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Quell the itch

Six years ago, Mary, 32, was stricken with a bad case of eczema and hives.

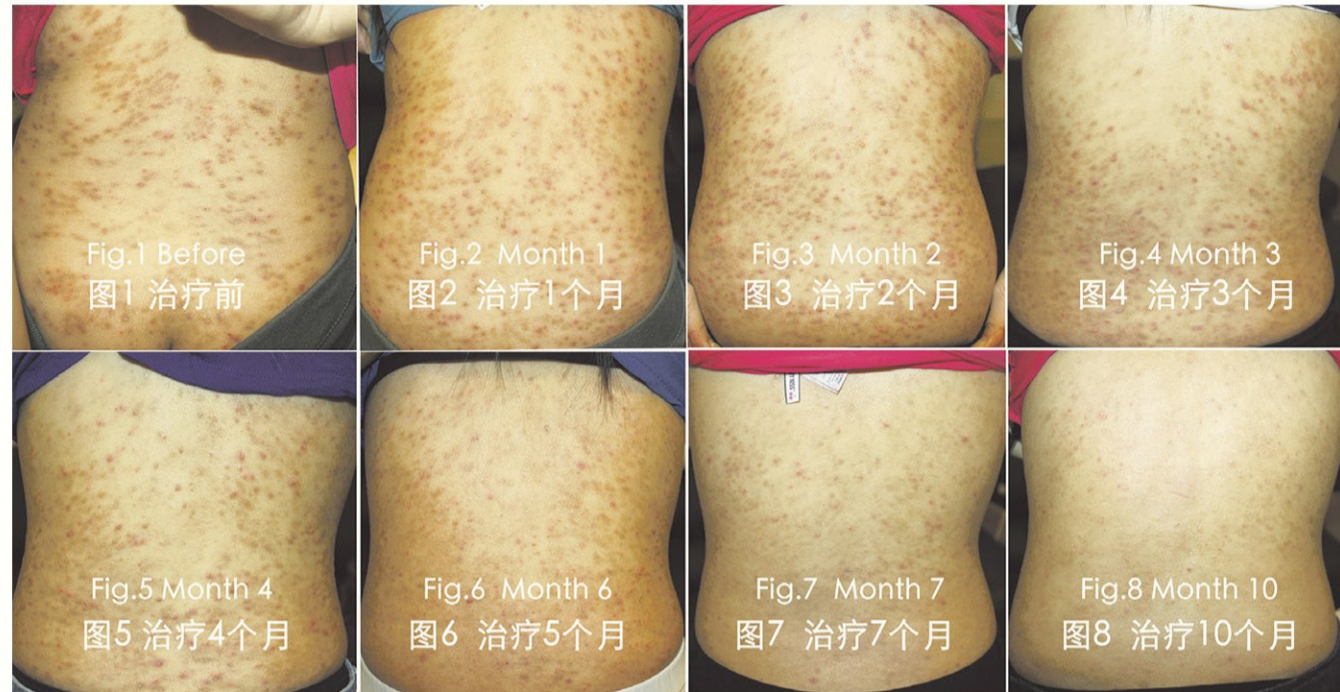
She even stopped eating mutton and seafood, hoping the itch would go away — but to no avail.

Finally, she started seeking treatment with Dr Tony Tang of Tangs Clinical Centre TCM.

Atopic dermatitis, also known as eczema and atopic eczema, is an immune system related skin condition that is common in children but may also affect adults, explains Dr Tang.

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).

Eczema in adults can be a serious condition that may result in chronic, red, thick lesions with severe itchiness.



Mary's skin condition has improved over months of treatment at Tangs Clinical Centre TCM. PHOTOS: TANGS Clinical Centre TCM

Tangs Clinical Centre TCM aims to relieve the discomfort caused by autoimmune skin problems such as eczema in a natural and safe way.

Initially, Mary's skin condition worsened when she started the herbal treatment, but each time her eczema

flared up, the symptoms would seem less intense than the one before.

After seven months of treatment at Tangs Clinical Centre TCM, Mary's itchiness started diminishing.

After 10 months of continued treatment, she felt that her skin

condition improved and appeared to normalise.

Since then, Mary's skin condition has seen improvement. The discomfort caused by her hives is gradually disappearing and her eczema is now more manageable.

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Summary of Therapies for Chronic Eczema

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



唐钰琦医师

Tony Tang Yuqi

FRSM (London)
MSc. Clinical Research (Edinburgh)
Dip. TCM (Singapore)
MBA (Singapore)
TCM Physician (S'pore Reg.)

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



TANGS CLINICAL CENTRE TCM PTE. LTD.

470 North Bridge Road #05-01 Bugis Cube Singapore 188735

Tel +65.6333.4066 Fax +65.6333.9654

www.tangscinical.com email: admin@tangscinical.com