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HRT: REVISITING THE PROS AND CONS

By Choice Magazine, February 2009

Traditional Chinese Medicine

Clinical trials in China of Chinese herbal medicine have found them very effective in reducing the symptoms of menopause. As Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) becomes more popular in the west, Chinese herbs are becoming more widely researched.

The main stumbling block for TCM in Western evidence-based medicine is that there is no one-size-fits-all formulation that can be tested for its ability to treat particular symptoms. Some companies have attempted to make a standard Chinese medicine formulation in a pill or similar, based on a combination of typically used herbs. One study of such a preparation showed that it was no more effective than a placebo.

However, this does not surprise TCM experts, who argue that women experience menopause differently and require different herbal combinations. A qualified TCM practitioner assesses each woman and her symptoms profile and prescribes particular herbs accordingly. Studies conducted in China operate the same way, they look at herbal preparations (which are raw herbs, not pills) and they are altered over the course of the study according to individual responses – a very different approach from Western clinical trials.