

Integrative Medicine Research

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Editorial

Who has super-digestive system?

1. Who has super-digestive system?

In modern society people are very concerned about the healthy diet. Is there any food or mixture of food for maintaining sound health and slim body shape without worrying about calories? This question does not have a simple answer. Lee et al., in this issue (pp. 39) searched many literatures and pointed out very interesting aspect of digestive function among specific types of Sasang Constitutional Medicine (SCM). In most literatures, Tae-Eum (TE) type people have very strong digestive function including good appetite and fast eating habit which make them vulnerable to obesity. On the other hand, So-Eum (SE) type people have a tendency to eat only a small amount of food with slow eating habits, therefore less likely to be obese. This review raised a fundamental question whether obesity is a result of strong appetite and eating amount rather than metabolic activity in TE type. Original Concept of SCM is imbalance between two important functions and TE type is defined as strong activity of anabolism and weak activity of catabolism¹. But in this review TE type is characterized as more uptake in food amount rather than imbalance in activity of metabolism. I think it should be differentiated between strong appetite and metabolic imbalance in diagnosis of SCM type in future studies. Also In addition, whether obesity is the main determinant factor or simple result of low catabolism in TE type should also be clarified. In any case weight control diet should be different in various SCM types. And I look forward to having an article to propose Constitutional type-based specific diet-formula for weight control in the near future.

2. Should you take medication with or without exercise? That is the question!

Exercise is always recommended by doctors for the improvement of one's health condition. For the healthy people exercise is a healthy habit but different things can be said to those who suffer from heart disease or circulatory disease with medication. Medications that patients take may complicate things further. Can exercise be recommended to most patients or should it be carefully adjusted to individual patient²? In this

issue, Dizon et al. (pp. 49) reviewed and discussed about these problems with regard to various medications and concluded that exercise is beneficial for the treatment of patients who take medications in general.

3. In search of ideal drugs for gastrointestinal (GI) motility disturbances

It is considered that GI motility is initiated from intestinal cell of Cajal and propagated through the intestine. Motility research is recent hot topic³ and its disturbance in intestine is quite common and one of the major causes of dyspepsia; however, there are not many drugs that increase the motility. Kim et al. (pp. 62) investigated the effect of methanol extracts of root of *Poncirus trifoliata* (L.) Raf. (PT) which is widely used in traditional medicine. They found that PT depolarizes the membrane potential and inhibit TRPM7 ion channel activity, which leads to increased pacemaker activity of Cajal cell. These findings could explain the underlying mechanism of PT and give scientific rationale of medicinal use.

4. Is Combinational drug therapy more effective and safer than single component drug?

The search for a more effective and safer drug for the treatment of ischemic heart and brain diseases is a major challenge in modern society. Antithrombotic compound is one of the main targets for better treatments. Searching for antithrombotic substances from natural herb is very promising; however, it is very difficult find the components that possess strong efficacy and low side-effect. Jin et al., in this issue (pp. 70) investigated an effective preparation from herbal medicine and found a combination of *Phyllostachis pubescens* leaf (PL) and *Mume fructus* (MF). This combination with a ratio of two to one was effective in antithrombotic activity. Combination therapy is becoming more and more important and provides promising targets for the new drug discovery. The cost of drug development is rising at an unprecedented pace without the increase in success rate. This innovation gap is causing many concerns for large pharmaceutical companies

that are facing patent cliffs. The recent stringent regulation for new drug approval may be the main cause; however the research and development process itself is called onto question. Today's target-centric approach is far from being the best model for new drug development⁴. Instead, formerly used physiology and phenotypic approach is resurfacing. Mixing the two methods may attenuate the high attrition rate.

The understanding of many diseases is very poor at current stages. Lateral thinking and the use of interdisciplinary (not just translational research) approach should be implemented.

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