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RESEARCH ARTICLE

POPAVADEE - A NEW THAI TRADITIONAL MEDICINE HERBAL FORMULA FOR CONSTIPATION

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ABSTRACT

Due to the stresses of every day life and variable eating habits, constipation is a major complaint in and around big cities in Thailand. Through our research, we have found that skipping meals, routinely consuming fast foods with little nutrients, having insufficient amount of vegetables in daily diet, excess fat and chemical preservatives, artificial coloring, scents, and tastes, all contribute to developing constipation. Also, the combination of a lack of routine for meals and exercise, coupled with emotional and commotional stress contribute not only to constipation but also leads to more serious chronic diseases like, hypertension, diabetes, heart diseases, and cancer. Undoubtedly, these chronic diseases causes premature deaths and burdens societies. The objective of this study is to develop an effective herbal medicine formula base on the Thai Herbal Materia Medica to alleviate and cure constipation.

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INTRODUCTION

The fundamental belief of health care and medical treatment of Thai people was deeply connected with Thai Traditional Medicine. The drastic change of economics, social, and the rapid flow of religious cultures and modern medical treatment has influenced health care for the Thai people. Modernization has diverted people and their faith from local traditional wisdom. Modern medical treatments have provided better health care services to society, more than in the past, but anyhow, there are still dangerous diseases and illnesses that remain incurable and those that still have no treatment. Thai people are privileged with the right to choose and therefore many have sought other options for medical treatment where none is provided by modern medicine, such as Thai Traditional Medicine and Chinese Medicine. Interest in medicinal plants among the general public in Thailand has grown dramatically and there is increasing promotional support by governmental and non-governmental organization in researching medicinal plants commonly used in Thailand. A lot of these medicinal plants are utilized as foods in Thai cooking and also as medicine in primary health care.

MATERIALS AND METHODS USED

This is a qualitative research. The sample group included 30 key informants, 30 casual informants and 45 general Informants. the sampling group was selected by purposive sampling and the data was collected by documented, in-depth interviews, participants observation, including group discussions. Field research was carried out during December 2011 to June 2012. The data retrieved was categorized using descriptive analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Thai Traditional medicines uses the concept that our bodies are comprised of four elements: Soil, Water, Wind and Fire. When these

elements are either lacking or in excess, sickness or diseases occur. The use to herbals aims to restore balance of the four elements. The cause of constipation is mainly due to the wind element. There are four types of wind referred to as "Manlom":

- Manlom Athokamavata - wind inside the stomach that blows up through the throat
- Manlom Uthangkamavata - wind inside the stomach that blows down through the anal canal
- Manlom Gushisayavata - wind that blows inside the stomach and intestines
- Manlom Grathasayavata - wind that blows outside the stomach and intestine

Theoretical approach to Thai Traditional Medicine in treating illness differs from modern medicine in that modern medicine treats the physical illness, while Traditional Thai Medicine use a holistic approach. Treating in all cases, the physical body, the mind, and (society).

According to Thai Traditional Medicine, indications for constipation are as follows:

- Lack of exercise causing decreased intestinal movement
- Emotional or commotional stress resulting in restraint of colon pressing
- Taking medications containing iron, aluminum and calcium
- Consuming small quantity of water resulting in fecal hardening
- Overuse of laxatives, inhibits natural peristalsis
- Forgetting how to defecate normally

The treatment for constipation is divided into four categories:

- Bulk laxative - increases the quantity of fecal matter
- Fecal softener - increases moisture in the intestines
- Fecal emollient functioning by enamel fecal to be softening

- Intestinal Stimulant and Irritant - accelerate peristalsis and promote defecation

The following herbs are traditionally use for treating constipation:

- Senna or Cassia acutifolia dalile
- Golden Shower or Indian Laburnum
- Tamarind or Sampaloc
- Holy Basil or Ocimum Canum Sims
- Kilec or Cassia Siamea Lank
- Indian Hemp or Cambia
- Papaya
- Melon Tree

The new creative Thai Traditional Medicine formula using only 9 mixture of herbals in resolving constipation named "Popavadee" contains:

1. Alexandrian Senna
2. Ceylon Cinnamon
3. Chinese Rhubarb
4. Indian Gooseberry
5. Psyllium seeds
6. Terminalia bellerica roxb.
7. Terminalia citrina roxb.
8. Terminalia chibula retz.
9. Terminalia SP.

Preparation

- Put all herbs listed above in same ration in grinding machine and collect powder.
- Fill 250mg capsules with powder and close well

Dosage

- Children - take one capsule before sleep
- Adults - take 2 capsules before sleep

After 45 patients, composed of 23 men and 22 women between the ages of 25 to 45 took "Popavadee" for 5 days consecutively, all reported defecating normally without side effects. These 45 patients were followed for the next 30 days and reported the same results.

Conclusion

Popavadee a new Traditional Thai herbal formulation has been proven effective in this study for treating constipation without harmful side effects. The ingredients used in this formula are found in most Thai household kitchens and have been safely used for thousands of years in other countries like China and India.

Recommendation

Ministry of Health should recognise "popavadee" as an effective treatment for constipation without harmful side effects. The Thai Government should support the National Pharmaceutical Organization in producing "Popavadee to meet the need of the local population. Further research on Thai Traditional Medicine in treating other diseases must continue and receive full cooperation and support from the Thai Government and other concerned private entities. The Thai government should reduce imported medicines to lessen national public debts.

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