

In my last post we talked about some possible ways to prevent getting the flu. In this one I'd like to discuss some possible ideas for treating influenza cases. First let me say that I have not directly treated any cases of the H1N1 and although it is spreading rapidly, the vast majority of complementary practitioners have not actually treated many or any cases either. So most of what is being suggested is theoretical and so should be looked at cautiously until there is significant data to back it up.

Isatis Traditional flu remedies that have stood the test of time, such as Boneset and Yarrow or Boneset, Yarrow and Elderflower, I believe would still have significant benefits for treating H1N1 or the seasonal flu. These can be taken as teas or tinctures. There are several Chinese herbs that are traditionally used for treating influenza such as Isatis root and leaf, Andrographis, Chinese Chrysanthemum flower, and Forsythia fruit. I believe a formula using these herbs would have significant benefits also. In several cases, people using combinations of these Chinese and western herbs I've already mentioned have reported back that they had very minor cases of the flu compared to other members of their family or schoolmates who did not use them. These evidence is anecdotal and far from conclusive, but it is at least suggestive that we may be on the right track.

A formula I have thought would be useful contains the following herbs in the following proportions:

Isatis leaf - 2 parts, Andrographis - 1 part, Chrysanthemum flower - 2 parts, Bonset - 1 part, Elder flower - 2 parts, Forsythia fruit - 2 parts, Yarrow - 1 part, Thyme - 1 part.

Other herbs I believe deserve attention here include Lomatium root, Thyme, Propolis, and Garlic. Lomatium has an interesting history of use during the 1918 Spanish Flu epidemic with success and Thyme, Propolis, and Garlic are especially interesting as antibacterial agents to the lungs. This is especially important considering recent reports that 50% of deaths due to H1N1 are due to bacterial pneumonia. Whether or not these herbs can help prevent H1N1 induced pneumonia is unknown but we do know they help treat other types of pneumonia.

Finally, a few interesting things I'd like to report on concerning the H1N1 vaccine that I gleaned from attending the recent AHG conference in Santa Rosa, CA. There is still tremendous debate in the CAM community about whether or not vaccines for H1N1 should be used. I am not going to comment on whether they should or shouldn't, but people at high risk certainly should consider the use of vaccines. If someone is going to take the vaccine they should know the following things: none of the three vaccines approved in the United States contain the adjuvant Squalene. This is good because rumor suggested that they did and Squalene has been strongly linked to developing Guillain-Barre syndrome. Secondly, I was told the cleanest and safest of the vaccines is the Australian vaccine. If your vaccine is a single dose it does not contain Thimerosal. Vaccine doses coming out of a multi-use bottle on the other hand do contain Thimerosal which is a mercury containing preservative that some people believe may be linked with autism.

I hope you find this information useful in making healthy choices and we wish everyone a happy and healthful Autumn and Winter season.

Blessings,

David Winston, RH (AHG)