuses on treating a disease's cause rather than its symptoms, are the concepts and theories of Holism of Human Beings and the Universe, Yin-Yang, Five Elements, Mutual Generation and Restriction, Concept of Holism and Syndrome Differentiation and Treatment. Due to widespread belief that it is both natural and inexpensive, demand for this type of therapy is rising worldwide in both developed and developing nations. China, the birthplace of TCM, saw 907 million TCM visits in 2009. 13.6 million (16%) TCM inpatients were found among all institutions surveyed in a national survey, indicating that TCM practice has been adequately incorporated into the Chinese national health care system.

Description

Economic evaluations aim to direct choices by estimating the cost-effectiveness trade-off of two or more interventions. Cost-utility analysis (CUA), cost-effectiveness analysis (CEA), cost-benefit analysis (CBA) and cost-minimization analysis (CMA) are the four most prevalent types of economic analyses. In the process of allocating healthcare resources like health policy and medical insurance reimbursements, economic evaluations are increasingly regarded as an essential component. They are widely used in the evaluation of diagnostics, treatment interventions, care and rehabilitation around the world. TCM's priority setting and reimbursement decision-making will also be improved by the precise and trustworthy evidence from an economic evaluation [1].

Contrary to Western medicine's standard disease-targeted approach, TCM has developed over time on the basis of empirical knowledge and a belief in the use of a holistic approach to individual treatment based on the concept of "Syndrome Differentiation." Due to the unique characteristics of TCM, such as individualization and holism, it is more challenging to evaluate the safety, efficacy and cost-effectiveness of TCM treatments in comparison to Western Medicine protocols. In addition, academics have yet to agree on how to evaluate the health economics of TCM. Since pharmacists and clinicians conducted the majority of TCM pharmacoeconomic studies, the pharmacoeconomic study suffers from a lack of connection between actual clinical practice and its quality and usability [2].

Economic evaluation has been increasingly incorporated into the

reimbursement decision-making process over the past few decades. In a number of nations around the world, it has gradually become one of the most important factors in determining whether a drug or health technology can be included on the reimbursement list. Evidence and methods for HTA, also known as pharmacoeconomic evaluation, are now included in China's National Reimbursement Drug List (NRDL) update since 2017. The National Healthcare Security Administration enrolled 59 cataloged TCM for renewal in NRDL (2020 version) in 2020 through negotiations regarding economic evaluation and budget impact analysis. Because poor reporting may limit the usefulness of economic evidence in forming and guiding reimbursement decisions, it is worthwhile to evaluate the TCM economic evidence in order to improve health decision-making [3].

The Consolidated Health Economic Reporting Standards (CHEERS) statement was released in 2013 to improve and optimize health economic evaluation reporting. Cheers has been recommended by numerous journals. The very minimum amount of information that ought to be included for each aspect of the publication is suggested by the final 24 items of the CHEERS checklist. Even though this reporting guideline has some limitations, the CHEERS statement is still widely used to evaluate the reporting quality of economic evaluations that focus on various treatment aspects like drugs, surgery, medical instruments and so on.

The reporting quality of TCM economic evaluations in China has not been adequately studied. This review, which is based on the CHEERS statement, aims to evaluate the published studies that looked at the cost-effectiveness of the chosen TCM in order to inform HTA analysts and policymakers, offer suggestions on how to improve the reporting quality of economic evaluations of TCM and support decision-making based on evidence. The pilot sample for this review was selected to be the negotiated TCM in NRDL (version 2020).

This study conducted the first-ever systematic review of publications on the economic evaluation of the negotiated TCM in NRDL (2020 version). The CHEERS statement states that the primary objective of this study was to assess the quality of current evidence that might be used to guide economic evaluations of TCM enrolled in NRDL. By revealing the current state of the TCM economic evaluation, evaluating the quality of potential evidence and informing HTA analysts and policymakers, we aimed to improve the reporting quality of TCM economic evaluations [4].

Based on the results of reporting quality, we discovered that the included economic evaluation publications had the lowest average scoring rates in the sections titled "Results" (35.53%) and "Other" (15.13%). The terms "Characterizing heterogeneity" and "Characterizing uncertainty" in the "Results" section could be responsible for it. In addition, the journals' prior emphasis on these requirements may have contributed to the low number of articles containing information about funding sources and conflicts of interest. In the "Methods" section, we found that only six articles, or 15.79 percent, provided a clear definition of the chosen study perspective. These articles could, in turn, determine the evaluation process, such as the study design, the analytical method and cost and effectiveness calculations, which are crucial to economic evaluations. In contrast, the average score in the "Title and Abstract" and "Introduction" sections was relatively high [5].

Conclusion

Both the quantity and quality of TCM's publications on economic

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evaluation in China increased. The TCM economic evaluations are still in their infancy and there is an immediate need to improve the quality of the reports. It could be the result of TCM and Western medicine's divergent ideas or research experiences. The reporting quality of TCM economic evaluations can be improved by adhering to reporting guidelines like CHEERS and instructing economic evaluation investigators.

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Conflict of Interest

No conflict of interest.

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