

TRADITIONAL THERAPY AND WESTERN MEDICINE FOR TREATING INSOMNIA

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ABSTRACT

Objective: The herbs that have been used in Vietnam since ancient times for many different uses but not everyone recognize its great value. The paper aims to discover the preferred medicinal plants and the reasons why patients choose them. Although Western medicines play an important role in treatment and bring immediate effect, however, to treat insomnia in the long term, natural herbs account for significant importance. The paper was conducted in early 2019 in different regions in South Vietnam to once again determine the role of medicinal plants use.

Methods: This paper is completed with the support of 100 respondents who are from some places of Ho Chi Minh city and are suffering from insomnia. With the form of direct interviews, some questions are designed to examine patients' opinions about the strategies that can to treat insomnia.

Results: The results showed that herbal treatment still plays a rather important role even though people tend to choose Western medications in busy days because this medications are less time consuming. The paper also mentions that the importance of herbs in the treatment of insomnia needs more attention.

Conclusion: In the current medical methods, traditional methods are being trusted and used by many people because this therapy brings many health benefits, helps patients treat their illnesses well as well as improve their health much better. Traditional remedies which are all derived from natural herbs are very good for health.

Keywords: Insomnia, Herbs, Traditional therapy, Western medicine.

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INTRODUCTION

Vietnam is a rich country in medicinal sources. This is an important condition for Vietnam to develop the pharmaceutical and traditional medicine industry [1]. According to the World Health Organization, 80% of the population in developing countries still relies on herbal medicines for health care. In the countries which have developed industries, one-fourth of all drugs listed in the form contain herbal ingredients. Nowadays, the search for natural active ingredients with high biological activity to make medicine is the trend of interest of scientists. Each year, Vietnam consumes about 50,000–60,000 tons of different kinds of pharmaceutical materials which are used in the processing of traditional medicine, pharmaceutical industry, or export materials. Vietnam's pharmaceutical consumption market is huge [2].

LITERATURE REVIEW

The quality of products made from domestic materials is still limited. In fact, there are a number of ways to treat insomnia including using herbs and some traditional therapies.

Treatment of insomnia by acupuncture method is applied very popular since ancient times according to traditional medicine, bringing high efficiency, simplicity, and safety [2]. Acupuncture is a traditional, simple, effective, and safe method of healing and transmitting [3]. It is applicable to all ages and is often applied to cases of chronic diseases and incurable diseases. One of the important findings is that over 75% of patients who suffered from insomnia have used combination of traditional therapies [1]. By acting directly on acupuncture points, the nervous system allows treatment of the disease directly from deep within without the use of drugs and without side effects [3].

Another study also assessed the impact of patient knowledge on making decisions about which herbs or treatments were most appropriate. The research of Kanda (1998) is also quite important since "Kampo

medicine" (herbal medicine) is especially useful for old patients and patients with "physical complications." The improvement is usually "mild and slow, but sometimes very drastic."

Since insomnia often occurs in subjects of working age and as a result, it gives the body no time to replenish the energy lost during the previous working day [4]. Insomnia has many unpredictable and annoying consequences in life. Therefore, insomnia patients often have to find all ways to recover sleep, improve quality of life [2]. In particular, according to statistics, most insomnia patients have used Western medicine even taking the drug last month or increase the high dose. However, the abuse of sleeping pills leads to unpredictable consequences for health [5].

Together with the advancement of science and especially in preparation technology, traditional medicine and herbs have gained a foothold in the treatment and support of the treatment of general diseases and insomnia in particular. These natural herbs help effectively help you sleep, reduce stress, and fatigue [6].

CONTENT OF RESEARCH

The most valuable rare and precious medicinal plants in Vietnam
Vietnam has many rare and valuable medicinal plants. Natural conditions in Vietnam are great potentials for developing many types of valuable medicinal plants, but people do not know the economic value and their uses, therefore, they still exploit indiscriminately and there is no plan for conservation and farming. Here are some rare and precious medicinal plants that bring the economic value to be preserved that we can refer to [7].

"Ngoc Linh" ginseng

In fact, the cure for insomnia with Western medicine has made many people concerned by its side effects. Therefore, since ancient times, the cure for sleeplessness from herbs including types such as "Ngoc Linh" ginseng, *Pasiflora foetida*, or embryo nelumbinis, has always been favored and circulated by people for generations.

Ngoc Linh ginseng is also called Vietnamese ginseng, K5 ginseng. It is not only precious in Vietnam but also is one of the most valuable ginseng species in the world. Ngoc Linh Ginseng is the 20th type of ginseng found in the world, only growing at an altitude of 1200 m or more, discovered in 1973 on Ngoc Linh Mountain (Kon Tum Province).

This is a perennial herbaceous plant, 40 cm–100 cm tall, with a fat root of 3.5 cm in diameter. It has five leaves which are 7–12 cm long (Fig. 1). Inflorescences are 25 cm long, 1.5–2 times longer than the length of petioles. Flowers are light green-yellow, flowers bloom 3–4 mm in diameter.

Fruit when ripe red, usually have a black spot on top of the fruit. The fruit has a slightly flat sphere of 7–10 mm wide and 4–6 mm wide.

The widespread use of medicinal plants is a habit of Vietnamese people and it is still preserved by some people to this day. Although modern Western style medicines and hospitals are available throughout Vietnam, health-care practices exist from generation to generation, from people to traditional clinics. However, maintaining this traditional form is not very focused, when the user demand is not high. For that reason, the effort to maintain and develop therapeutic knowledge in folklore is quite necessary [3].

Some areas in Vietnam still maintain traditional therapies including China town of Ho Chi Minh City, North Vietnam, and several cities. Traditional medicine hospitals and clinics are still considered an important component in the daily life of Vietnamese people [2]. In fact, the biological activity of many pharmaceuticals has been verified by reputable medical organizations. To promote the movement of keeping

traditional therapies, studies have been promoted and encouraged. One of the recent findings is the discovery of the “Ngoc Linh” ginseng.

Good sleep with *Stephania*

Rotundin in *Stephania* helps improve insomnia, especially in the case of restless sleep, reduced memory, depression, poor eating, thinning, and fatigue. By combining 8 g of *Stephania* with lotus seed, longan, and sour apple; each 10 g, respectively, patients should take this medication before sleeping 30 min and during the day (Fig. 2).

False ginseng – “god of medicine” for insomnia

False ginseng contains high content of saponin with more than 54 types of saponins – the main nutritious ingredient in this ginseng has many good effects for health, especially helps to sleep well. The ways to treat insomnia using false ginseng are rather simple. By mixing 5–10 g of false ginseng with hot water (90–100 degrees) for 2–4 min. False ginseng tea creates a relaxed and deep sleep (Fig. 3).

Valeriana – “the king of herbal remedies”

Valeriana officinalis is applied for good insomnia treatment which can be used safely for children. It contains many essential oils, valerenic acid. This plant prevents central nervous stress, helps restore brain inhibition process, reduces stimulation, and helps patients sleep deeper. Using *V. officinalis* for a long time is safe and does not cause side effects. Patients just use 10–15 g of *V. officinalis*, make it as tea and drink daily (Fig.4).

P. foetida

In fact, *P. foetida* has a very wonderful name with the meaning of “Happy Fairy,” that is, those who drink *P. foetida* tea will have a feeling



Fig. 1: The image of Ngoc Linh ginseng



Fig. 3: The image of false ginseng



Fig. 2: The image of *Stephania*



Fig. 4: The image of *valeriana officinalis*

of being lost in the fairy realm, not dreaming, waking up at midnight. It is commonly used in most of insomnia remedies of oriental medicine. Medicinal substances such as alkaloids, flavonoids, and saponins in *P. foetida* have a central nervous system effect against anxiety and help calm the mind and easily fall asleep (Fig. 5).

Young leaves of *P. foetida* are often used for daily cooking. By combining *P. foetida* (50 g) with other herbs such as *Erythrina orientalis* leaves (30 g), *Morus alba* leaf (10 g), and embryo nelumbinis (2 g), the patients could use this right dosage since it has a long-lasting effect.

RESEARCH METHODS AND RESULTS

Research method

In the form of online interviews and oral interviews held daily in some districts located in the outskirts of Ho Chi Minh City, traditional medicines and Western medicines are compared to clarify the useful effects of traditional oriental therapies. The interviewees were randomly selected, which means that if patients do not suffer from insomnia syndrome, they will not be interviewed in detail. Interviews are conducted using a simple, rigorous questionnaire to ensure all questions will be answered. In addition, some interviewees will also be interviewed directly through questioning. Three main questions related to pathology are addressed to find out the cause of the disease, their response to therapies, as well as finding some suitable solutions [7].

Research results

More than half of the respondents said that they enjoyed using traditional remedies made from plants. The study is mostly focused on the peasantry, the economically inferior, who do not dare to spend on redundant hospitals or they want to take advantage of available medicines. This also demonstrates the importance of herbal medicine in



Fig. 5: The image of passiflora foetida

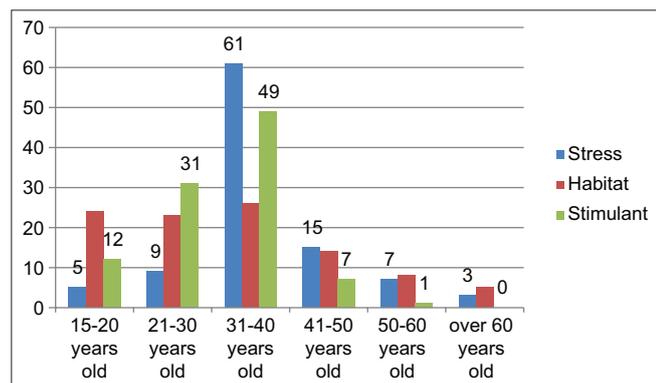


Fig. 6: The reasons to use herbal plants to treat insomnia

the common knowledge of the people as well as the over-modernity of Western therapies, which has made the herbs gradually disappear [6].

However, in another aspect, traditional medicine can satisfy the different basic needs of patients that Western medicine cannot meet (Fig. 6).

In this study, most women participated, accounting for 90%. The ages are also quite diverse. Only 15% of patients are from 15 to 20 years or older. The age groups from 21 to 30 account for 19% followed by those from 31 to over 60. It can be said that the age of 31-50 accounts for a large proportion (57%) with severe insomnia. This group of people has to bear a lot of pressure in life and the group deserves the most attention.

Three direct interview questions were also conducted to determine patients' perceptions and choices to use medicine. For the first question: "Have you used herbal medicine to treat insomnia? Specifically, which one do you use?" Surprisingly, many people said that they used it and knew the good effects of medicinal plants to treat insomnia. About 87% said that they used to use embryo nelumbinis or *P. foetida*, while only 13% said that they had never known the herbs. These few people do not have confidence in the effects of herbs, are a little skeptical or too busy with life even though they know that herbal medications are rather effective [8].

With the next question: "Do you usually use herbal medicine to treat insomnia?" About 90% of people think that they only use it when they are sick, they are not patient enough to use herbs, most is in medical condition now quite well. The herbal preparations are also quite popular, which makes many people choose this simple method. The third question mentioned: "In your opinion, are herbal medication and Western medication, which is better?" The next interesting thing is that many of them think that herbal remedies (herbal medication) still work best.

To clarify the knowledge related to herbs, the survey also got some pretty good results. Most people understand the names of herbs as well as their uses, although they are not interested in the scientific composition of the herb. Their usage is mainly based on the experience and knowledge they have accumulated on their own (Table 1).

Scientific knowledge related to traditional medicine is used to treat long-term medical conditions in Vietnam, including the combination of traditional medicine and Western medicine [4]. There are no detailed studies to assess the impact of the educational level of patients when deciding on which treatment to treat, even the use of herbs. Most people get sick when they have health problems, they find herbs by their own experience of the folk, the seniors leave or support from relatives, who have used herbs and proved its effectiveness [2].

SOME RECOMMENDATIONS

How to improve and treat this insomnia effectively, which is a question that many people care about. Here are some solutions to help us fall asleep quickly and have a good night's sleep.

Table 1: Common medicinal plants used by people in the outskirts of Ho Chi Minh City

The names of popular herbal plants	Number of patients who are using herbal plants
<i>Passiflora foetida</i>	78
<i>Mimosa pudica</i>	36
Embryo nelumbinis	92
<i>Valeriana officinalis</i>	43
<i>Lactuca indica</i>	26
<i>Glycyrrhiza uralensis</i>	69
<i>Erythrina orientalis</i>	61

Using herbal insomnia is the preferred method since the past. Very low-risk natural herbal remedies that only need to be applied properly will produce significant results [8]. The method of treating insomnia with traditional medicine is currently the choice of many people. This is one of the long-term, safe methods to improve the physical and mental health for patients without leaving side effects. Treatment of insomnia, difficulty sleeping with oriental medicine including methods such as reflexology, acupuncture, and prescription medication loading according to the condition is quite effective.

At present, in addition to the method of treating insomnia with the combination of oriental medicine, many people have come to an alternative method of sitting meditation [9]. With this method, patients will not have to take medicine or acupuncture or acupressure, but the treatment is completely natural. When applied this way, our body will automatically absorb fresh energy directly from the universe to remove waste products. This principle will quickly bring our body to equilibrium in mental care, relieve stress, pressure helps us dispel fatigue. To have a good sleep, we should work in moderation, be healthy, and apply natural therapies, meditation practices, and yoga for health [10].

To be effective in treating insomnia the best when applying the above treatment and treatment methods, we should combine it with a diet to supplement essential nutrients for our body to keep your body energized to help us sleep better [11].

In addition to applying the above-mentioned long-term treatment, we should not forget and miss the option of applying simple insomnia tips. We can change living habits, exercise smoothly before going to bed, skip unhealthy eating habits [12].

CONCLUSION

Insomnia or sleep disorders are increasingly popular in society today because many people suffer from all causes and it is very difficult to cure. Insomnia affects not only daily life but also causes the mood and health condition to decrease if the disease lasts. However, we can completely get rid of this disease and regain a good night's sleep by applying simple insomnia treatments, making it easy to fall asleep and sleep most quickly by ideal herbs. It seems very mediocre but has tremendous values.

LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

Research scope is among limitations in the current study and I hope that the future research should expand the number of respondents as well as diversify research questions to find out different aspects of better medications.

ETHICAL CLEARANCE

I am ensuring the quality and integrity of our research. The ideas and opinions expressed in this paper is my effort. By writing this paper, I surely respect the confidentiality and anonymity of my research respondents since they participated in my study voluntarily.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

No conflicts of interest are noted in the paper.

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