

**Biostatistics statement:** Data are expressed as means  $\pm$  standard errors around the mean. For the analysis of the data's distribution, non-pairwise comparisons were performed using Student's t-test. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used in testing three or more variables for statistical significance. Nonlinear and linear regression analyses were utilized as appropriate. Differences were considered as significant at  $P < 0.05$ . Calculations were performed using IBM SPSS Statistics (IBM® SPSS® Statistics, Version 20.0). All the statistical methods used in this study have been carefully reviewed by Xin-Lin Chen, PhD, a certified biostatistician, from Guangzhou University of Chinese Medicine, Guangzhou, Guangdong, China.