

Dear editor,

Name of journal: World Journal of Meta-Analysis

ESPS Manuscript NO: 14681

Columns: Meta-Analysis

We would like to submit our manuscript entitled “Is the traditional Chinese medicine helpful for patients with hematologic malignant diseases? A meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials”, the ESPS Manuscript NO: 14681.

TCM is popular among the complementary and alternative medicine usage as palliative care for cancer patients. Albeit the treatment methods of malignant diseases progress quickly the general prognosis of this kind of diseases is poor. Many randomized controlled trials (RCTs) have shown that traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) as the adjuvant treatment improved the malignant hematologic diseases response and reduced the adverse effects (AEs) associated with chemotherapy. But most of the published studies were small sample sized and the results were not consensus. So we wrote the meta-analysis to evaluate the efficacy of TCM for the treatment of hematologic malignant diseases.

We included 11 RCTs involved 891 participants into our meta-analyses after extensively searching and strictly screening and evaluating. Our results showed TCM had a significantly higher overall response (OR) and complete response (CR) rates than the control (RR=1.17 (1.10, 1.25), $P<0.00001$; RR=1.24 (1.11, 1.37), $p<0.0001$, respectively). TCM also significantly decreased the non-hematologic AEs rate and had a trend to decrease the serious infection rate in our study. As hematologic malignant diseases always rely on chemotherapeutic treatment and chemotherapy usually have good response. The advantage of reducing serious AEs does make sense. Infection is the most common cause of death among hematologic malignances. Since we only included three studies it was not enough to show a statistically significance. Only three studies included in the survival rate analysis and there was no significant difference between the TCM and control arms. Therefore, TCM not only decreased the AEs rate but also improved the response rate. We recommend including TCM in the hematologic malignances treatment.

To our knowledge, this is the first meta-analysis on TCM for hematologic malignances. For most of our meta-analyses included studies were mainly focused on adult acute leukemia patients so we implicate more high quality RCTs on other hematologic malignant diseases and the survival, infection and hematologic AEs rates.

We confirm that this manuscript has not been or attempted to be published elsewhere. All authors approve the manuscript and agree with submission to the World Journal of Meta-Analysis. The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

We thank the reviewers for their valuable and constructive comments. We have carefully considered them and our replies are attached. All authors have read and approved the final revised version. We hope the manuscript can be accepted for publication in World Journal of Meta-Analysis.

The study was supported by the Six Peak Talent Program of Jiangsu Province 2009-47-D.

Response to reviewer 1

1- Authors should include an "abbreviation section"

Thank you! I have added this section in the revised manuscript.

2- Authors should clarify the terms "tradition or tradition*" in "Searching Method" section
Sorry. I searched the free word tradition and tradition*. I used the "tradition*" to search all the words begin with "tradition", for example, traditional.

3-It is seems that something is missed in this sentence "the TCM causes little side effects and economical" in "Response Rate of TCM" section
Sorry, I have revised it to "the TCM causes little side effects and it is economical"

3- Authors should check some words spelling such as: Introduction instead of Intruduction
Hematolog instead of hemotolog Asian instead of asian
Thank you very much! I have checked the spelling and revised the mistakes.

Response to reviewer 2

1-Please add a list of abbreviation in the beginning of your manuscript.

Thank you! I have added the abbreviation section in the revised manuscript.

2-In the discussion section: You should discuss in more details why your study failed to show that TCM increase the survival rate?

Thank you very much! I have revised the discussion section as your advice.

3-In the method section: It is important to judge & clarify the role of funnel plot in detecting publication bias.

Thank you! I have revised the section.

4-Some typographical mistakes need to be corrected; for example " intruduction " ,
"tradition or tradition",etc.

Thank you very much! I have checked the spelling and revised the mistakes.

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Best regards!

Yours sincerely,
Yanzhi Song, on behalf of all authors