

Stop the itch

Kate was only eight when she started developing red, scaly rashes on her legs and arms.

Doctors diagnosed her with eczema, and, for more than three years, tried to treat her condition with steroids. But each time Kate stopped her medication, her symptoms flared up and became worse.

By the time she sought help from Dr Tony Tang of Tangs Clinical Centre TCM, nearly a third of her legs was covered in bloody, crusty papules.

Atopic dermatitis, also known as eczema and atopic eczema, is an immune system-related skin condition that is very common in children but may occur at any age, Dr Tang explains.

The disease usually occurs in people who have an "atopic tendency" — they may develop any or all of three closely linked conditions such as atopic dermatitis, asthma and hay fever (allergic rhinitis).

These conditions often run within families, so a family history of asthma,

eczema or hay fever is particularly useful in diagnosing atopic dermatitis in infants.

As Kate's father had eczema, her case was one typical of chronic eczema patients, Dr Tang says.

ROAD TO RECOVERY

Tangs Clinical Centre TCM aims to treat autoimmune skin disorders such as eczema in a natural and safe way.

Dr Tang advised Kate to stop all her previous treatments, and administered a herbal treatment.

Kate's skin condition worsened initially, but each time her eczema flared up, the episode was less intense than the one before.

After 12 months of treatment at Tangs Clinical Centre TCM, she started experiencing less itchiness; 16 months later, her skin condition improved markedly and appeared more normal. Her eczema is now under control.

Call 6333-4066 or e-mail admin@tangscinical.com for more information.



Kate's affected skin has improved over the course of her 16-month treatment at Tangs Clinical Centre TCM. PHOTO: Tangs Clinical Centre TCM

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Summary of Therapies for Chronic Eczema



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Immunosuppressive drugs are the mainstay conventional therapy for eczema. Topically applied corticosteroids have been the first-line treatment since the late 1950s. While providing excellent short-term relief, prolonged usage of corticosteroid may have adverse side effects, including thinning of the skin, worsening of a pre-existing skin infection, changes in skin colour, acne and rosacea. Two recently approved TCI creams (topical calcineurin inhibitors) contain immunosuppressant agents which may result in side effects such as a burning sensation on the skin. Antibiotics are prescribed should there be bacterial infection. Systemic immunosuppressants, like phototherapy (PUBA, UVB), prednisolone, MTX, ciclosporin and azathioprine are used to improve treatment efficacy. However, it may also cause kidney and liver toxicity to develop. TCM formulas to suppress the immune system to manage symptoms of eczema commonly include herbs such as honeysuckle (金银花) [Lonicera], licorice (甘草) [Glycyrrhiza], threewingnut (雷公藤) [Triperygium], dittany bark (白鲜皮) [Dictamnus],

light yellow sophora root (苦参) [Sophora], cicada slough (蝉蜕) [Cryptotympana], selfheal (夏枯草) [Prunella] etc.

Dr. Tony Tang and his TCM clinic are currently applying a counter reversal application towards the cousins of the two conventional western and eastern immunosuppressive treatment. The clinic uses herbal ingredients such as Astragalus, Paeonia, Codonopsis, Saposhnikova etc. to help maintain the immune system at a balanced, normal and healthy stage. Although Eczema is not a life threatening disease, the symptoms associated with the condition require some time to manage. The right choice of treatment therapy is integral and a doctor should be consulted. In any recommended treatment, the patient's safety should be the top priority.

Clinical Research Publication:

1. Review of Treatment for Psoriasis, a Botanical Formula. Journal of Dermatology. 2005; 32(12): 940-945
2. A herbal medicine for psoriasis. European Journal of Dermatology. 2008; 18(3): 352-353
3. Atopic Dermatitis. Complementary Therapy. 2009;2(5):58-62
4. A 14-year-old girl with multiple, firm, dome-shaped eroded nodules and itching on the limbs. Dermatologic Therapy. 2010; 23(3): 299-301
5. A Nonimmunosuppressant Approach on Asia Psoriasis Subjects: 5-Year Followup and 11-Year Data Analysis. Dermatology Research and Practice. vol. 2012, Article ID 304172, 11 pages, 2012. doi: 10.1155/2012/304172
6. Review of the regulations for clinical research in herbal medicines in USA. Chin J Integr Med. 2014 Dec; 20(12): 883-93

Consultation Hours: 11am - 5pm, Tuesday - Saturday



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