

Editorial

Zhang Xichun's Creative Prescriptions Combining Chinese Herbs with Western Drugs

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Zhang Xichun, also called Zhang Shoufu (1860-1933), was a representative of the Chinese-Western Integration School (zhong xi huitong pai) during the late Qing Dynasty and the early Republic of China and was called "the leader figure in medicine throughout the nation" at that time [1]. Based on his long practice, he invented a lot of effective new prescriptions combining Chinese herbs with western drugs.

Zhang Xichun thought that western drugs were good in treating symptoms while Chinese herbs excelled at curing causes. Combining Chinese herbs with western drugs could treat both symptoms and causes together. He would like to take use of the advantages of western drugs to make up the weaknesses of Chinese herbs. A well-known example was that he invented gypsum-aspirin decoction to treat combination of exogenous wind-cold but interior heat. He said "Giving its nature, gypsum is quite suitable to combine with western medicine aspirin. The heat-clearing capacity of gypsum is large, but its capacity of relieving exterior symptom is little. Aspirin, with acidic taste and cold nature, is good in reaching exterior, i.e. make the stagnated interior heat disperse through the exterior, Aspirin, with the synergism of gypsum, shines more brilliantly in the gypsum's company." He also said "The effect is wonderful for aspirin combined

with gypsum to treat swelling and pain of joints." Another example was that he once had levigated scale corundum and lactose mixed with Gucong Decoction he formulated, then the mixed decoction was drunk to treat menorrhagia. He used yam, cogongrass rhizome decoction combining aspirin to treat gout. He used *Os draconis preparata* and *concha ostrear*, dogwood fruit and potassium bromide to treat nocturnal emission. He used decoction combining aspirin to treat tuberculosis. In addition, he used yam porridge combining pepsin to treat indigestion. He used honey combining magnesium sulfate to treat yangming sthenic symptom (constipation). He used lithium bromide, bromine water and ammonium bromatum combining lead-sulfur cinnabar pill to treat epileptic seizure [2].

During the late Qing Dynasty and the early Republic of China when Chinese medicine and western medicine attacked each other and rejected each other, Zhang Xichun, with open-up and bold mind, invented gypsum-aspirin decoction to treat diseases for the first time in Chinese medical history and later invented many new prescriptions combining Chinese herbs with western drugs [3]. His creative and aggressive spirits deserve our respect and learning.

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