

## The Origin of Chinese Medicine External Treatment

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**Abstract.** Purposes: To sum up the historical development process of Chinese herbal medicine external treatment. To analyze the characteristics of external treatment of Chinese medicine and its development model in the future. Methods: Through the literature review, analysis and summary. Conclusions: The external treatment of Chinese medicine has the features of high curative effect, simple method and little side-effect. It has a very good development prospect in the future.

### Introduction

Chinese medicine external treatment is a traditional Chinese medicine subject, both ancient and young. Chinese medicine external treatment as one of the effective route of administration of Chinese medicine has been well received by the people's welcome, also valued by professionals. With the gradual change of people's concept of disease prevention and treatment. New opportunities and challenges for the development of Chinese herbal medicine have been brought forward.

In recent years, the research of Chinese medicine external treatment has shown signs of vigorous development. However, there are many restrictions in the development of external treatment. We should focus on the external treatment of Chinese medicine, study the theoretical basis of external treatment, and solve the difficult problems of external treatment techniques and methods.

### The Origin of History of Chinese Medicine External Treatment History

External treatment of Chinese medicine is a method Used to treat diseases in China, that is, in addition to oral administration of Chinese medicine outside the treatment. External treatment has a long history, with a unique effect and rapid action. The term "external treatment" has appeared more than five thousand years ago. It can be said that Chinese medicine external treatment originated in the pre Qin period, grew up in Han and Tang Dynasties, innovated in Song and Yuan Dynasties and matured in the Ming and Qing Dynasties.

Xia Shang period is the budding period of external treatment of traditional Chinese medicine. The earliest record of external historical is *Shan Hai Jing*. The earliest extant ancient medical *Prescriptions, Fifty-two Diseases*, has recorded the sticking, steaming, washing collapse, impregnation, drops, nasal drops and other treatment methods. In addition, 173 external therapies have been recorded. Treatment methods and dosage forms have become diversified.

The spring and autumn period were the period of the formation of the theory of external use of Chinese Medicine. In the *Canon of Internal Medicine* sets "Internal diseases are treated by internal methods, external diseases are treated by external methods". It provides the basis for treatment theory and development of external

treatment. *Canon of Medicine* use four external treatment methods. It includes clinical application of steam bath, external application and paste dressing. So it shows that the external treatment system has been basically formed.

*Shanghan Zabing Lun* written by Zhang Zhongjing induced a large number of methods, theories and dosage forms of external use of Chinese Medicine. It covers different dosage forms more than 10, integrating the theory of the whole concept and the theory of dialectics into the external treatment. It enriches the clinical application of external treatment of Chinese Medicine. In the Jing and Yuan Dynasty, with the advent of various books of traditional Chinese Medicine. External treatment of Chinese medicine has also been rapid development, not only provide a rich theoretical basis for external governance of Chinese herbal medicine, the scope of external treatment has also been supplemented and developed.

In the Song Dynasty, with the rapid development of industry and commerce. This has promoted the development of traditional Chinese medicine. The external dosage forms of traditional Chinese medicine have been constantly enriched. The external treatment methods have been constantly innovating. And the mechanism of external treatment has gradually taken shape.

In the Ming and Qing Dynasties, there are a large number of medical scholar, monographs, theoretical system, scientific research and technology. *Compendium of Materia Medica* written by Lishi Zhen recorded a large number of prescriptions for external use. There are more than 30 kinds of dosage form, most of them are still used, and some of them have been improved. *Rhymed Discourse for Topical Remedies* recorded hundreds of external therapies, putting forward therapeutic method of Triple Warmer. The scope of treatment involves internal, external, gynecological, child, skin and other subjects. It is an epoch-making medical work, which symbolizes the maturity and perfection of the theory system of external treatment of Chinese Medicine [1].

Since the founding of the people's Republic of China, Chinese medical scholars have summarized the literatures about the external treatment of the past dynasties, and more than 10 monographs have been published. *The Clinical Edition of Contemporary Chinese Medicine for External Treatment* covers more than 500 kinds of external therapies. It made a clear division of the various diseases. At present, there are more and more researches on the external treatment of Chinese medicine. In clinical applications, the application of external treatment is expanding, involving various subjects. Nowadays, modern technology and external treatment of Chinese medicine has been combining constantly. It has greatly developed the techniques and methods of external treatment of Chinese Medicine. With the increase in the variety of external use and external treatment pathway, the types and applications of external dosage forms have been expanding. And the external treatment has also been significantly improved.

### **The Theoretical Basis of External Treatment of Chinese Medicine**

The theory of external treatment of Chinese medicine has been continuously developed and perfected. It absorbed the essence of various subjects of traditional Chinese medicine and formed its original theoretical system [2]. External treatment of Chinese herbal medicine includes the basic theory of traditional Chinese medicine, the theory of meridians and collaterals, the five elements of Chinese medicine theory, essence Qi theory, and modern medical theory [3].

## **Basic Theory of Chinese Medicine**

“External disease, external treatment. Internal disease, endotherapy.” Traditional Chinese medicine emphasizes that man is an organic whole. All parts of the human body are inseparable. The viscera, organs, meridians, forms and functions of the human body are interdependent and restrict each other [4]. Pathological changes in the internal organs of the human body are usually embodied by the outside of the human body. Such as heart problems, will cause the left arm acid, numb, pain. Even it can be from the chest pain to the back and shoulder. Therefore, we make use of the physiological and pathological connections between human organs, and achieve therapeutic effects by external characterization.

## **Internal Organs and Meridians Theory**

The basic theory of external therapy of Chinese medicine is mainly Zang Xiang and meridian theory. Internal Organs theory is centered on the five viscera. It connects and affects each other through internal Organs and meridians, and transmits the drugs to the required parts through the transmission of the channels and collaterals [5]. The internal organs theory covers many aspects of the human body and function, including the viscera and system, meridians, Qi blood body fluid and physical. Viscera are the main body of interconnection. Essential Qi and blood is the material base to maintain the function of viscera. Meridian is the passage of Qi and blood in human body, connecting with various organs. After years of research and clinical practice, Meridians and vessels, lymphatic vessels, nerve tissues are closely linked. Drugs act on meridians, acupoints, and through specific acupoints, skin, drugs, and then through the blood circulation to reach the lesion [6]. The most important thing is that the medicine is absorbed by acupoints. And it can enlarge the therapeutic effect of the medicine [7]. In addition, local treatment or stimulation can not only cure local diseases through the near treatment of acupoints, and can play the role of the point of the remote treatment. It through the channels and collaterals to correct the viscera, rise and fall of Qi and blood, to achieve the purpose of treatment of disease.

## **Muscle Region Theory**

Generally speaking, external treatment of Chinese medicine is to stimulate the meridians, acupoints, muscles, muscles and bones, skin, mucous membranes, and other parts of the body to achieve the purpose of disease prevention and treatment. Tendon is one of the five body constituents, and is closely related to the formation of the basic theory of viscera, meridian, Qi and blood [8]. Flaccidity syndrome, arthralgia, syncope are related with five body lesions. Different treatment methods were adopted according to the difference of the five body diseases. Meridian tendons are a connecting part of the twelve meridians. It is also the material base of the meridian qi and blood. Its function depends on the nourishment of meridians and qi blood. Therefore, the meridian tendons can become the intersection of syndrome differentiation and sign differentiation of Qi and blood [9].

At present, two points of views are put forward according to the anatomical location of the meridian tendons. One is that the meridian tendons are only associated with a single tissue. For example, the meridian tendons are seen as nerve tissue. Another is that the meridian tendons are able to interact with a variety of tissues. Some scholars have suggested that the meridian tendons are muscles (mostly tendons and ligaments) and the surrounding nerve tissue. Nowadays, Muscle region theory has been regarded as the bridge between meridian theory and external treatment theory of Chinese Medicine.

## **Modern Medical Theory**

Modern medicine holds that the external treatment of Chinese medicine covers the basis of anatomy, the mechanism of permeation and absorption of skin, and the theory of nerve conduction. At present, medicine has proved that human skin has the function of absorbing external substances. It can be absorbed by the three channels of the stratum corneum, hair follicle, sebaceous glands and mouth of sweat glands to transmit the efficacy of drugs. Drug molecules are mainly through the stratum corneum of human skin, into the interstitial cells, quickly diffuse into the blood and access to the whole body [10]. But based on the difference of tissue structure in different parts of human body, there is also the problem of the speed of absorption. Transdermal administration has the advantages of external application of Chinese medicine and Western medicine transdermal delivery, but also reduces the effect of long-term use of Chinese herbal medicine on the gastrointestinal tract [11]. Traditional Chinese medicine has many ways of transdermal administration, and its advantages are great. Transdermal delivery can rapidly penetrate the skin. And It would be absorbed into the blood circulation. It can also avoid the drug on the gastrointestinal tract and liver damage.

## **Present Situation, Existing Problems and Thinking of External Treatment of Chinese Herbal Medicine**

The external treatment of Chinese medicine has been widely applied in clinical departments [12]. External treatment is also increasingly integrated with modern technology. Laser, electromagnetic therapy, aerosol, iontophoresis and other techniques have been applied to external therapies. With the progress of science and technology, traditional Chinese medicine used in the treatment of dosage form is constantly improved and along with the emergence of new drug formulations. Since the Ministry of science and technology will be “Chinese medicine external characteristics therapy and external governance technology demonstration research column” as “11th Five-Year National Science and technology support plan” key project. It shows that the government has taken the external treatment of Chinese medicine into the important step of improving the health and health undertakings [13].

There are many problems in application, technology, security, standardization, and professionals. Chinese medicine contains many ingredients. Its composition is complex, and the content of various active ingredients is low. It has brought many difficulties to transdermal drug delivery [14]. In theory, the Chinese theory still follows the previous theoretical basis to leave. In the past 20 years, the research materials about Chinese medicine external treatment are mostly collected by folk prescription collection, ancient literature arrangement and clinical experience. It is rare to study the theory of external treatment of Chinese medicine [15]. In the long run, the absence of the theory of external treatment of Chinese medicine will definitely affect the development of Chinese Medicine.

## **Conclusions**

This article summarizes the history and methods of external treatment of Chinese herbal medicine. The external treatment of Chinese medicine has good curative effect on the disease, the method is simple and convenient, and the metabolism and the decomposition of the medicine are avoided, and the side effect is small, and the utility model can not cause dependence on the patients. External treatment of Chinese

medicine is a great challenge for the future development of Chinese medicine. We should not only improve the governance effect, but also to develop disease cure characteristics. In view of the present situation and future development of Chinese herbal medicine external treatment. We should first improve the theory of external treatment of Chinese medicine and study the mechanism of external treatment. we should standardize the evaluation criteria of clinical efficacy, formulate the technical standards of external treatment, establish and perfect the operation standard of Chinese medicine external Treatment technology and popularize it.

In a word, the study of the external treatment of Chinese medicine is the inevitable trend of the modernization of Chinese medicine. How to combine traditional Chinese medicine with modern medicine and modern technology for clinical and technical design is the key to the development of traditional Chinese medicine.

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