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Traditional Chinese Medicine Active Ingredient-Metal Based Anticancer Agents

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1. Introduction

Traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) possesses a rich and ancient history, tracing its roots back several thousand years. The practice of TCM, highly influenced by the development of Chinese culture, involves physical therapy using acupuncture, moxibustion (application of heat to the acupuncture point by burning a piece of the Chinese plant Artemisia moxa on the skin or the acupuncture needle), and chemical therapy. TCM natural products are isolated as decoctions of animal, mineral and herbal materials (Chan, 1995; Shibata, 1985). The objective of the system of TCM is on the patient rather than disease, which fundamentally intention to promote health and enhance the quality of life, with therapeutic strategies for treatment of specific disease or symptoms in holistic fashion. TCM represents an old Chinese philosophical thinking, where the human is considered the centre of the universe and acts as an antenna between celestial and earthly elements of the world. The world is a single unit and its movement affords yin and yang, the two main antithetic aspects. Moreover, Chinese believe that yin and yang are not absolute but relative. Consistent with the modern view of homeostasis, yin and yang are interchanged to meet the view that yang decline and yin rises? Or yang is raised to produce a decline of yin? The four bodily humors (qi, blood, moistue and essence) and internal organ systems (zang fu) play an important role in balancing the yin and yang in human body. Proper formation, maintenance and circulation of these energies are essential for health. When the two energies fall out of harmony, and the balance is broken, disease develops (Patwardhan et al., 2005). The physician takes into account this concept while treating patients. Drugs or herbs are used to correct this imbalance of yin-yang in the human body (Cheng, 2000; Gibert, 1998).

Different from TCM, western science and medicine are focused on the mechanism, which belongs to reductionism. Rather than addressing the overall well being of a patient, it is only the disease that is analyzed at the cellular, molecular, and pharmacological level. The history, philosophy, theory and practice of TCM can been seen in recent reviews (Liu, 1988), herein, we do not give unnecessary details.

Although medicinal herbs have played an important role in Western medicine from ancient to modern times, medicinal plants gradually lost their importance as synthetic pharmaceuticals advanced in Western countries during the 20th century. Currently, there is a revival of interest in bioactive natural products as chemical lead compounds for the generation of semi-synthetic derivatives, namely regression nature.


So, F. V.; Guthrie, N.; Chambers, A. F.; Moussa, M. and Carroll, K. K. (1996). Inhibition of human breast cancer cell proliferation and delay of mammary tumorigenesis by...


During the recent years, traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) has attracted the attention of researchers all over the world. It is looked upon not only as a bright pearl, but also a treasure house of ancient Chinese culture. Nowadays, TCM has become a subject area with high potential and the possibility for original innovation. This book titled Recent Advances in Theories and Practice of Chinese Medicine provides an authoritative and cutting-edge insight into TCM research, including its basic theories, diagnostic approach, current clinical applications, latest advances, and more. It discusses many often neglected important issues, such as the theory of TCM property, and how to carry out TCM research in the direction of TCM property theory using modern scientific technology. The authors of this book comprise an international group of recognized researchers who possess abundant clinical knowledge and research background due to their years of practicing TCM. Hopefully, this book will help our readers gain a deeper understanding of the unique characteristics of Chinese medicine.

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