

The March 2020 Newsletter of The GP-TCM Research Association



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Special Highlights on COVID-19 from GP-TCM RA Members

1. COVID-19: An update on the epidemiological, clinical, preventive and therapeutic evidence and guidelines of integrative Chinese–Western medicine for the management of 2019 Novel Coronavirus Disease. *The American Journal of Chinese Medicine*. 2020. <https://doi.org/10.1142/S0192415X20500378>

As of 22 February 2020, more than 77662 cases of confirmed COVID-19 have been documented globally with over 2360 deaths. Common presentations of confirmed cases include fever, fatigue, dry cough, upper airway congestion, sputum production, shortness of breath, myalgia/arthralgia with lymphopenia, prolonged prothrombin time, elevated C-reactive protein, and elevated lactate dehydrogenase. The reported severe/critical case ratio is approximately 7–10% and median time to intensive care admission is 9.5–10.5 days with mortality of around 1–2% varied geographically. Similar to outbreaks of other newly identified virus, there is no proven regimen from conventional medicine and most reports managed the patients with lopinavir/ritonavir, ribavirin, beta-interferon, glucocorticoid and supportive treatment with remdesivir undergoing clinical trial. In China, Chinese medicine is proposed as a treatment option by national and provincial guidelines with substantial utilization. We reviewed the latest national and provincial clinical guidelines, retrospective cohort studies, and case series regarding the treatment of COVID-19 by add-on Chinese medicine. We have also reviewed the clinical evidence generated from SARS and H1N1 management with hypothesized mechanisms and latest in silico findings to identify candidate Chinese medicines for the consideration of possible trials and management. **Given the paucity of strongly evidence-based regimens, the available data suggest that Chinese medicine could be considered as an adjunctive therapeutic option in the management of COVID-19.**

(Corresponding author **Vivian Wong is the chairperson of GP-TCM RA Interest Group of Good Clinical Practice Guidelines**)

2. Can Chinese medicine be used for prevention of Corona Virus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)? A review of historical classics, research evidence and current prevention programs. *Chinese Journal of Integrative Medicine*. 2020 <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11655-020-3192-6>

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Since December 2019, an outbreak of corona virus disease 2019 (COVID-19) occurred in Wuhan, and rapidly spread to almost all parts of China. This was followed by prevention programs recommending Chinese medicine (CM) for the prevention. In order to provide evidence for CM recommendations, we reviewed ancient classics and human studies. Historical records on prevention and treatment of infections in CM classics, clinical evidence of CM on the prevention of severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) and H1N1 influenza, and CM prevention programs issued by health authorities in China since the COVID-19 outbreak were retrieved from different databases and websites till 12 February, 2020. Research evidence included data from clinical trials, cohort or other population studies using CM for preventing contagious respiratory virus diseases. The use of CM to prevent epidemics of infectious diseases was traced back to ancient Chinese practice cited in *Huangdi's Internal Classic (Huang Di Nei Jing)* where preventive effects were recorded. There were 3 studies using CM for prevention of SARS and 4 studies for H1N1 influenza. None of the participants who took CM contracted SARS in the 3 studies. The infection rate of H1N1 influenza in the CM group was significantly lower than the non-CM group (relative risk 0.36, 95% confidence interval 0.24–0.52; n=4). For prevention of COVID-19, 23 provinces in China issued CM programs. The main principles of CM use were to tonify qi to protect from external pathogens, disperse wind and discharge heat, and resolve dampness. The most frequently used herbs included astragali radix (*huangqi*), glycyrrhizae radix et rhizoma (*gancao*), saposnikoviae radix (*fangfeng*), atractylodis macrocephalae rhizoma (*baizhu*), lonicerae japonicae flos (*jinyinhua*), and forsythia fructus (*lianqiao*). **Based on historical records and human evidence of SARS and H1N1 influenza prevention, Chinese herbal formula could be an alternative approach for prevention of COVID-19 in high-risk population. Prospective, rigorous population studies are warranted to confirm the potential preventive effect of CM.**

(Corresponding author **Jian-ping Liu is the co-chairperson of GP-TCM RA Interest Group of Acupuncture-moxibustion and Meridians**)

Further Reading

1. **The COVID-19 belongs to plague in TCM with the etiology of epidemic factor exposure.** Details: TCM diagnosis and treatment protocol for COVID-19 (trial

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- version 7) (Bilingual) by the National Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine. <http://ghs.satcm.gov.cn/gongzuodongtai/2020-03-20/14089.html>
- SARS-CoV-2 is not a laboratory construct or a purposefully manipulated virus.** Details: The proximal origin of SARS-CoV-2. *Natural Medicine*. 2020. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41591-020-0820-9>
 - Chinese scientists suggested, on the basis of genetic analyses, that the scaly, ant-eating pangolin was the prime suspect. But scientists have now examined those data along with three other pangolin coronavirus genome studies released and say that although the animal is still a contender, the mystery is far from solved.** Details: Mystery deepens over animal source of coronavirus. *Nature*. 2020. <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-020-00548-w>
 - The psychological impact of quarantine is wide-ranging, substantial, and can be long lasting.** Details: The psychological impact of quarantine and how to reduce it: rapid review of the evidence. *The Lancet*. 2020. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(20\)30460-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(20)30460-8)
 - In most scenarios, highly effective contact tracing and case isolation is enough to control a new outbreak of COVID-19 within 3 months.** Details: Feasibility of controlling COVID-19 outbreaks by isolation of cases and contacts. *The Lancet Global Health*. 2020. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2214-109X\(20\)30074-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2214-109X(20)30074-7)

Media News on COVID-19

- 'Chinese solution': Melbourne's Chinese medicine stores sell out after Beijing spruiks COVID-19 benefits.** Details: <https://www.smh.com.au/national/chinese-solution-melbourne-s-chinese-medicine-stores-sell-out-after-beijing-spruiks-covid-19-benefits-20200317-p54b09.html>
- Traditional Chinese Medicine used in treating coronavirus patients.** Details: <https://news.cgtn.com/news/2020-02-15/Traditional-Chinese-Medicine-used-in-treating-coronavirus-patients-O62F3IXSTe/index.html>
- Differences between traditional Chinese medicine and western medicine in treating COVID-19.** Details: <https://news.cgtn.com/news/2020-03-01/How-TCM-and-western-medicine-differ-in-treating-COVID-19-OvNQN4Zaus/index.html>

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4. **China has sent a team of medical experts and aid to support Italy and Spain in their fight against coronavirus after Rome blasted the European Union for ignoring its pleas for help.** Details: <https://morningstaronline.co.uk/article/w/china-sends-medical-experts-to-support-italy-and-spain-fight-against-coronavirus>

Other Recommended Reading

1. **This critical review aims to explore and exploit applications of systems biology–driven omics methods in TCM against a diversity of diseases, toward the specific use of TCM to treat patients with different diseases. Such effort shall enhance the applicability of systems biology–driven omics strategies in deciphering the mechanisms by which TCM treats different diseases and may lead to the discovery of new therapeutic directions.** Details: Omics strategies decipher therapeutic discoveries of traditional Chinese medicine against different diseases at multiple layers molecular-level. *Pharmacological Research*. 2020. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.phrs.2020.104627>
2. **The (re-)discovery of artemisinin more than 50 years ago introduced a novel development in TCM: the commingling of Eastern and Western medicine, the appreciation of both systems. The need for more rigorous approaches, fulfilment of and agreement to current guidelines to achieve high-quality research are of utmost relevance. Thereby, ancient knowledge of herbal species and concoctions may serve as a possible treasure box rather than Pandora’s box.** Details: A critical examination of the main premises of Traditional Chinese Medicine. *Wiener klinische Wochenschrift (The Central European Journal of Medicine)*. 2020. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00508-020-01625-w>
3. **The International Classification of Diseases (ICD) coding tool of the WHO is an influential and essential part of disease diagnosis. For many clinicians and scientists, the revision of ICD-11 also brings a major problem in that it adds a chapter on Traditional Chinese Medicine.** Details: Globalization of traditional Chinese medicine: What are the issues for ensuring evidence-based diagnosis and therapy? *Journal of Internal Medicine*. 2019. <https://doi.org/10.1111/joim.12989>
4. **Administration of the Aidi injection and concomitant NP is beneficial to NSCLC.** Details: Clinical efficacy and safety of Aidi injection combination with vinorelbine and cisplatin for advanced non–small-cell lung carcinoma: A systematic review and meta-

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- analysis of 54 randomized controlled trials. *Pharmacological Research*. 2020. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.phrs.2020.104637>
5. **Tianzhi granule, a traditional herbal drug, showed the same benefits as donepezil in terms of cognition, global impression for patients with mild to moderate vascular dementia.** Details: Tianzhi granule improves cognition and BPSD of vascular dementia: a randomized controlled trial. *Journal of Translational Medicine*. 2020. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12967-020-02232-z>
 6. **Skin-patches of Xin Huang Pian appeared to be safe and efficacious for relieving joint symptoms in patients with acute gouty arthritis.** Details: Skin-patch of Xin Huang Pian on relieving joint symptoms in patients with acute gouty arthritis: A randomized, double-blind, active-controlled trial. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*. 2020. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jan.14338>
 7. **This perspective defines the current status of available models and the mechanistic understanding of DILI, and proposes our vision of a roadmap for the development of predictive preclinical models of human DILI.** Details: Managing the challenge of drug-induced liver injury: A roadmap for the development and deployment of preclinical predictive models. *Nature Reviews Drug Discovery*. 2020. <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41573-019-0048-x>
 8. **The relationship between the 4D folding of the genome and its function is an outstanding question in biology.** Details: Visualizing the genome in high resolution challenges our textbook understanding. *Nature Methods*. 2020. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41592-020-0758-3>
 9. **High-throughput screens have been widely used in drug discovery.** Details: High-throughput screening with transcriptomics. *Nature Methods*. 2020. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41592-020-0785-0>

Special Features

Ancient Chinese medicine unlocks new possibilities for cancer treatment. Yung-Chi Cheng, Henry Bronson Professor of Pharmacology, a leader in drug development for hepatitis B, cancer, and HIV, is developing the first botanical drug to treat cancer. Details: <https://news.yale.edu/2020/03/13/ancient-chinese-medicine-unlocks-new-possibilities-cancer-treatment>

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Invitation from the Official Journal of GP-TCM RA

For more information, please visit: <http://www.wjtcn.net/submitarticle.asp>

1. WJTCM Call for papers: Herbal Medicine Analysis and Quality Standards.

World Journal of Traditional Chinese Medicine (WJTCM)

The official journal of WFCMS and GP-TCM



Special Issue on
Herbal Medicine Analysis and Quality Standards

CALL FOR PAPERS



Guest Editor
Prof. De-an Guo



Guest Editor
Prof. Rudolf Bauer



Guest Editor
Prof. Ikhlas Khan

Qualitative and quantitative determination of the effective components together with other workable approaches in traditional Chinese medicines and other herbal medicines is the reasonable and effective comprehensive quality control method, which is the fundamental basis for their quality standard setting and thereby to guarantee the clinical efficacy and safety of herbal medicines at large.

We invite researchers home and abroad to contribute original research articles as well as reviews on the topic of herbal quality.

Potential topics include but are not limited to:

- Phytochemical analysis of complex herbal mixtures.
- Development of state of the art analytical methods.
- Tactics for herbal quality standard elaboration
- Metabolic analysis of herbal drugs and herbal finished products.
- Application of new quality control technology and methods in herbal industry.

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Authors can submit their manuscripts via the Manuscript System at <https://mc03.manuscriptcentral.com/wjtcn>.

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2. WJTCM Call for papers: Pharmacology and Toxicology of Herbal Medicine.



Special Issue on
Pharmacology and Toxicology of Herbal Medicine

CALL FOR PAPERS



Guest Editor
Prof. Hongxi Xu



Guest Editor
Prof. Xuanbin Wang



Guest Editor
Prof. Pulok Kumar Mukhrjee

The special issue on *Pharmacology and Toxicology of Herbal Medicine* focuses on the biological effects and mechanisms of herbal medicine. It has a broad scope, covering basic research to clinical studies regarding pharmacology and toxicology.

We cordially invite researchers and experts to contribute original research articles as well as reviews on pharmacology and toxicology of herbal medicine.

Potential topics include but are not limited to:

- Bioactive principles from herbal medicine,
- Biological, pharmacological activities and mechanisms of herbal medicine,
- Genomics, proteomics, metabolomics, pharmacoinformatics studies on herbal medicine,
- Toxicology of herbal medicine.

Authors can follow the author instructions and submit their manuscripts via the Manuscript System at:

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3. WJTCM Call for papers: Systems Biology and Metabolomics of Traditional Chinese Medicine



Special Issue on
Systems Biology and Metabolomics of Traditional Chinese Medicine

CALL FOR PAPERS



Guest Editor
Prof. Xi-jun Wang



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Traditional Chinese Medicines (TCMs) are evidenced to confer therapeutic actions by largely interacting with dysregulated multi-layers molecules that underlie diseases, which can be defined as the holistic characteristics of TCMs to treat different diseases.

The fact is that systems biology, and metabolomics have the robust-capacity to better understand the holistic characteristics by globally deciphering the complex interactions between TCMs and diseases associated with dysregulated molecules. Currently, they are widely used to address many key questions in TCMs involving chemical characterization, therapeutic efficacy, toxicology and metabolic features, etc.

We invite the scholars in the niches to contribute research articles, reviews, and perspectives to this special issue.

Potential topics include but are not limited to:

- metabolomics of TCMs
- multiple omics of TCMs
- network pharmacology of TCMs
- systems biology of TCMs

Authors can submit their manuscripts via the Manuscript System at <https://mc03.manuscriptcentral.com/wjtcmm>

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4. WJTCM Call for papers: Processing of Chinese Medicinal Materials (Zhongyao Paozhi)



Special Issue on
Processing of Chinese Medicinal Materials (Zhongyao Paozhi)

CALL FOR PAPERS



Guest Editor
Prof. Tu-lin Lu



Guest Editor
Prof. Zhi-ling Yu



Guest Editor
Prof. Yuan-shiun Chang

In traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) practice, one of the distinctive features is the use of processed Chinese medicinal materials (Yinpian). It is Zhongyao Paozhi, a unique pharmaceutical technique, that transforms raw Chinese medical materials into Yinpian. Zhongyao Paozhi plays a pivotal role in guaranteeing the clinical efficacy and safety of TCM therapies.

We invite researchers home and abroad to contribute original research articles as well as reviews on the topic of Zhongyao Paozhi.

Potential topics include but are not limited to:

- Scientific basis of Zhongyao Paozhi.
- Intelligentization of Zhongyao Paozhi.
- Techniques of Zhongyao Paozhi.
- Quality standards of adjuvant materials for Zhongyao Paozhi.
- Quality markers of Yinpian.
- Quality standards of Yinpian.

Authors can follow the author instructions and submit their manuscripts via the Manuscript System at:
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Antarctica Field Investigation Conducted by Prof Zhongzhen Zhao

Exploring *Wa Na Qi* and Protecting its Source

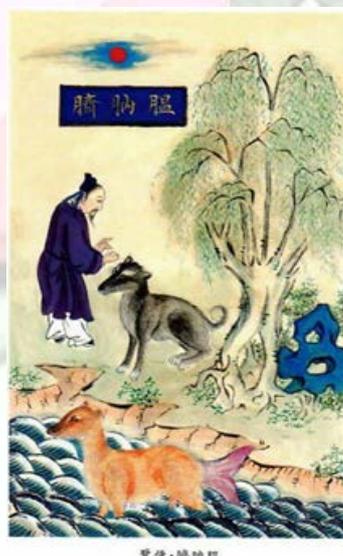


Wa Na Qi, or 肭脐, is traditionally a kidney-nourishing and yang-strengthening medicinal. Starting from the Song Dynasty, *Wa Na Qi* was discovered through the development of maritime trade. This medicinal was recognized and recorded in various *materia medica*.

*Bencao Pinhui
Jingyao* (1505 AD)
Picture Depicting
Wa Na Qi



*Buyi Leigong
Paozhi Bianlan*
(1591 AD)



We have arrived at several conclusions through a field investigation to Antarctica, *materia medica* literature research, and current market investigation.

Throughout history, *Wa Na Qi* (also known as 海狗肾, *haigou shen*) was more of a general concept than a specific product. However, the most common source was the penis of several different species of seals.

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After a field investigation in Antarctica, we understood that historically, *Wa Na Qi* probably originated from seals, including fur seals. This information matches the current medicinals available on the market.



Wa Na Qi found in the Hong Kong markets (Source: Fur Seals)

In past *materia medica*, the animal for *Wa Na Qi* has been drawn in black and white as well as full colour. The Song Dynasty *Materia Medica Bencao Tujing* and the Ming Dynasty *Materia Medica Bencao Pinhui Jingyao* both had illustrations that seemed very close to how fur seals look. In later *materia medica*, however, the illustrations for the animal were distorted and almost myth-like.

The name *Wa Na Qi* was adapted from a foreign word, and it is believed to sound like *walrus*, which has also been credited as a source for *Wa Na Qi*. In Chinese, *Wa Na* was a reference to the roundness of the walrus but was eventually dissociated to become a description of heaviness. Later, it became a name for fur seals.



Natural habitat in Antarctica (Weddell seal), Arctic seal, and seals atop floating ice

After conducting market investigations in Mainland China and Hong Kong, we found many imposter products. For example, *Huang Gou Shen* from dogs has been sold as *Wa Na Qi*. We recommend relevant Drug Inspection and Management authorities provide standards for authentication and other necessary protocols to combat market confusion.

Historically, humans have always gone through a process of discovering, utilizing, and protecting natural resources. New effective medicinals will always be discovered through clinical practice, and some varieties have been discontinued due to scarcity. The laws and regulations of every country must be abided, and international agreements of conversation such as CITES are to be followed as humans continue to explore natural resources (Reported by Dr Elizabeth Ren Qi).

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Monthly Chinese Materia Medica Highlights

Rugosa rose (*Rosa rugosa*, Rosaceae, 玫瑰, left) and Chinese rose (*Rosa chinensis*, Rosaceae, 月季, right)



The dried flower bud of rugosa rose (*rosae rugosae flos*) and the dried slightly bloomed flower of Chinese rose (*rosae chinensis flos*) are official Chinese medicinals recorded in Chinese Pharmacopoeia. Sweet and warm in properties, these two Chinese medicinals have similar functions and indications. Slightly bitter and richly aromatic, *rosae rugosae flos* primarily regulates qi and resolves constraint. By contrast, *rosae chinensis flos* primarily invigorates the blood and regulates menstruation.

Rugosa rose (native to China, Japan, Korea, and Far East of Russia) and Chinese rose (native to China) are popular ornamentals with many horticultural forms worldwide. The former is widely used in food and cosmetics industry as well. Both plants may look similar at first glance, but they can be clearly differentiated by their morphological features of hairs, prickles, leaflets, receptacles and the flower parts. The higher content and more constituents in the volatile oil of rugosa rose shall explain that “a rose by any other name would smell as sweet”.

玫瑰

出生即作爱相随
报香枝头去又回
若是丛中花有刺
寒冬未去待春归

月季

一年几度迎春开
岂是邻家送暖来
月下残香常伴客
旁花落尽始登台

The above colour photographs, English texts and Chinese poems are contributed by Prof **Hubiao Chen** (Hong Kong), Dr **Ping Guo** (Hong Kong) and Prof **Jiqing Liu** (Shenzhen), respectively. This column is advised by Prof **Zhongzhen Zhao** (Hong Kong).