

Title of Project: Chinese herbal medicine for local treatments related side effect in women with breast cancer: development of a clinical protocol

(FOR Code/s): 1104

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Location of Project: Campbelltown

Project Background

Breast cancer is the second leading cause of cancer deaths in women today. With the advances in medical knowledge, the survival rates for breast cancer have been improving for the past forty years; however the side effects of many conventional therapies in treating breast cancer are still harmful and distressing which decrease quality of life in patients and increase use of health care resources. In the case of surgically induced lymphoedema, there is no cure requiring daily management by compression and physical therapy. Skin reaction, radiodermatitis occurs nearly all patients undergo radiotherapy which may delay or interrupt the treatment and can produce spontaneous bleeding, ulceration and necrosis.

Many cancer patients or survivors use Chinese herbal medicine (CHM) for managing adverse effects from conventional therapies including lymphoedema and radiodermatitis.

This project is part of a series of research study in the field. There has been a Honours project exploring any evidence of effectiveness on use of CHM on these two conditions through a systematic literature review with meta-analysis, findings and results will become available soon. Some preliminary findings indicate a need of a clinical protocol development. It is anticipated findings of this project will inform design of a clinical trial in the nature as part of PhD study.

Aim of Study:

Design a clinical protocol on use of CHM for lymphoedema and radiodermatitis caused by local therapies in women with breast cancer

Methods

Literature review, in-depth review on a small cohort of CHM oncologists in China and CHM practitioners in Australia, working on patients with these conditions.

Ethics Application Requirements:

N/A

Key References:

Kremser, T., et al., Use of complementary therapies by Australian women with breast cancer. *The Breast*, 2008. 17(4): p. 387-394.