

A STUDY OF WISDOM OF FOLK DOCTOR FOR THE TREATMENT FOR LAH DISEASE

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Abstract: *This research was aimed to study the knowledge of folk doctor for the treatment for Lah disease in the infant and toddler which focused on studying the treatment process for Lah disease, the treatment process for applying herbs and suggestion for after treatment. This research was qualitative research by paraphrasing the knowledge from folk doctor, Mr. Boonyong Sriutthakowit which the data was gathered from interviewing, then it was categorized and analyzed. The findings revealed that the traditional treatment was instructed from his father as he had observed which it was not the current medicine, and Mr. Boonyong Sriutthakowit was the expert for the treatment for Lah Disease. The treatment would start with asking the medical profile, checking the body, and applying herbs for sweeping on the tongue and buccal fat pad, then the ulcer was recovered after 1 – 5 times of this treatment which depended on its violence. Additionally, it was applied with the incantation by the creed that it would expedite the patients to get recover as physical, mental and spiritual treatment. The treatment for Lah disease in the infant and toddler revealed that 95% of them would not have a retreatment and 5% would have a retreatment. Applying herbs and incantation was for the physical, mental and spiritual treatment, and this research was useful for public health and medical system to integrate the knowledge with their treatments, decrease the government expenses on the current medicine, conserve the knowledge of folk doctor and improve for the international acceptance.*

Keywords: *Study of Wisdom, Folk Doctor, Thai Traditional Medicine, Knowledge*

INTRODUCTION

Lah disease, a disease in the infant with the yellow, green or black ulcer. Even if there is the progress in medical sciences and technology but it still occurs in the infant and toddler in all genders and ages. Some families believe in the treatment of Thai traditional doctor or folk doctor due to he could recover it by sweeping the medicine, applying herbs, insufflation and bathing with herbs etc. [1]

The understanding of protocol and symptom of Lah disease from the relevant scripture in the textbook of Thai traditional medicine by the complicated writing which affected to the hardly understanding and unable to be a guideline for checking, diagnosis and treatment due to it was not the current Thai language but the ancient language such as Bali language and Sanskrit language. In consequence, Thai traditional medicine, folk medicine or people should have knowledge and understanding of the cause and symptom of Lah disease accurately, if not, it would affect to the violent symptom in the infant and toddler rapidly. Nevertheless, the medical science and technology was exceedingly progressed but it still occurs in the infant and toddler for all ages. In some families believed in the treatment of Thai traditional medicine or folk medicine due to its better recovery such as sweeping the medicine in the throat, taking herbal medicine, insufflation, showering with herbal medicine etc. Thai traditional medicine or folk medicine was not only the physical treatment but holistic treatment. The violent symptom of Lah disease such as infection which affected to the diarrhea drastically, hematochezia, anarcatharsis, and the complication disease in the infant and toddler due to their low immunity. If there was insufficient knowledge and understanding of

this disease, it would affect to the first aid, diagnosis and treatment inaccurately which it was a reason of death. The treatment should be dedicated for Lah, La-Ong and Sang disease which were recorded and well-known in the scripture of Thai traditional medicine.

A study of various researches and academic papers on local wisdom, health and local medical wisdom during 1993 – 2003 revealed that there were 115 researches and the Institute of Thai Way Health conducted the circumstance research during 2000 – 2009 indicated that 53.38% was the research on herbs, alternative medicine, local medicine and Thai traditional medicine consecutively. Most of Thai traditional medicine focused on Thai massage which the satisfaction and effectiveness revealed that most of the research was a knowledge gathering of folk doctor and local wisdom on health for people's health care included there was no protocol to apply it for the health services system. [2]

A study of status and role of folk doctor to the community revealed that the significant factor of being folk doctor was the ancestor was used to be, a study of diagnosis pattern revealed that it would start with asking the medical profile, checking the body and asking the relatives, 16% of them start with considering the medical profile from the current doctor. In addition,

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84% (42 doctors) was the folk doctor without the professional license, 10% had 51 years and above of experience, and 34% had 10 – 20 years of experience. [3]

The researcher expected to gather the relevant knowledge, cause, protocol, treatment, medicine from the scripture as mentioned above included the relevant research on Lah Disease, experience of Thai traditional doctor and folk doctor to analyze its origin, symptoms and treatment obviously.

METHODOLOGY

A. Population and sample group

The population of this research was Mr. Boonyong Sriutthakowit, a folk doctor.

B. Tools for research

The data was gathered by using the interview questions which was divided into 4 parts as follows;

Part 1 – General information of Mr. Boonyong Sriutthakowit

Part 2 – Status and role of folk doctor

Part 3 – Treatment for Lah Disease

Part 4 – Methods and tools for the treatment of folk doctor

C. Data gathering

The data gathering was divided into 4 processes as follows; gathering data by clarifying the community leader on the objective and methodology of qualitative research with the participatory observation and non - participatory observation. The researcher would gather all data by observing the community environment and activity included observing the behavior of folk doctor and patient by recording and in-depth interview.

Step 1 – Providing staff; due to it was the qualitative research, it should provide a team of researcher and research assistant for the same process of data gathering.

Step 2 – Area surveying; the research assistant who gathered all data with the researcher would start discussing with the community leader and sample group or folk doctor as the key informant.

Step 3 – Data gathering with 3 methods;

1. In-depth interview
2. Observation and field note
3. Document analysis

It was 20 times of area surveying and data gathering for this research.

D. Data analysis

1. Organizing data by paraphrasing the interview of folk doctor from a voice recorder.
2. Coding data by ordering the topics to categorize and analyze for the pattern and their relations.

3. Presenting data by gathering data codes for the meaning and understanding.
4. Presenting data by providing the research report from paraphrased and gathered data.
5. Checking the accuracy of the research findings.

RESULTS

A. Symptoms of Lah, La-Ong and Sang Disease on the knowledge of folk doctor

Lah disease: there were 4 – 5 of ulcer on the buccal fat pad, warm temperature, frequent yawning, indigestion, tongue and jaw goes tough, face goes green and body goes yellow due to he could not drink milk.

Period of disease: infant – 9 months old

Diagnosis on the wisdom of folk doctor: there was 1, 4 – 5 or 5 – 6 of ulcer on the buccal fat pad by observing when he was yawning.

Treatment pattern of folk doctor

Treatment: melting the medicine powder with boiled water or 28 degree of alcohol, drink the water above, then sweep the medicine at the bottom. Normally, 28 degree of alcohol was used in order to sweep when the symptom goes violent.

Method of sweeping the medicine: sweep 1 time per day, in case of he didn't get recover, it could repeat sweeping but not more than 3 times (for the infant – 3 months old). Poking the ulcer by nail and sweep the medicine, or sweep it covered the root of the tongue (the previous time, it would be poked by pin before sweeping the medicine). Moreover, sweeping the medicine with the incantation to prevent its regeneration.

Caution of sweeping the medicine: Be careful of poking the ulcer by nail and sweeping the medicine for the infant.

Symptoms after the treatment: The parents should observe there was the ulcer or not while he was yawning.

Prohibition after the treatment: There was no prohibition for children but the mother should not eat all in the cold temperature due to it would be passed through the breastfeeding.

Method of prevention: There was no prevention, it could be in everyone in the previous time.

Medical formula for treatment

7 herbs were formulated for treatment as follows;

500 grams of peppermint, 30 grams of clove, 30 grams of aloe, 210 of pepper, 150 grams borneol, 30 grams camphor and 20 – 30 of lizard

Properties: To relieve the indigestion (He would sleep well after taking or sweeping it).

B. Process of medical formulation

1. Clean the peppermint, slice and dry it.
2. Put 7 pepper seeds in each lizard and grill it.
3. Roast all dried peppermint, clove and aloe.
4. Roast all dried lizard and herbs, and beat the borneol and camphor.
5. Filter with the white fabric and beat it, and repeat it.
6. Pack the medical powder in the durable package.

The medicine should be roasted before using, it would be brown and black from white.

It would be filtered to prevent the hazard in the infant and toddler.

The belief of keeping the medicine, if there was a death, the medicine should be out of the house until the cremation ceremony was done, then it could be back for keeping.

C. Information of herbs for medical formulation

The researcher gathered the detail of herbs from the scripture and textbook as follows; 5.5.1 Clove



Fig 1: Clove

Source: Kullapat Pochanakul. 2017

Scientific name:

Eugenia caryophyllus (Sprengel) Bullock et Harrison, *E. caryophyllata* Thunberg., *Syzygium aromaticum* (Linn.) Merr. & Perry., *Caryophyllus aromaticus* Linn.

Family name: MYRTACEAE

Common name: Jan Jee (North) / Clove

Properties:

Flower: spicy flavor, expectorate, scurvy, asthma, toothache, pyorrhea, stomachache, beriberi, sepsis, lymph, amniotic fluid, excretory system, 4-dyspepsia, flatulence, convey the upper wind to the lower wind. The nutrient such as calcium and phosphorus for strengthening tooth and bone.

Clove oil: anesthetic for twitching, carminative, stomachache, flatulence, toothache, for mix up with gargle, food flavor, antiseptic such as *E.coli* which caused to thyroid, dysentery and abscess, and *trichomonas vaginalis* which caused to leucorrhea, anemia, anti 6-fungus and dermatophytosis, no drug resistance and irritation, cholagogue. The other clove extracts such as stem, leaf, with the light yellow fruit for the best pharmaceutical result.

Substances: 14 – 20% of volatile, 10 – 13% of gallotannic acid, triterpene acid, ester & chromone.

5.5.2 Camphor



Fig 2: Camphor Source: Kullapat Pochanakul. 2017

Scientific name: *Cinnamomum camphora* Nees ex Eberm.

Family name: LAURACEAE

Common name: Camphor / Vietnamese Cinnamon / Prom Seng (Ngiew) / Jia Lo (Chinese)

Camphor Tree, Laurel Camphor, GumCamphor, Formosan Camphor

Properties:

Camphor powder: It was white scale and breakable, spicy flavor, expectorate dyspepsia, carminative, stomachache, cough, circulatory system, stimulation, itching, eye disease, aphrodisiac, perspiration, nervous disorder, chloasma, embrocation, intumesce, twitching, ankle pain, nervous pain, dried skin, insect sting allergy, chronic skin disease, lymph, cardiotoxic and food flavor.

Substances: It was saturated ketone which extracted for the raw camphor, and filtered by limewater and charcoal.

Artificial camphor: It was synthesized by pinene in the turpentine.

5.5.3 Pepper



Fig 3: Pepper

Source: Kullapat Pochanakul. 2017

Scientific name: *Piper nigrum* Linn.

Family name: PIPERACEAE

Common name: Small Pepper / Huo Jia (Chinese)

Pepper, Black Pepper, White Pepper

Properties:

Leaf: spicy flavor, carminative and stomachache

Flower: spicy flavor, ciliary infection by the hypertension

Seed: spicy flavor, paralysis, carminative, expectorate and leucorrhoea.

Vine: spicy flavor, expectorate and suffer from excessive bloody flux.

Root: spicy flavor, carminative, stomachache and dizziness.

5.5.4 Borneol



Fig 4: Borneol

Source: Kullapat Pochanakul. 2017

Scientific name: -

Family name: -

Common name: Borneol, Borneol
camphor Properties:

It was extracted by the pharmaceutical scripture, cooking with other medicines for the white or red scale but now it was extracted by the synthetic substance with spicy flavor.

Its smell would dizziness, cardiotoxic, carminative, indigestion, stomachache, wound, chronic wound, venereal disease and malignancy.

5.5.5 Peppermint



Fig 5: Peppermint

Source: Kullapat Pochanakul. 2017

Scientific name: *Mentha cordifolia* Opiz.

Family name: LABIATAE

Common name: Hom Duon (North), Hom Duen / Mak Nguo / Sa Nae (South), Ka Yae (Northeast)

Kitchen Mint, Marsh

Mint Properties:

Leaf: spicy flavor, perspiration, asthma, stomachache, carminative, flatulence, muscle contraction, analgesic and inflammation.

5.5.6 Aloe



Fig 6: Aloe

Source: Kullapat Pochanakul. 2017

Scientific name: -

Family name: -

Common name: -

Properties:

Aloe, a plant from the rubber of aloe vera with red, yellow and black solid. It should be formulated with cardamom or nutmeg to decrease indigestible symptom.

Its bitter flavor to convey the upper wind to the lower wind, expectorate and blood, convey the fever, convey the ascaris and cestoda, cholagogue, indigestible symptom, grind it with the liquor for the abscess and bruise (Wut Wutthamwet. 1997: 102-103, 314, 319, 411, 433).

5.5.7 Lizard



Fig 7: Lizard

Source: Kullapat Pochanakul. 2017

Scientific name: Hemidactylus frenatus Dumeril & Bibron

Family name: -

Common name: Spiny-tailed House Gecko

General information:

Lizard, a reptile which able to adjust itself to live in the house with all human, same as *H. platyurus* that eats small insects, 2 eggs with the white shell in the corners and adjust its color to the environment. (Biological and environmental diversity conservation group. 2010, November 25).

Properties: There was no medical properties in the scripture or research.

DISCUSSION

Part 1 – General information, the inspiration of Mr. Boonyong Sriutthakowit was the grandfather of grandfather (great grandfather) who was a folk doctor for the treatment for disease in the toddler by sweeping on the tongue with applying traditional Chinese medicine.

Part 2 – Expertise of folk doctor, the findings revealed that Mr. Boonyong Sriutthakowit was the expert for the treatment for Lah Disease.

Part 3 – Pattern of treatment, the traditional treatment was a sweeping on the tongue with applying 7 medicines; peppermint, clove, aloe, pepper, borneol, camphor and lizard, which was accepted by the parents, and observing the ulcer when he was yawning.

Part 4 – Inheritance, the findings revealed that there was no descendant to inherit the wisdom of applying herbs from Mr. Boonyong Sriutthakowit.

CONCLUSION

A study of background of Mr. Boonyong Sriutthakowit revealed that being Thai traditional doctor would have to study Thai traditional medicine which inherited from the ancestor and years of work experience on treatment for the expertise and be accepted by people in the community which was consistent with the concept of (Komart Juengsatiansab, 2007) with 3 characteristics; 1. Home medicine, a knowledge that people applied for disease treatment by herbs, 2. Specific operating tradition for the abnormality of health and 3. Treatment of folk doctor who inherited from the ancestor or learned from the proficient doctor and accumulated the years of work experience by the observation and memory on the information which affected to the limit of proficiency.

A study of treatment of Mr. Boonyong Sriutthakowit revealed that applying herbs and superstition were used in order to relieve or eliminate the symptoms for the better health by the word-of-mouth in the expertise of folk doctor due to a trust, faith and spirit which was consistent with (Piyanuch Yodsomsuay, 2013), it indicated that the treatment of folk doctor were an applying herbs and incantation to relieve the symptoms for the better health by a trust and faith which affected to the mental health and the word-of-mouth in the expertise of folk doctor [4].

A medical formula of Mr. Boonyong Sriutthakowit for the treatment for Lah disease in the infant and toddler consisted of 7 medicines; peppermint, clove, aloe, pepper, borneol, camphor and lizard, with its soft hot taste for carminative and digestion, and to relieve indigestion and constipation which was consistent with (Chadarat Issararak and Phakawadee Suwanno, 2009), A Study of Thai Medical Formula for Alimentary System Pathomchinda Scripture: Case of Medical Formula for Constipation, it indicated that there were various herbs and different proportions to formulate the medicine for alimentary system with its spicy taste to relieve indigestion and constipation [5].

Nevertheless, a study of wisdom of folk doctor for the treatment for Lah disease which was the traditional treatment by sweeping the medicine, its medical formula was similar to the medical formula of Pratomjinda scripture for the flatulence by

applying herbs for disintegrating the wind element which it was a cathartic and spicy medicine as the medical formula of Mr. Boonyong Sriutthakowit that it was a spicy medicine and black medicine. The interviewing revealed that a folk doctor treated for all patients without financial benefits or medical fee or depended on the patient. It was not only the physical health but also the mental health that a folk doctor treated for all patients by the incantation for their confidence and better recovery. The researcher revealed that those knowledges would not be inherited in the next generation, no data gathering and recording which affected to the loss of knowledge and folk doctor due to there were no data recording, no intention of the new generation on learning of treatment that the treatment of folk doctor was needed before it would be depreciated and lost.

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