Dang Gui Liu Huang Tang (Angelica Six Yellow Decoction) in the treatment of 60 cases of night sweats from malignant lymphoma

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Malignant Lymphoma is a cancer of the lymphatic tissues and is often accompanied by night sweats. As a matter of fact, night sweats are used as a prognostic factor for malignant lymphoma. If night sweats are present, the prognosis is not very favorable and the disease condition seems to be relatively severe. Between 1998 and June 2000, the authors of this article used Dang Gui Liu Huang Tang (Angelica Six Yellow Decoction) with modifications to treat the night sweats in malignant lymphoma patients. As the report below shows, the results were good.

Cohort description

Out of the 60 patients, 42 were male and 18 were female. Their age ranged from 14 to 71 years with an average of 42. The clinical history, current bodily symptoms and granular cells or tissue analysis showed true type malignant lymphoma. A total of 18 cases suffered from Hodgkin’s disease and the rest, 42 cases, suffered from non-Hodgkin’s disease.

Treatment method

In the treatment of all the cases, Dang Gui Liu Huang Tang was employed. It contained the following medicinals: Radix Angelicae Sinensis (Dang Gui), unprepared Radix Rehmanniae (Sheng Di), cooked Radix Rehmanniae (Shu Di), Radix Scutellariae Baicalensis (Huang Qin), 12g each, Cortex Phellodendri (Huang Bai), Rhizoma Coptidis (Huang Lian), 9g each, Radix Astragali Membranacei (Huang Qi), 30g, Fructus Zizyphi Jujubae (Hong Zao), 20g. For accompanying fever, 20g of Gypsum (Shi Gao) were added. One ji, prepared into a 200mL water decoction, was taken daily in two doses for seven consecutive days.

Treatment results

Out of the 60 cases, 32 cases were cured; this meant that all the symptoms dispersed. Twenty cases experienced a turn for the better; this meant that their night sweats were markedly reduced and their symptoms improved. Eight cases did not experience any results. Thus, the overall effective rate was 86.7%.

Representative cases history

The patient was a 62 year old male who had been suffering from swelling lumps on the left side of his neck accompanied by low-grade fever and night sweats. The swelling lump gradually increased in size and thus the patient came for diagnosis. Examination revealed a lump on the left neck of 3×5cm in size, soft in consistency, immovable, and not painful upon palpation. Biopsy of the swelling lump revealed the diagnosis of Hodgkin’s malignant lymphoma with large B-cells. Thereafter, chemotherapy combined with Chinese medicinals were administered. The tongue was red with scant fur and the pulse was fine and rapid. The pattern diagnosis was yin vacuity with fire effulgence and the treatment principle was to enrich yin and drain fire, secure the exterior and stop sweating. Dang Gui Liu Huang Tang with modifications was prescribed: Radix Astragali Membranacei (Huang Qi), 30g, Radix Angelicae Sinensis (Dang Gui), unprepared Radix Rehmanniae (Sheng Di), cooked Radix...
Rehmanniae (*Shu Di*), Radix Baicalensis Scutellariae (*Huang Qin*), 12g each, Cortex Phellodendri (*Huang Bai*), 9g, Rhizoma Coptidis (*Huang Lian*), 6g, (*Fu Xiao Mai*), 15g, Fructus Zizyphi Jujubae (*Hong Zao*), 20g. One ji was taken daily. After 4 ji, the sweating stopped.

Discussion

Modern medicine considers night sweats a result of an autonomic dysfunction disorder and there is no effective treatment available. *Dang Gui Liu Hui Tang* from the book *Lan Shi Mi Zang (Secrets of the Orchid Chamber)* and contains *Dang Gui*, *Sheng Di* and *Shu Di* to foster yin, nourish blood and bank the root in order to clear internal heat; these are the main ingredients. The three yellows (i.e., *Huang Bai*, *Huang Lian*, *Huang Qin*) drain fire and eliminate vexation, clear heat and harden yin. These are the deputy medicinals. Assisting is a high amount of *Huang Qi* to boost qi and secure the exterior so as to stop sweating. In malignant lymphoma patients, the tongue is often red and the pulse rapid. This observation points to the fact that these patients often suffer from a yin vacuity with fire effulgence. According to Chinese medical *bian zheng lun zhi*, this pattern discrimination has to be addressed by the treatment principles of enriching yin and draining fire, securing the root and stopping sweating. Thus, *Dang Gui Liu Huang Tang* is the correct formula. However, the mechanisms of how *Dang Gui Liu Huang Tang* affects malignant lymphoma patients as well as the multiple approaches for possibly achieving a future cure for patients suffering from this disease requires further research.