



EVIDENCE / RESEARCH / SCIENCE

## A TCM Herbal Formula for MCI

Editorial Staff

According to 2020 U.S. census data, mild cognitive impairment (MCI) affects nearly 23% of the population, with the percentage expected to rise dramatically in the coming years as the baby-boomer population continues to age. Common MCI symptoms include “losing things often, forgetting to go to important events or appointments, and having more trouble coming up with words than other people of the same age.”<sup>1</sup> With MCI an increasingly common problem, and no current medications proven useful as treatment, results from a new study involving a TCM herbal formula are encouraging.

In the study, published in the peer-reviewed journal *Brain Science*, researchers divided 60 elderly patients with mild cognitive impairment into two groups for comparison. All cases came from Yueyang Hospital of Integrated Traditional Chinese Medicine and Western Medicine, Shanghai University of Traditional Chinese Medicine and Hongkou District, Shanghai.

The intervention group received an herbal formula daily (6 g of *Alpiniae Oxyphyllae fructus*, 6 g of *Nelumbinis plumula*, 5 g of Chinese yam, 10 g of *Poria cocos*, and 3 g of *jineijin*) for three months; while the control group received a vitamin E supplement (100 mg daily) for the same time period. (Previous research suggests vitamin E can slow the progression of MCI.)

Researchers assessed cognitive function using the Montreal Cognitive Assessment (MOCA) and Mini-Mental State Examination (MMSE); and body function using the Chinese Simplified Physical Performance Test (CMPPT), including stand static balance, sitting-up timing, squat timing, and six-meter walk timing. Grip strength and activities of daily living (ADL) were also assessed to gauge daily life performance before and after the intervention.

After three months taking the herbal formula or vitamin E supplement, the researchers concluded: “Our findings indicate that the herbal dietary formula can improve the grip strength, cognitive function, physical function, and ability of daily living in patients with MCI, and the efficacy is better than vitamin E.”

## References

1. "What Is Mild Cognitive Impairment?" [Alzheimers.gov](https://www.alzheimers.gov).
2. Xu X, Shi D, Chen Y, et al. The effects of traditional Chinese herbal dietary formula on the ability of daily life and physical function in elderly patients with mild cognitive impairment. *Brain Sci*, 2024;14(4):333. [Free full text available here](#).

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