

Embracing clinical value in traditional Chinese medicine development

Xiaoxiao Zhang¹, Yao Lu², Yong Zhu¹, Wei Hou³, Mingjun Zhu⁴, Xudong Tang⁵, Lei Xiong⁶, Quan Jiang³, Xianyu Zeng⁷, Haisong Li⁸, Ruihua Zhao³, Yuqiao Lu², Xiaonghong He^{1,9}, Guochen Wang^{1,*}

¹China Association of Chinese Medicine, Beijing, China; ²Dongfang Hospital, Beijing University of Chinese Medicine, Beijing, China; ³Guang'anmen Hospital, China Academy of Chinese Medical Sciences, Beijing, China; ⁴The First Affiliated Hospital of Henan University of Chinese Medicine, Zhengzhou, China; ⁵Xiyuan Hospital, China Academy of Chinese Medical Sciences, Beijing, China; ⁶Yunnan Provincial Hospital of Traditional Chinese Medicine, Kunming, China; ⁷Wuhan First Hospital, Wuhan, China; ⁸Dongzhimen Hospital, Beijing University of Chinese Medicine, Beijing, China; ⁹School of Pharmacy, Chengdu University of Traditional Chinese Medicine, Chengdu, China

The recent initiative by China's National Medical Products Administration (NMPA) to realign traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) registration with clinical value marks a pivotal shift toward modernizing and enhancing the efficacy of TCM. This initiative reflects a progressive attitude toward integrating TCM's rich heritage with contemporary medical needs, ensuring that it remains relevant and effective in addressing modern health challenges^[1].

TCM is renowned for its holistic approach and unique methodologies for disease prevention and treatment^[2]. However, the increasing complexity of diseases and advancements in medical knowledge necessitates a more structured approach to drug development that prioritizes clinical benefits and meticulously evaluates the risks involved. By addressing unmet clinical needs, the NMPA's new guidelines represent an essential step in tailoring TCM to better serve patient populations.

To identify specific clinical demands across various specialties, the China Association of Chinese Medicine initiated a pilot project involving 10 specialties: oncology, cardiovascular diseases, gastroenterology, pediatrics, rheumatology, dermatology, andrology, gynecology, nephrology, and pulmonary disease. Experts from these divisions, along with representatives from the Translational Medicine Center at Dongfang Hospital of Beijing University of Chinese Medicine, analyzed the epidemiological data and characteristics of TCM treatments.

These experts have curated a "Clinical Needs List for Chinese Medicine Research and Development," encompassing 10 diseases: malignant tumors, chronic heart failure, gastroesophageal reflux disease, primary nephrotic syndrome, rheumatoid arthritis,

atopic dermatitis, Sjögren syndrome, chronic nonbacterial prostatitis, endometriosis, and adenoid hypertrophy^[1]. With a summarized overview of the current disease statuses and treatment options, it primarily focuses on key elements such as clinical positioning, clinical value, and measurable efficacy, further clarifying the unmet clinical needs for the development of TCM.

This initiative not only significantly guides further development of TCM and innovates research direction, but also emphasizes the importance of a clinically demand-driven approach, following its inherent laws and characteristics to meet and reflect its clinical value. As diseases evolve and new treatments emerge, the frameworks guiding TCM development must also progress. Although the expert consensus represented in this initial list is invaluable, it is crucial that researchers remain adaptable, grounding their practices in both traditional and modern scientific inquiries.

Conflict of interest statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Funding

None.

Author contributions

Xiaoxiao Zhang, Yao Lu, Yong Zhu, Wei Hou, Mingjun Zhu, Xudong Tang, Lei Xiong, Quan Jiang, Xianyu Zeng, Haisong Li, Ruihua Zhao, Yuqiao Lu, Xiaonghong He, and Guochen Wang participated in the writing of the original draft. Xiaoxiao Zhang and Yao Lu participated

Xiaoxiao Zhang and Yao Lu contributed equally to the work.

*Corresponding author. Guochen Wang, E-mail: 1028bj@sina.com.

Received 25 October 2024 / Accepted 3 November 2024

How to cite this article: Zhang XX, Lu Y, Zhu Y, Hou W, Zhu MJ, Tang XD, Xiong L, Jiang Q, Zeng XY, Li HS, Zhao RH, Lu YQ, He XH, Wang GC. Embracing clinical value in traditional Chinese medicine development. *Acupunct Herb Med* 2024;4(4):559–560. DOI: 10.1097/HM9.000000000000139

Copyright © 2024 Tianjin University of Traditional Chinese Medicine. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-Non Commercial-No Derivatives License 4.0 (CCBY-NC-ND), where it is permissible to download and share the work provided it is properly cited. The work cannot be changed in any way or used commercially without permission from the journal.

in review and editing of the paper. Guochen Wang participated in the conceptualization.

Ethical approval of studies and informed consent

Not applicable.

Acknowledgments

None.

Data availability

Not applicable.

References

- [1] Zhang X, Lu Y, Hou W, et al. Clinical demand checklist for research and development of new drugs of traditional Chinese medicine(first batch). *J Tradit Chin Med* 2024;65(1):17–25.
- [2] Wu J, Zhang F, Li Z, et al. Integration strategy of network pharmacology in traditional Chinese medicine: a narrative review. *J Tradit Chin Med* 2022;42(3):479–486.