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Traditional Japanese medicine (Kampo medicine) could be helpful for control of inflammatory bowel diseases: A case series

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Introduction: Inflammatory bowel diseases (IBD) are usually treated with drug therapy (aminosalicylates, corticosteroids, and immunosuppressant drugs) and surgery. However, some cases are refractory to these treatments or the patients continue to have repeated remissions and exacerbations. We used traditional Japanese medicine (Kampo medicine) for IBD along with/without conventional treatment. In this study, we report some cases with IBD in which Kampo therapy was able to suppress inflammation and relieve symptoms.

Case 1: A 42-year-old woman with ulcerative colitis refractory to conventional treatment. She came to our clinic complaining of mucous, bloody stool and fatigue. Soon after Hochuekkito was prescribed, the frequency of bloody stool decreased. In addition, endoscopic findings of her colon improved from moderate to mild 3 months after initiation of Kampo treatment.

Case 2: A 30-year-old man was diagnosed with Crohn's disease with bowel fistula. He was recommended to be admitted and undergo surgery but he refused. He came to our clinic to try Kampo treatment without conventional therapy. Daikenchuto and keihito were prescribed and his symptoms reduced gradually. His Kampo formulation was changed according to his symptoms, and he has had a long period of remission.

Conclusion: Combination therapy with conventional and Kampo medicine, or even Kampo medicine alone, can decrease the influence of exacerbating factors, maintain long periods of remission, and relieve symptoms during exacerbations of IBD. Kampo formulations were selected for each patient, and it is difficult to standardize. However, our results suggest that Kampo medicine could be helpful for the treatment of IBD.

Biography

Ryutaro Arita graduated from Keio University School of Medicine. He is a Board Certified Member of the Japanese Society of Internal Medicine, a Certified Physician of the Japan Society for Oriental Medicine, and a Certified Sommelier of the Japan Kampo Shoyaku Sommelier Association. He is a graduate student of Tohoku University School of Medicine, Department of Education and Support for Community Medicine and is conducting some clinical researches about Kampo treatment for dementia and analysis of traditional tongue diagnosis.

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