

Overview of the Application and Research of the Classic Formula Shenghua Decoction in the Field of Gynecology

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Abstract: *Shenghua Decoction originates from “Fu Qingzhu’s Gynecology” by Fu Shan of the Qing Dynasty. Its main effects are promoting blood circulation to remove blood stasis, and warming the meridians to relieve pain. The original formula was indicated for persistent lochia due to blood deficiency and cold invasion after childbirth. It is now extensively applied in treating various gynecological diseases, such as menstrual disorders, postpartum diseases, miscellaneous diseases, and pregnancy-related disorders. Its therapeutic effect is significant and has gained widespread recognition. In recent years, with the development of Traditional Chinese Medicine and scientific technology, the clinical efficacy and pharmacological research on Shenghua Decoction have become a focus of scholarly attention. This article will summarize the application of Shenghua Decoction in gynecology from two aspects: its current application status and its mechanism of action. The aim is to explore the application and research progress of Shenghua Decoction, derive important information, thereby enabling it to better serve clinical practice and scientific research, and be more beneficial for patient treatment.*

Keywords: Shenghua Decoction, Gynecology, Application, Mechanism.

1. Introduction

The use of Shenghua Decoction for treating gynecological diseases is extremely common. It originated from “Secret Key to Gynecology” from Xiaoshan Bamboo Forest Temple and was included in “Fu Qingzhu’s Gynecology · Postpartum Volume” from the early Qing Dynasty, becoming a widely known gynecological formula. “Fu Qingzhu’s Gynecology” has had a profound influence on TCM gynecology; the formulas in the book are still used today and have received widespread praise and recognition. Shenghua Decoction is a classic and commonly used formula from this book. During childbirth, women consume their own essence and blood, leading to organ damage. If not regulated and treated promptly, it can cause various physical problems. The TCM formula Shenghua Decoction has a good therapeutic effect on postpartum women’s diseases, leading to its widespread application by many physicians in clinical treatment. However, this formula is not limited to postpartum diseases. Based on the same pathogenesis underlying different diseases, the same treatment method can be applied through different syndrome differentiation perspectives. This formula can not only treat postpartum diseases but also menstrual disorders, difficult gynecological conditions, and various diseases during pregnancy. Research on Shenghua Decoction is beneficial for the development of the gynecological field and medical progress. It holds very important significance for female patients and plays a positive role in promoting current gynecological research.

2. Application Status and Mechanism of Action in Menstrual Disorders

2.1 Dysmenorrhea

2.1.1 Application Status

Primary dysmenorrhea is relatively common among

adolescents and is a frequent gynecological condition. Most patients experience recurrence and find it difficult to recover completely after Western medical treatment, with poor therapeutic outcomes. Jiang Congyu [1] used modified Shenghua Decoction to treat 100 cases of primary dysmenorrhea. Among primary dysmenorrhea patients aged 15-21, 100 cases were selected as research subjects, including 85 cases with mild or severe dysmenorrhea, abdominal pain, nausea, dizziness, vomiting, fatigue, and other symptoms. After treatment, their clinical manifestations were recorded and analyzed in detail. Shenghua Decoction was taken as a decoction with water, preferably starting one week before menstruation until the end of menstruation. After taking the modified Shenghua Decoction, patients’ pain symptoms were relieved, achieving a cure. 85 cases showed marked effect, 15 cases were effective, with a total effective rate of 100%. Zheng Yanhui [2] believed that the total effective rate in the treatment group, which used Shenghua Decoction combined with acupoint application on the basis of conventional analgesic therapy for primary dysmenorrhea of cold coagulation and blood stasis type, was significantly higher than the control group receiving conventional analgesic treatment (Ibuprofen Sustained-Release Capsules). This treatment has the advantages of fast onset, good safety, simple mechanism of action, and significant efficacy, demonstrating good clinical application value. Hou Aizhen [3] used modified Shenghua Decoction, combining Chinese and Western medicine to treat primary dysmenorrhea, which showed relatively good efficacy. It can promptly improve pain and reduce the occurrence of adverse reactions, holding extremely high clinical value.

2.1.2 Mechanism of Action

Endometriosis can cause dysmenorrhea. When the endometrium invades the uterine wall, the ectopic endometrium continuously becomes congested and edematous under the influence of ovarian hormones, causing expansion of the smooth muscle tissue in the middle layer of

the uterus and triggering pain. Observing uterine changes induced by modified Shenghua Decoction in diethylstilbestrol-treated models under a microscope, it can be seen that the degree of endometrial hyperplasia significantly decreased, the number of cells significantly reduced, stratified arrangement gradually disappeared, and the endometrium in most animals had basically returned to normal morphology. Congestion and edema of the uterine wall layers, secretion of submucosal glands, and simple hypertrophy of the myometrium also slowly disappeared.

2.2 Amenorrhea

2.2.1 Application Status

Sun Xinfeng [4] selected 70 patients with amenorrhea and used modified Shenghua Decoction to treat secondary amenorrhea. After 1-3 courses of treatment, 38 cases were cured (54%), 30 cases improved (43%), and 2 cases were ineffective (3%), with a total effective rate of 97%. Zhang Meiru [5] used Cangfu Daotan Pills combined with Shenghua Decoction to treat amenorrhea caused by antipsychotic drugs. Among the 12 outpatients selected, 6 were cured, 5 showed marked effect, 1 was ineffective, with a total effective rate reaching 91%. Psychiatric patients require long-term use of antipsychotic drugs to maintain mental stability, but amenorrhea caused by such drugs leads many patients to refuse medication. Therefore, the results of this study are of great significance for the long-term mental stability of psychiatric patients.

2.2.2 Mechanism of Action

Amenorrhea in patients can be caused by endocrine disorders and decreased ovarian function. Some components in Shenghua Decoction have the effect of regulating endocrine function and can act on organs such as the uterus and pituitary gland, promoting the normal secretion of estrogen and progesterone, thereby improving amenorrhea symptoms. Therefore, Shenghua Decoction also has certain therapeutic effects in treating amenorrhea.

3. Application Status and Mechanism of Action in Postpartum Diseases

3.1 Persistent Lochia

3.1.1 Application Status

Lochia is the stagnant blood and turbid fluid discharged from the uterus after childbirth. Zou Ying [6] used Shenghua Decoction combined with Du Meridian moxibustion to prevent persistent postpartum lochia, achieving an efficacy rate of 96.0%. It can shorten the duration of postoperative lochia, reduce the height of the uterine fundus, and improve patients' quality of life. Xu Jun [7] used Huarui Shenghua Decoction to treat persistent postpartum lochia of Qi deficiency and blood stasis type, enabling patients to stop lochia discharge completely, with clinical symptoms disappearing, tongue and pulse becoming normal, and no abnormalities found on B-ultrasound examination. The total effective rate of treatment reached 92.50%. Xu Cuihong [8] used Yimu Shenghua Decoction to treat persistent postpartum

lochia. Among 86 outpatients selected, the total effective rate in improving complexion, vaginal bleeding, abdominal pain, blood color, blood quality, and lochia condition reached 93.02%. Cai Xiaofeng [9] used Shenghua Decoction combined with emotional intervention to treat persistent postpartum lochia. Emotionally, methods combining emotional counseling and TCM explanation and resolution can be used to treat parturients. The clinical total effective rate reached 90.00%, effectively reducing the high-inflammatory state in parturients with persistent lochia, alleviating patient emotions, shortening the duration of lochia discharge, and reducing uterine three-dimensional measurements. Li Yanping [10] used auricular point embedding combined with TCM Shenghua Decoction to prevent persistent postpartum lochia of blood stasis type. Among 64 patients, symptoms such as vaginal bleeding and abdominal pain were significantly improved. Based on the pathogenesis and symptom characteristics of postpartum blood stasis type persistent lochia, this combination can accelerate uterine involution and promote cure, possessing good clinical application value. Li Taoying [11] specifically targeted patients with persistent postpartum lochia of blood stasis type, using modified Shenghua Decoction combined with Yigong Granules for treatment, and compared it with the control group using modified Shenghua Decoction alone. The final results showed that the combined treatment had better effects, with an effective rate reaching 100%. It also promoted uterine involution, reduced bleeding time, and enhanced the hemostatic effect.

3.1.2 Mechanism of Action

Uterine atony can cause persistent lochia. Modern pharmacological research shows that Shenghua Decoction has the effects of promoting uterine contractions, repairing the endometrium and basal layer, promoting necrotic shedding of the decidua, and angiogenesis [12]. Studies have confirmed that Dang Gui (*Angelica sinensis*) and Yi Mu Cao (*Leonurus japonicus*) have the effect of exciting uterine smooth muscle and strengthening uterine contractions. Chuan Xiong (*Ligusticum chuanxiong*) has the function of repairing blood vessels, can enhance the recovery ability of damaged blood vessels, improve microcirculation, and enhance the ability to expel lochia [13].

3.2 Postpartum Vaginal Bleeding

3.2.1 Application Status

Postpartum vaginal bleeding is mainly related to uterine atony and is an important cause of maternal mortality during childbirth [14]. Zhou Yuxi [15] used Shenghua Decoction combined with Oxytocin Injection and oral Misoprostol Tablets to treat atonic postpartum hemorrhage, with a total effective rate of 95.45%. *Leonurus japonicus* contained in Shenghua Decoction can regulate menstruation, remove toxins, promote blood circulation, and remove stasis. On the basis of Western medicine treatment, combining it with Shenghua Decoction is very helpful in reducing postpartum hemorrhage, improving hemorheology and coagulation function, with good safety. Fang Honghao [16], in a study on modified Compound Shenghua Decoction combined with oxytocin for treating postpartum hemorrhage, indicated that

this method has good therapeutic effects on postpartum hemorrhage in parturients, promotes uterine involution and the clearance of residual tissue to a certain extent, and has good clinical application value. Hao Liya [17] used Shenghua Decoction combined with Misoprostol and Carboprost Tromethamine to treat postpartum hemorrhage, with a total effective rate of 96%. It effectively reduced the bleeding volume of patients, improved their coagulation ability, had little impact on physiological stress, and the effect was significant.

3.2.2 Mechanism of Action

Research shows that oxytocin can stimulate rhythmic contractions of uterine smooth muscle, continuously increase uterine tension, and close open sinusoids, achieving a hemostatic effect [18]. Misoprostol is a drug with significant smooth muscle contraction effects. It is a derivative of Prostaglandin E1. Within 30 minutes of administration, it can increase blood viscosity in patients and inhibit disease progression by regulating coagulation function [19]. Modern pharmacological studies show that Chuan Xiong contains various effective components such as phthalides and their dimers, organic acid phenols, polysaccharides, alkaloids, which have anti-thrombotic, pro-coagulant, and blood viscosity-improving effects. Tao Ren (Semen Persicae) contains various active ingredients such as amygdalin and emulsin, which can improve coagulation function and inhibit disease progression. Active ingredients in Dang Gui class mainly include volatile oils, organic acids, polysaccharides, etc., which can adjust human blood circulation, thereby improving coagulation function and effectively controlling disease development [20-21].

3.3 Postpartum Abdominal Pain

3.3.1 Application Status

In TCM, the main cause of postpartum abdominal pain is the poor circulation of Qi and blood throughout the body, leading to pain due to obstruction [22]. Zhang Xiaomei [23] used Shenghua Decoction combined with Du Meridian herbal fumigation to treat postpartum abdominal pain. The time to first feeding, first anal exhaust, and first defecation in the patients were all shorter than those in the control group. It can effectively treat postpartum abdominal pain and accelerate the normal recovery of gastrointestinal function after surgery. Liu Ying [24] used modified Shenghua Decoction and moxibustion to treat postpartum abdominal pain of cold coagulation and blood stasis type. The effective rate in the treatment group was 100%, significantly higher than the 82.93% in the control group. Results: There was no significant difference in pain level before treatment between the treatment and control groups, but after 4 days of treatment, the rates of painlessness and mild pain in the treatment group were higher than those in the control group, with a significant difference. The results show that the combination of Shenghua Decoction and moxibustion can dispel cold, promote Qi movement, unblock meridians, and promote blood circulation to remove stasis, significantly improving patients' abdominal pain and related clinical symptoms. Zhang Xiaoying [25] used modified Shenghua Decoction to treat postpartum abdominal pain. Among 78 selected patients,

the total effective rate in the observation group was 97.44%, while that in the control group was only 62.8%. This indicates that based on TCM syndrome differentiation and treatment, and removing stasis to promote regeneration, Shenghua Decoction has a good improving effect on postpartum abdominal pain and possesses good clinical application value.

3.3.2 Mechanism of Action

Pharmacological research results indicate that Dang Gui contains important components that can both excite and inhibit smooth muscle, so Dang Gui has a dual effect on the uterus. The main components of Chuan Xiong and Dang Gui are ferulic acid and tetramethylpyrazine, which can jointly slow uterine contractions, and uterine contractions can cause postpartum abdominal pain. Studies show that Dang Gui, Chuan Xiong, Gan Cao (Glycyrrhiza uralensis), etc., also have analgesic effects. Puerperal infection can also cause abdominal pain, and Dang Gui, Chuan Xiong, Gan Cao, and Pao Jiang (Zingiber officinale rhizoma preparatum) have anti-inflammatory functions. Furthermore, Shenghua Decoction can also promote the discharge of lochia [26]. Based on network pharmacology analysis, it was found that this formula can regulate the process of lower abdominal pain through multiple targets. Its biological pathways may include: immune regulation, inflammatory response; physiological processes such as cell growth, replication, apoptosis; self-regulation of cells and organs. On this basis, multiple pathways perform their respective functions, thereby achieving the treatment of mild abdominal pain [27].

4. Application Status and Mechanism of Action in Miscellaneous Gynecological Diseases

4.1 Infertility

4.1.1 Application Status

Guo Yi [28] used modified Shenghua Decoction combined with Femoston to treat infertility caused by endometriosis. Endometriosis belongs to the category of "dysmenorrhea" in TCM, with Qi, blood, and phlegm being the main pathogenic factors. Among the 80 selected patients, the total effective rate in the observation group was 95.00%, higher than the 80.00% in the control group. Therefore, the combination of Shenghua Decoction and Femoston has good clinical effects on infertility caused by endometriosis, can effectively regulate endocrine, increase ovulation and fertilization rates, and has high safety, worthy of clinical promotion and application. Zhang Huiyan [29] used modified Shenghua Decoction combined with Gestrinone Capsules as adjuvant therapy for infertility of Qi stagnation and blood stasis type caused by endometriosis. 68 patients were selected, 34 in the treatment group and 34 in the control group. By comparing endometrial thickness, total pregnancy rate, clinical efficacy, and adverse reactions with the control group, the results showed that the treatment group was superior to the control group. Yu Xianmei [30] used modified Shenghua Decoction to treat 60 patients with tubal obstruction infertility. 50 patients were cured and achieved pregnancy, accounting for 83%; 6 cases improved, 10%; 4 cases were ineffective, 7%. Through clinical practice, it was found that for older patients with longer course of disease, obesity, phlegm-dampness type

tubal obstruction infertility, the efficacy of this formula is relatively poor. If combined with TCM syndrome differentiation and treatment, and comprehensive medication based on the menstrual cycle and ovarian cyclical changes, better results can be achieved. Xie Qi [31], in a study on the effects of modified Shenghua Decoction on endometrial thickness, recurrence rate, and pregnancy rate in infertile patients with endometrial polyps after hysteroscopic surgery, found that the recurrence rate in the observation group after treatment was lower than that in the control group. Moreover, after treatment, the menstrual cycle, menstrual volume, and endometrial thickness in the observation group were significantly reduced compared to the control group, and the conception rate in the observation group was significantly higher than that in the control group. Comparing hormone levels between the two groups, it was found that the E2 level in the observation group was significantly lower than that in the control group, while the expression of ER and PR was significantly increased.

4.1.2 Mechanism of Action

Shenghua Decoction is a TCM formula that can regulate endocrine function and improve the intrauterine environment, significantly improving women's fertility and treating infertility. It also has fetus-protecting effects; taking it in early pregnancy can reduce the occurrence of spontaneous abortion. Infertility can be caused by endometrial diseases, and Shenghua Decoction can upregulate ER and PR, reduce E2, increase the endometrial proliferation rate, with minor side effects. Pharmacological studies have also found that Shenghua Decoction has anti-exogenous hormone effects, exerts dual-directional regulation on the uterus, can enhance uterine contraction function, and also has anti-inflammatory, anti-thrombotic, accelerating endometrial breakdown and lochia discharge functions [31].

5. Pregnancy Diseases

5.1 Ectopic Pregnancy

5.1.1 Application Status

Cao Bianna [32] used Shenghua Decoction combined with Methotrexate to treat early ectopic pregnancy. 200 patients were selected and divided into a control group and an observation group, 100 cases each. By observing and comparing the total effective rate, vaginal bleeding time, time for mass disappearance, etc., it was found that this application can enhance the therapeutic effect. Wang Feng [33] used Shenghua Decoction combined with Methotrexate for conservative treatment of unruptured tubal pregnancy. The cure rate and tubal patency rate in the experimental group were higher than those in the control group. While promoting the decline of HCG to normal levels, reducing mass absorption time, and menstrual recovery time, it did not increase side effects.

5.1.2 Mechanism of Action

Shenghua Decoction can promote local blood circulation, accelerate the absorption of secretions, thereby achieving anti-inflammatory, hemostatic, and analgesic effects.

Applying Shenghua Decoction combined with Methotrexate in patients with ectopic pregnancy can prevent surgical damage and allow good recovery of the fallopian tube. It can also accelerate the absorption of lesions and reduce the time for non-surgical treatment. Moreover, it is inexpensive, simple, and causes minimal trauma, making it an ideal treatment method [34-36]. Furthermore, on the basis of MTX killing the embryo, Shenghua Decoction can help absorb tubal pregnancy products and pelvic blood clots, reduce peritubal adhesions, improve the success rate of medication for ectopic pregnancy, and combine TCM's promoting blood circulation to remove stasis, dispersing swelling and masses with Western medicine's embryo-killing effect, achieving rapid embryo-killing without additionally increasing adverse reactions [32].

6. Insights

Shenghua Decoction is widely used in clinical practice and is a classic and commonly used formula for treating gynecological diseases, which has been recognized by many scholars. It can be used for dysmenorrhea, amenorrhea, persistent postpartum lochia, postpartum vaginal bleeding, postpartum abdominal pain, infertility, and ectopic pregnancy, all with good therapeutic effects. Pharmacological research indicates that Shenghua Decoction has the following effects: enhancing uterine contractions, repairing the endometrium and basal layer, accelerating necrotic shedding of the decidua and angiogenesis, regulating endocrine function, and having anti-inflammatory, hemostatic, and analgesic effects. Among its ingredients, Chuan Xiong can repair blood vessels and improve microcirculation; Dang Gui can excite uterine smooth muscle and strengthen uterine contractions; Tao Ren can improve coagulation function; Zhi Gan Cao (honey-fried Licorice) and Pao Jiang can reduce inflammation and relieve pain.

By consulting a large number of documents, from the perspectives of clinical application and mechanism of action, the author found that Shenghua Decoction not only has good therapeutic effects on gynecological diseases but also enhances its efficacy when combined with other drugs and treatment methods, making it suitable for widespread promotion and application.

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