

Eight to one – with the power of plants against the virus

Asian medicinal plants have an antiviral impact

At present, a traditional medicinal plant formulation in China is celebrating much acclaimed successes against viral respiratory tract infections – modernised in application and composition and with an effectiveness proven by numerous studies, as recently re-published by the World Health Organisation (WHO).

Purely vegetable, vegan, very effective, highly sought after and so far only available in China

For twelve centuries, the Tujia ethnic group living in the mountains of southern China had relied on the treasure of medicinal plant to be found in the surrounding nature, since they were on their own when it came to health care. At his uncle's small rural pharmacy, Daxiong Xiang, today director of the pharmacy at the Xiangya Hospital, Central South University, realised the enormous potential of the orally transmitted formulation, which was said to extract the "dark substances" from a body after only a few hours. Yuexin Zhu, Jiren Pharmaceutical, invested in the research and development of the formulation and had it patented as "Shufeng Jiedu" (meaning "Soothing Wind") for the Chinese market already in 2009. With over 800 million TCM (traditional Chinese medicine) units sold annually, Anhui Jiren Pharmaceutical Co. has become one of the top addresses for TCM active ingredients and therapeutics. Traditional Chinese medicine evolved more than 5,000 years ago. Most important part of it: TCM herbal medicine – a natural and effective method to relieve and heal numerous ailments and diseases.



The origin of the powerful plants of Shufeng Jiedu: A country pharmacy in the high mountains near Sangzhi, Hunan province in southern China, where the formulation of the Tujia people had been preserved for decades.



The traditions of the Tujia only survived in the most remote areas. The Tujia minority didn't have a written culture, and the Shufeng Jiedu formulation was initially passed down from generation to generation only in oral form. (Picture: fortes, flickr)

Shufeng Jiedu – a modern, purely vegetable herbal formulation deriving from traditional Chinese medicine – effective against viral infections of the upper respiratory tract

During the SARS epidemic in 2003, patients in China were treated with traditional Chinese medicine in addition to Western medicine. A WHO report published in 2004 cited a controlled observational study that had ascertained significantly higher survival rates among patients who were treated with a combination of Western and Chinese medicine in comparison to a group that was exclusively treated with Western medicine. In China, TCM was successfully used against viral infections of the upper respiratory tract such as SARS, MERS, avian flu and common flu – always with success.

The TCM preparation Shufeng Jiedu is also currently being used successfully in China to contain the COVID-19 pandemic. By June 2020, 8 million packs were administered in Wuhan hospitals. The declining infection figures in China speak for themselves. On its website, the World Health Organisation has published an extensive list of scholarly literature on the effects, effectiveness, safety and lack of side effects of Shufeng Jiedu. A large body of clinical data and observations shows that the inclusion of specific TCM formulations in the treatment scheme has a positive impact on the prevention of the disease as well as on its progression; in addition, it can influence the recovery phase positively.

A comprehensive summary of the studies indicates that SFJDC (Shufeng Jiedu capsules) in the case of acute lung injuries effectively reduce inflammation and immunoregulatory activities, which are an important physical reaction to COVID-19. In three previous clinical trials, SFJDC have shown a promising effectiveness for the treatment of COVID-19.

Ten studies published by the WHO in August 2020 describe the effectiveness and safety of traditional Chinese medicine for the treatment of COVID-19, in particular Shufeng Jiedu capsules. Since the outbreak in Wuhan, traditional Chinese medicines have been used more and more in China and a series of results from clinical practice have shown that they play a pivotal role in treatment. As a result, numerous guidelines that reflect the consensual opinion of the experts recommend TCM for the treatment of COVID-19 – especially Shufeng Jiedu capsules (SFJDC), which are frequently used as an antiviral, antibacterial, anti-tumour and anti-inflammatory drug.

Specific mixtures of plant-based active ingredients beat single-ingredient medications, which usually cause side effects when taken in high doses

Owing to its ideal composition of 8 individual plant extracts, Shufeng Jiedu has the following effects: It provides for a general strengthening of the organism to stabilise the body's defences and slows down the propagation of the viral pathogens in human cells immensely. This reduces the typical symptoms of the disease in patients.

The power of the eight: Smartweed rootstock, forsythia fruits, dyer's weed root, Chinese hare's-ear root, patrinia herb, verbena, reed root, licorice root.

However, in Chinese medicine, formulations are not just a mixture of medicinal substances whose effects can simply be added up. Instead, they are complex formulations in which the active ingredients contained in them interact with one another and augment one another in their impact. From a TCM point of view, a formulation is only impactful when all substances contained are carefully harmonised to achieve a desired effect and avoid side effects. In contrast to classical therapy with chemically produced, nature-identical single substances, Chinese drug therapy can influence several signalling pathways in the body simultaneously, and the causes of complex diseases can be treated better due to synergistic effects.

Nearly all Chinese medicines are composed of several herbs that complement, support and amplify one another. This gives the formulation its special impact. Four important components make up a traditional Chinese formulation: Imperial herb, minister herb, helper herb and messenger herb. The imperial herb is the leading component. In Shufeng Jiedu, the imperial herb is the smartweed rootstock. The minister herb, the forsythia fruits, supports the imperial herb in the treatment of the main symptom; concurrently, it treats other existing characteristics of the disease. The helper herbs enhance the effect of the imperial and minister herb and also aid in reducing possible side effects. The herb referred to as messenger herb, namely the licorice root, harmonises the effects of the other healing herbs. Thus all herbs complement and support one another in their impact as part of the overall complex.

Coveted active ingredients now exclusively available in Europe

Together with extensive scientific studies conducted at international universities a German-Chinese joint venture have conducted continuous research to investigate and study Shufeng Jiedu in terms of its numerous active ingredients and have confirmed its modes of action as a modern TCM medicine. In China, Shufeng Jiedu has been approved as a drug for flu ailments since 2009 and is protected under patent law. In 2018, full approval was planned for Europe, but that may take several years. This is why the original preparation is not available in Europe due to lack of approval. In order to make the active ingredients accessible to the European market however, Prof. Hans Rausch, together with the manufacturer Anhui Jiren, decided to make the high-quality plant extracts available to German pharmacies for a mixture that is 98% analogous to the Chinese finished product. This was proven by Prof. Rausch in a phytoequivalence study. The production of Chinese herbal formulations in pharmacies has been common practice in Europe for decades, provided that the raw materials meet all necessary quality guidelines and have been approved by an expert.

According to the Western understanding of therapy, a great number of already known effective individual components are involved for the multiple effects, whose mechanisms of action and active ingredients have been sufficiently described by extensive scientific investigations. Through their targeted combination, the complex effects in the disease process can be explained.



CC08 – a Shufeng Jiedu analogue as a TCM Compactates in an herbal mixture produced in a German pharmacy with anti-inflammatory, immunomodulating and antiviral properties



Detailed illustration of a TCM Compactates – strongly pressed, dried plant extract with a very low proportion of auxiliary substances

High-quality plant extracts – in compact form, easy to prepare and easy to store

Compactates are a new form of administration. Developed in China more than 15 years ago, Compactates are new and unique in Europe. They consist of high-quality plant extracts with a precisely defined therapeutic drug/extract ratio. This ratio indicates the amount of plant extract of the plant ingredients in the Compactates, which corresponds exactly to the amount of extract that the patient would receive when the medicinal plants are decocted at home. This guarantees the comparability of dosage.

Premium quality from the outset

The wealth of experience of TCM that goes back thousands of years is combined with state-of-the-art, scientifically tested production processes. The result: TCM products are no longer offered as raw materials as in the past, which means that time-consuming decoction of the dried plants is no longer necessary and at the same time a contamination-free and bacteria-free product is guaranteed.

The completely new way of processing and the administration as TCM Compactates raise the application to a much higher level of quality and safety

The dried extracts of the medicinal plant that were produced in the traditional way are compressed into small, irregular grains. The advantage for users: Compactates are very water-soluble. Thus the preparation is far more convenient. Just stir in water – and you're done. In the pharmacy, the pharmacist precisely mixes the TCM Compactates according to the formulation and packs them in individual doses, so that they can be taken easily at any time with optimum dosage.

Another crucial advantage is that the concentration of herbal ingredients in the granulates used up till now is often low and not standardised; partially the ingredients were even contaminated. From a legal point of view, granulates are therefore no longer permitted as a drug in Europe.

TCM Compactates as a modern form of traditional Chinese medicine allow for an administration at a much higher level of quality and safety. They are therefore the only plant products that are classified by the authorities as legal active pharmaceutical ingredients.