12. Skin Diseases

Reference

1. Objectives
To evaluate the efficacy of Seunggal-tang (升葛湯) powder extract for atopic dermatitis.

2. Design
Randomized controlled trial (RCT).

3. Setting
One Oriental hospital (Oriental Medicine Hospital of Dongeui University), Republic of Korea.

4. Participants
Thirty-nine patients (age range: 14 - 65 years) diagnosed with atopic dermatitis using the criteria of Hanifin and Rajka.

5. Intervention
Arm 1: Treatment with Seunggal-tang (升葛湯) extract was orally administered for 8 weeks, 3 times per day (n=13, male/female=8/5).
Arm 2: Treatment with placebo extract was orally administered for 8 weeks, 3 times per day (n=10, male/female=1/9).

6. Main outcome measures
1) Skin variables– oil content, transepidermal water loss (TEWL), skin water content, erythema, and melanoderma.
2) Self-developed clinical severity Index.
3) Blood variables- IgE level and mast cell count.

7. Main results
Sixteen subjects dropped out during the study. Skin water content around the Yintang (EX-HN3, 印堂) acupuncture point was significantly increased 8 weeks after treatment ($P=0.0168$). Treatment in Arm 1 reduced clinical severity (itchiness and sleep problems), and neither treatment significantly affected the blood variables.

8. Conclusions
Seunggal-tang (升葛湯) improves subjective symptoms.

9. Safety assessment in the article
Safety was confirmed by comparison of the results of blood tests and urine analysis before and after treatment.

10. Abstractor’s comments
This study is highly meaningful as it had a randomized, controlled design. However, as the drop-out rate was high, the reliability of the trial is decreased. Most studies on atopic dermatitis in Korea examine reactions to topical products, such as cosmetics, ointment, shampoo, etc. Therefore, this study is highly meaningful as it has a randomized, controlled design and evaluates the effect of oral herbal medicine on atopic dermatitis. I think that the high drop-out rate in this study illustrates the difficulty of conducting a clinical trial of a systemic herbal remedy. So, I think that this study is valuable not for its result but for its methods.

11. Abstractor and date
Nam HJ, 8 June 2010.