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Comparison of drug prices between extracts and decoctions of Chinese medicine as ethical pharmaceuticals considering dispensing free and contents of index ingredients

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<Objective> The Chinese medicines available as ethical drugs include extracts and decoction formulations. Although the former are used widely, this is not the case with the latter. It is troublesome to carry out decoctions, however, the component titer of the decoction may be higher than the extract. Therefore, if there is no disadvantage in the price, it can be prescribed to patients with good compliance. Then, by taking the component content into consideration, both formulations were compared from an economical point of view.

<Methods> Comparison 1: The price of the extract and the corresponding decoction formulation were compared on the basis of the national health insurance drug price standards. Calculating the total price of the crude drug constituents gave the price of the decoction. Comparison 2: Because the technology fee was added, when the decoction was dispensed, the price which took the technology fee into consideration was used in the comparison. Comparison 3: The content of Baicalin, Saikosaponin b2 and Glycyrrhizic acid, which are representative crude drug components, were measured, and the price of these per unit content was compared.

<Results> In comparison 1, the decoction formulation was cheaper in the case of 126 prescriptions out of 128 published in the price standard. In comparison 2, the prescriptions that were cheap for decoction formulations decreased to 49 prescriptions. In comparison 3, the price of decoction per unit weight of each

component was cheap.

<Conclusion> Some of the decoction formulations are cheap, and it have a high titer. Therefore it is of benefit to the patient with good compliance.