

A Short Communication on the Combination of Traditional Chinese Medicine and Western Medicine as Potential Treatment of COVID-19

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Abstract

The pandemic of COVID-19 has affected millions of people worldwide over the past three years, yet no effective treatment has been developed to cure the patients. This article published in Technology and Healthcare summarized the existing treatment options from both traditional Chinese medicine and Western medicine. Moreover, the author combined the two systems through analysis of molecular biology and the infection mechanism of the virus. While this innovative method may generate controversies, it provides direction for future developments in COVID-19 treatment and other incurable diseases.

Keywords: SARS-CoV-2; COVID-19; Therapy; Integrated medicine

About the Study

Since early 2020, the pandemic of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome Coronavirus-2 (SARS-CoV-2) has spread globally, resulting in millions of infections and deaths. After three years of development, even though multiple versions of vaccines that can prevent the infection of different variations of SARS-CoV-2 were developed, there is yet no promising medication or therapy that is effective in the treatment of COVID-19 patients. In the recent published paper "Assessment of the Potential Value of Combining Western Medicine Therapies with Traditional Chinese Medicine in the Treatment of COVID-19: Mechanistic Perspectives" in journal Technology and Healthcare, the author Zeng summarizes current treatment method for COVID-19 and proposes potential combinations of traditional Chinese medicine and Western medicine to work synergistically as therapy for COVID-19 patients [1].

Commonly used western medications

According to the author, the infection process starts from the combination of viral compartment (S protein) and human cell receptors. After attachment, the viral RNA enters the cell for replication, and the compartments of SARS-CoV-2 assemble in cell and the virus moves out of the cell through exocytosis [2]. The author uses this infection process as a guideline and lists the common medications that are utilized to target different steps of viral infection based on previous research. With the structure shown, the basic logic of treating COVID-19 can be understood easily, and such logic is also the methodology of the combination treatment in the later part of the paper. Aside from the viral infection process, the author also mentions about the treatments that target host response such as inhibiting cytokine storm and convalescent plasma therapy. It is reasonable and needed to shed light on immunology even it is not related to the

methods of combining Eastern and Western medicine since cytokine storm is one of the main causes of mortality in COVID-19 patients [3].

Traditional chinese medicine treatments

The author briefly introduces Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) since the readers are primarily from the Western world and may be unfamiliar with it. However, the introduction was not closely related to the later combination logic. The author reviews the common practice of TCM in treating COVID-19 and discusses the molecular view of using TCM that target different stages of viral infection, linking it with the method used by Western medicine, thus setting the stage for combination in the next part. The author also acknowledges the challenges posed by cultural differences that may lead to a low degree of acceptance of TCM in Western medical society, which explains the use of molecular biology as the basis for the proposed combination [4].

Proposal of combination

The core part of this study is the proposal of potential combinations of TCM and Western medicine to work synergistically to potentially treat COVID-19 patients. The author bridges the two systems through molecular analysis and categorizes the combinations based on whether they have the same or different molecular targets. By presenting a few successfully implemented therapies, the author demonstrates the feasibility of combining these systems from a molecular standpoint. Then, he proposed three new combinations based on the principle discussed before. These proposals transform the study from pure literature summary to a creative work that may contribute to the advancements of the field.

Conclusion

In summary, this study effectively summarizes common COVID-19 treatments and presents the basic logic behind combining Western and

Eastern treatments. It can serve as a clear guideline for readers seeking insights into potential COVID-19 cures. However, there are some limitations in this study. Firstly, the proposed combinations are based solely on their theoretical functions in targeting different steps of viral infection. The negative effects caused by possible chemical reaction of them mixing together remains unknown and are not considered in the discussion, which made them unfeasible for clinical test. Secondly, the molecular aspect of TCM used in combination is different from the diagnostic approach used by doctors of TCM. Even such method can be seen as an innovation, controversies may arise in both Eastern and Western medical societies. Although the urgency of finding a COVID-19 treatment has diminished after three years of the pandemic, integrated medicine can be applied to similar incurable diseases, and this paper provides a pathway for future exploration.

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