

Treatment Plan and Dosage for Prepared (Patent) Formulas

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Excerpt from my current work-in-progress ©Robert Hayden, AP, 2019

Golden Flower Chinese Herbs

GFCH presses their KPC 5:1 average extracts into 600 mg caplets. This means that the average equivalent is 3 grams of decocted formula per caplet. At the recommended dosage (i.e., on the bottle) of 2 caplets TID, the patient is getting the equivalent of 18 grams of decocted herbs. Assuming that most of the standard materia medica is dosed at 3-9 grams, this means that you're getting the equivalent of a two-ingredient formula dosed at the upper range of 9 grams or a six-ingredient formula dosed at the lower range of 3 grams per ingredient.

For a bottle of 60 caplets, if you want to make it last roughly a week, the dosage would be 9 pills (3x3) a day - and then you'd still come up a dose short. Consider, again, that the patient would be ingesting at that dose the equivalent of 27 grams a day of decocted formula - still quite low in terms of standard TCM dosages. I do think that, for most formulas over two or three ingredients, dosages should start at 8 or 9 pills a day for the majority of patients, unless you are looking for a purely dynamic effect.

Standard treatment plan is two sessions plus one 60-pill bottle of pills per week at 9 TID for two or three weeks. In my clinic, total cost would be \$130 for two weeks and \$190 for three weeks.

GFCH does offer most of its products in a 240-pill size, which is effectively four weeks' worth of pills. This offers a considerable cost benefit, if you are certain of the appropriateness of the formula. In that case, in my clinic I could offer a four-week cost of treatment for \$225 (plus \$10 initial fee). If the patient were only able to make one visit a week, but still take the herbs regularly, it would be \$145 for the four-week course.

Herbal Times Teapills (NuHerbs)

NuHerbs told me in an email that HT uses a 3:1 average extract. This would mean that in a bottle of 100 pills weighing 30 grams total, each pill holds the equivalent of 0.9 grams of decoction. A week's worth is 5 TID (a little less than a week) or 7 BID (a little more). This would mean the patient is getting the equivalent of about 13.5 grams of decocted formula per day. This is quite a small amount, TCM-wise, perhaps too low. The equivalent dose to the standard GFCH dose would be 10 TID or 8 QID, which is how I usually prescribe for acute situations - 8 pills every four hours is how I usually dose Gan Mao Ling Jie Du Wan. Be that as it may, I often start the HT formulas at 5 TID, as the patient is usually price-sensitive, and see how it goes. Even a purely dynamic effect can be a positive enough bias toward re-establishing the zheng qi; I feel this aspect is often overlooked in the more biochemical orientation of much of the complementary/integrative medicine industry. As unlikely as it may sound to the more

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materially-oriented, I find many patients do get good results at the 5 TID dose, especially in more psych-oriented formulas or in formulas where the chief herbs are a significantly high percentage of the formula. One of the HT formulations I have found particularly effective is Jia Wei Xiao Yao Wan, which sort of inverts the balance of the prescription, giving the highest dosages - about 16% each - to the “jia wei” ingredients of Zhi Zi and Mu Dan Pi. In other words, what was originally the additions to clear heat and cool and move the blood have now become the chief ingredients, together comprising about one-third of the total formula. This means that at the 5 TID dosage, you are at least approaching the lower end of the standard dosage for these two herbs.

In most acute cases, or even in the early treatment stages of chronic ones, a good plan of treatment course is to recommend two acupuncture sessions and two bottles of teapills per week, dosed at 10 TID, for two to three weeks (total cost in my clinic would be \$150 for two or \$220 for three weeks).