



COVID-19 RESEARCH

## Clinical Trial: Chinese Herbal Formula Effective for COVID-19

Editorial Staff

*Lianhuaqingwen*, an herbal formula widely available and utilized in China due to its class A status, is effective and safe for resolving symptoms in COVID-19 patients according to a new [clinical trial](#).

### Study Parameters

Published in *Phytomedicine*, this prospective, multicenter, randomized, controlled trial recruited patients from 23 hospitals throughout mainland China. Nearly 300 patients received 12 total *lianhuaqingwen* capsules daily (four capsules, three times a day) for 14 days or usual treatment only (controls). Most patients in both groups also received antiviral treatment; e.g., oseltamivir. Capsules contained two herbal formulae (*Yin Qiao San* and *Ma Xing She Gan Tang*), “consisting of *Forsythia suspensa*, *Lonicera japonica*, *Ephedra sinica*, *Isatis indigotica*, *Pogostemon cablin*, *Rheum palmatum*, *Glycyrrhiza uralensis*, *Dryopteris crassirhizoma*, *Rhodiola crenulata*, *Houttuynia cordata*, *Prunus sibirica*, gypsum and 1-menthol.”

The majority of patients recruited for the study were at least 45 years of age, and both the treatment and control groups were similar with regard to symptoms, demographic characteristics, and concomitant treatment. Vital signs, lab tests, chest computed tomography (CT) and nucleic acid assays of SARS-CoV-2 were compared (after randomization vs. day 14) to assess treatment response.



## Key Findings

- The recovery rate was significantly higher in the treatment group (91.5 percent) than the control group (82.4 percent).
- Average time to symptom recovery was shorter in the treatment group (seven days) vs. the control group (10 days).
- For all three primary symptoms, recovery time was shorter in the treatment group vs. the control group (fever: two vs. three days; fatigue: three vs. six days; coughing: seven vs. 10 days).
- Chest computed tomographic (CT) improvements were significantly greater in the treatment group (83.8 percent vs. 64.1 percent in controls).
- No serious adverse events were reported; elevated alanine aminotransferase levels or aspartate aminotransferase levels were the most common lab findings.

*Source:* Hu K, et al. Efficacy and safety of Lianhuaqingwen capsules, a repurposed Chinese herb, in patients with coronavirus disease 2019: a multicenter, prospective, randomized controlled trial. *Phytomed*, 2020:153242.

*Editor's Note:* This is the latest in a series of articles published over the past several months on the potential benefits of TCM for treating COVID-19 patients. The information is intended to add to the evidence base with the hope that it will promote the acupuncture profession's value within public health and health care in general. However, in the current COVID-19 climate, Acupuncture Today is not suggesting acupuncturists should be treating patients who test positive for coronavirus or display any symptoms indicative of such - certainly not without transparent interaction with the patient's medical doctor and in accordance with public health agency guidelines regarding COVID-19 treatment as they evolve.

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