

What is 'Kampo Medicine' ?

Kampo medicine is a traditional Japanese medical system with over 15 centuries of history which has its roots partly in ancient Chinese medicine. Though nearly half of the formulae used in Kampo medicine today are derived from the Shanghanlun (傷寒論), written in Han-dynasty China, pre-19th century Japanese Kampo physicians developed unique administration principles from the knowledge accumulated through their own clinical experiences. They put more importance on practical utility and clinical effectiveness than on speculative theories such as the five-phase theory, which is essential to Chinese medicine. While Japan experienced modernization from the mid-19th century in every field of science, including medicine, Kampo medicine survived in its pursuit of scientific proof.

Kampo medicine is now included in educational programs for medical students and practiced by medical doctors who have profound and scientifically based understanding of both conventional and Kampo medicine, which brings patients great benefits to patients.

The Japan Society for Oriental Medicine (JSOM) was established in 1950 and has grown to become the leading organization for Kampo medicine in Japan.

Kampo medicine now enjoys wide support by the public who see it as a reliable therapy for its scientific evidence and flexible therapeutic approaches.

● Medicinal herbs



● Acupuncture



Characteristics of Japanese Kampo Medicine

The following are the characteristics of Kampo medicine.

1. Today in Japan, prescription of Kampo formulae is limited to medical doctors. Physicians with profound understanding of both conventional and Kampo medicine diagnose and treat patients from the two different approaches, bringing significant benefit to patients.

2. In Japan, 148 Kampo extract formulations are used for medicinal purposes and are covered by national health insurance. Since Japanese manufacturers first successfully developed herbal extract formulations in the 1960s, they have been working at the forefront of quality and safety control. Notably, the consistency in the quality of extracted medicines makes it possible to perform reproducible clinical trials and gain reliable evidence for efficacy.



3. One of the characteristics of the Japanese Kampo medical system is its emphasis on clinical findings from the patient's body surface, especially changes in the abdominal region. Abdominal diagnosis was developed into



a reproducible diagnostic system in the 18th century by Yoshimasu Todo (吉益東洞), a Japanese Kampo master.



4. In recent years, a lot of research has been conducted by the members of academic organizations related to Kampo medicine. Much effort has been put into clinical research to generate high-quality evidence as well as the basic researches for action mechanisms of Kampo medicines and their efficacy.

Domestic and International Roles of JSOM

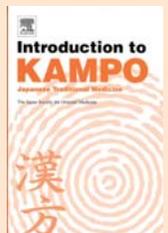
1. Domestic Roles

JSOM is conducting such activities as publishing and internationalizing academic journals, standardizing educational protocol, producing textbooks, training experts, establishing evidence-based medicine, and establishing an ethics board. The Japan Liaison of Oriental Medicine (JLOM), whose members include JSOM in the lead role and five other scientific organizations, was established in 2005 to address national issues which Kampo medicine is facing.

2. International Roles

JSOM is working toward the standardization of traditional medicine in the East Asia region in close coordination with the World Health Organization (WHO) as well as JLOM, relevant academic organizations, and the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare. JSOM is also a big contributor to WHO in terms of personnel time and finance which leads projects involving the diagnostic outcomes of Kampo medicine, which will be included in International Classification of Diseases (ICD)-11. JSOM actively cooperates with and supports the International Society for Japanese Kampo Medicine (ISJKM), which aims to advance communication and collaboration among English speaking researchers and practitioners throughout the world.

Published books



● Introduction to KAMPO

Kampo Medical Evidence Base

JSOM published Evidence Reports of Kampo Treatment (EKAT) and Clinical Practice Guidelines Containing Kampo Products in Japan (KCPG). These are now updated annually and published on the JSOM website (<http://www.jsom.or.jp/medical/ebm/ere/index.html>).