



HERBAL MEDICINE

TCM for Sepsis: The Power of *Xuebijing*

Editorial Staff

According to the World Health Organization's first [global report](#) on sepsis (2020), "When sepsis is not recognized early and managed promptly, it can lead to septic shock, multiple organ failure and death. ... Even sepsis survivors are not out of danger: only half will completely recover, the rest will either die within 1 year or be burdened by long-term disabilities." Ironically, infections acquired in health care settings (hospitals, intensive-care units, etc.) are a common cause of this life-threatening complication.

A new multicenter, randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled trial has found that a TCM herbal injection is effective at reducing sepsis-related mortality. Researchers compared *Xuebijing* injection vs. placebo among 1,817 patients (ages 18-75 years) at 45 intensive-care units across China. In all patients, sepsis was present for less than 48 hours at time of intervention.

Exclusion criteria when selecting patients for this study included sepsis for longer than 48 hours; lack of informed consent; severe primary disease including liver / kidney dysfunction; pregnant or breastfeeding; use of an immunosuppressant or organ transplant within previous six months; and participation in other clinical trials in previous 30 days.

Patients received intravenous infusion of either *Xuebijing* (100 mg mixed with 100 mg saline) or saline placebo (200 mg) every 12 hours for five days. Findings, published in *JAMA Internal Medicine*,¹ showed that the 28-day mortality rate was significantly lower in patients receiving *Xuebijing* compared to placebo (18.8% vs. 26.1%).

The study authors do not state the herbal ingredients in *Xuebijing* as used in the injection; however, it is generally known to consist of five primary herbs: *chi shao*, *chuan xiong*, *dan shen*, *hong hua*, and *dang gui*. The researchers also note that the herbal injection has been licensed and utilized in China for the treatment of sepsis and multiple organ dysfunction syndrome since 2004, raising the obvious question: When will other countries recognize its value?

References

1. "WHO Calls for Global Action on Sepsis – Cause of 1 in 5 Deaths Worldwide." World Health Organization, Sept. 8, 2020.
2. Effect of an herbal-based injection on 28-day mortality in patients with sepsis: The EXIT-SEP Randomized Clinical Trial. *JAMA Intern Med*, May 1, 2023 (online). [Read Here](#) (full text)

JULY 2023