A Nationwide Population-Based Study of Herbal Medicine for the Treatment of Functional Dyspepsia

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[Objectives]
- Herbal medicine is widely used for the treatment of functional dyspepsia (FD) in East Asian countries.
- We aimed to analyze the prescription patterns of herbal medicine for patients with FD in Korean medicine clinical settings through the analysis of national health insurance claims data over the past 10 years and to check how herbal medicine has been used for FD within the scope of national health insurance.

[Methods]
- All prescription data claimed to the Health Insurance Review and Assessment Service with the diagnosis of FD and herbal medicine prescriptions in 2010-2019 were reviewed.
- We estimated the demographics, clinical characteristics, and annual prescription amount and cost of each herbal medicine.
- Frequent comorbidities of FD were investigated by analyzing the frequency of the Korean standard classification of diseases codes used together with FD.

[Results]
- In total, 19,388,248 herbal medicine prescriptions were identified.
- Herbal medicine prescriptions were mostly claimed by women, the elderly, outpatients at Korean medicine clinics, and national health insurance; the number increased every year.
- The most frequently prescribed herbal medicine was Pingwei-san (Pyeongwi-san) (31.12%), followed by Xiangshapingwei-san (Hyangsapyeongwi-san) (23.20%), Qiongxia-tang (Gungha-tang) (6.31%), and Banxiaxiexin-tang (Banhasasim-tang) (6.25%).
- The total cost of herbal medicine prescriptions increased every year, and it was highest for Xiangshapingwei-san (Hyangsapyeongwi-san) (19.37%), followed by Banxiaxiexin-tang (Banhasasim-tang) (17.50%) and then Pingwei-san (Pyeongwi-san) (15.63%).
- Musculoskeletal and connective tissue diseases including low back pain and myalgia were the commonest comorbidities associated with FD.

[Conclusion]
- This is the first study to investigate the disease burden and actual prescription pattern of herbal medicine for FD using claim data.
- Future clinical research and related healthcare policies should be established based on our study.

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[Notice]
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