



Managing skin conditions with TCM

Eczema is an inflammatory skin disease related to one's immune system. It affects the epidermis, which is the skin's outer layer.

Symptoms include red, thick lesions with a severe chronic itch.

The terms atopic dermatitis and eczema are often used interchangeably.

The diagnosis of eczema is generally clinical and traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) is an option for managing the condition.

At Tangs Clinical Centre TCM, symptoms of autoimmune skin disorders like eczema are managed in a natural and safe way.

Dealing with a chronic itch

A 20-year-old patient, who wished to be known only as Tommy, has been suffering from eczema for three years.

For more than eight years, it caused the skin of his arms and legs to thicken

due to chronic itch.

He also looked into his diet and eliminated seafood from his diet. But this did not help to banish the itch.

The extensive weeping and fissuring lesions developed on his lower legs.

He stopped applying steroids cream a year ago, as the lesions did not respond to steroids any more.

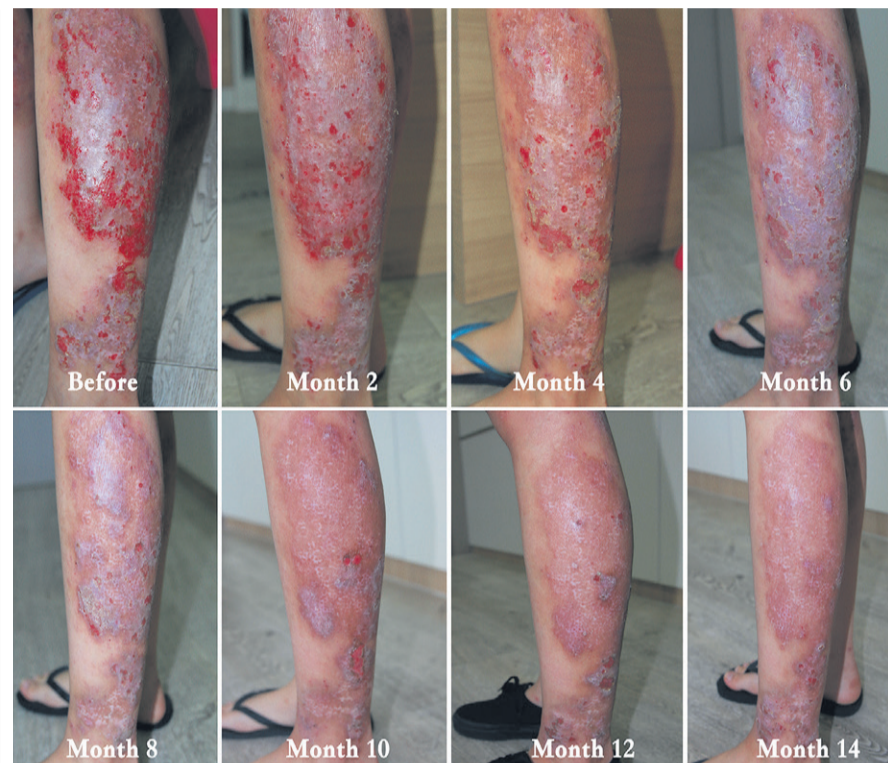
Therapy and relief

Tom eventually sought therapy from Dr Tony Tang at Tangs Clinical Centre TCM.

His skin condition initially worsened when he started the herbal treatment. But each subsequent flare-up became less intense.

Eight months after he began treatment, he experienced significantly less itchiness and the plaques on his palms and soles peeled off.

After 14 months of continual treatment, Tom's skin has a more normal appearance.



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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 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 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



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