

Editorial

Efficacies of each single crude drug used in Traditional Japanese Kampo Medicine

In Japan, the standards of crude drugs and Kampo formula are defined by two official compendiums from Japanese government, “the Japanese Pharmacopoeia (the latest one is 17th edition, 2016)” and “the approval standards for OTC Kampo products.” The former defines the origin and their botanical, botanical and chemical properties of approximately 200 kinds of crude drugs and 35 kinds of Kampo extracts, and the latter defines the components and dosages of crude drugs in Kampo formula, and the efficacies of Kampo formula. By the descriptions in the latter compendium, the physical properties and efficacies of 148 kinds of ethical Kampo extract formulation are approved by Japanese government though the components and efficacies are slightly different among the products produced by each company.

On the other hand, as regards the efficacies of individual crude drugs, although only 30 kinds of crude drugs have the official efficacies defined in the official compendium “the guideline of approval for the products using crude drug defined in the Pharmacopoeia”, the most of crude drug do not have the specific efficacies officially approved. In public health insurance, the official efficacies of individual crude drugs are “for the prescription in Kampo formula”.

In China, the official compendium “Chinese Pharmacopoeia 2015” describes the efficacies of individual crude drugs in traditional Chinese medicine. However, in Japanese traditional Kampo medicine, it has been popular to fix and use the formula without considering the efficacies of individual crude drugs. The efficacies of individual crude drugs are shown in some books described in private textbooks, but consequently, the efficacy descriptions of individual crude drug in textbooks differ much depending on the authors. For the national examinations for pharmacists and physicians, the efficacies should be standardized to prevent unfair advantage among students depending textbooks used. However, the descriptions of the efficacies of crude drugs in traditional medicines are based on not scientific evidences but experiences, and it is very difficult to standardize them among specialists of cognoscenti.

In order to fix this problem, we made database of the efficacies of individual crude drugs described in textbooks published from 1887 to 2014, and uploaded at <http://metabolomics.jp/wiki/Persist:CrudeDrugList>. Furthermore, we showed the private idea for standard of the efficacies of individual crude drugs on the article (The Japanese Journal of Pharmacology 71, 1–37, 2017).

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