



Review article

Online databases and journals of Traditional Medicine and Complementary and Alternative Medicine in Korea

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Abstract

Introduction: How to access Korean publications of Traditional Medicine (TM) and complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) is largely unknown in the west. This article introduces the databases and journals that are available online in Korea.

Methods: The databases were grouped according to their research scope, and each database was then searched for all journals on TM. The journals were classified as sub-societies' journals under the Society of Korean Medicine (SKOM), which is the main academic Society of Korean Medicine, as journals by TKM universities/colleges or as journals by other research sources. The subject of these journals are categorized according to the World Health Organization (WHO) International Standard Terminologies on TM in the Western Pacific Region as follows: general, basic theories, diagnostics, disease, therapeutics, acupuncture and moxibustion, medicinal treatment and classical literature.

Results: There are 13 databases and 44 journals about TM in Korea. Of the 44 journals, 32 belong to sub-societies under the SKOM. Only three of these Korean journals are indexed in the major international biomedical databases such as MEDLINE, SCOPUS and EMBASE. Most journals are published in Korean; although only 7 of the journals are available in English, all journals have English abstracts. Because these journals are not extensively accessible, the amount of information that is available in English may be insufficient.

Conclusions: Our article provides researchers with the opportunity to access studies originally published in Korean.

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Keywords: Complementary of alternative medicine; Traditional Medicine; Korean database; Korean journal; Literature search

Introduction

Traditional Medicine (TM) is the sum total of knowledge, skills and practices based on the theories, beliefs and experiences that are indigenous to different cultures. TM is also used to maintain health as well as to prevent, diagnose, improve or treat physical and mental illnesses as indicated in the World Health Organization (WHO) fact sheet [1]. In some Asian and African countries, 80% of the population depends on TM for primary health care. In many developed countries, 70–80% of the population has used some form of alternative or complementary medicine (e.g., acupuncture) [2]. The increasing use of TM and

complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) has stimulated the publication of clinical trials of these domains.

Evidence-based medicine (EBM) is the process of systematically collecting, reviewing, appraising, and using research findings to aid in the delivery of optimum clinical care to patients [3]. Among these EBM processes, collecting the findings is important and provides an opportunity for TM and CAM in health care when researchers are able to find many articles available from around the world [4–6].

Literature searches for articles on TM published in East Asian countries, specifically those from Korea provide special challenges because many of the Korean medical journals in which such articles appear are only available in Korean. Additionally, many Korean studies have only been often reported in Korean journals and are not included in Western databases. The growth of the medical literature has been tremendous in recent years. However, database search environments need to become more user-friendly by including various hypertext linking capabilities, such as LinkOuts to full-texts and reference linkings among

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articles by Digital Objective Identifiers (DOIs). Once a direct search of a keyword is initiated, a researcher can continue searching endlessly and seamlessly by simply clicking various links that are provided in the records that are retrieved [7].

Recently, many researchers from outside of Korea have asked how to access Korean databases and journals on TM and CAM. Additionally, publications from TM journals are being actively researched and play an important role in the health care system in Korea. Comprehensive searches for TM articles for the purpose of literature reviews will never achieve authoritative results if researchers are restricted to the journals that are listed in MEDLINE. It is essential to search Korean databases because these databases contain the majority of Korean articles. In addition, there is a need to access Korean databases to perform competent systematic reviews related to CAM. In response to this need, the aims of this article were to identify all relevant databases and journals on TM and CAM in Korea and to introduce comprehensive TM information from Korea to researchers who not familiar to Korean database and journals.

Methods

Database selection

The main Korean databases which include the literature on TM were included and classified as types according to their

research scope such as multidisciplinary, conventional medical and TM (Table 1). The information of selected databases was categorized into the database name, access, authorization, language and publisher. We included all journals on TM and CAM that were found in each database. And then the indexed databases are described in Tables 2–4.

Journal selection

To be included, the journals had to be concerned the following criteria: (1) the subject was TM; (2) the journal is published in Korea; and (3) the journal was currently and regularly published. The journals were classified as sub-societies' journals under the Society of Korean Medicine (SKOM), which is the main academic society of Korean Medicine or as journals by TM universities/colleges or as journals by other research sources. Data from each journal's website were abstracted according to predefined criteria that included the journal's title, subject, start year, access, ISSN, language and indexed database, etc. (Tables 2–4). When there was not sufficient information, we contacted the website or publisher to obtain additional data. Duplicated journals were excluded when the journals both had the same subject and ISSN numbers to review the journals' histories. If journals had changed their titles, then the records with the current title were included in the study, and those records with the former title were removed.

Table 1
Main Korean medical databases.

Category	Database (abbreviation)	Access via	Authorization	Main menu's language	Publisher
Multidisciplinary	Korean studies Information Service System (KISS)	http://kiss.kstudy.com/	Subscription, full text	Korean/English	Korean studies Information
	DBpia	http://www.dbpia.co.kr/	Subscription, full text	Korean	Kyobo Book Center & Nurimedia
	The Town Society of Science Technology (TSST)	http://society.kisti.re.kr/main.html	Free, full text	Korean	Korea Institute of Science and Technology Information (KISTI)
	National Discovery for Science Leaders (NDSL)	http://scholar.ndsl.kr/index.do	Free, full text	Korean	
	Korea Science	http://www.koreascience.or.kr/MainPage.jsp	Free, abstract	Korean/English	
Conventional Medicine	Research Information Service System (RISS)	http://www.riss.kr/index.do	Free, full text	Korean	Korea Education & Research Information Service (KERIS)
	Korea Citation Index (KCI)	http://www.kci.go.kr/	Free, full text	Korean	National Research Foundation of Korea (NRF)
	KoreaMed	http://www.koreamed.org/	Free, abstract	Korean/English	Korean Association of Medical Journal Edition (KAMJE)
	Korea Medical Citation Index (KoMCI)	http://www.komci.org/	Free, citation index	Korean/English	
	Synapse	http://synapse.koreamed.org/	Free, full text	Korean/English	
Traditional Medicine	Korean Medical Database (KMbase)	http://kmbase.medric.or.kr/	Free, abstract	Korean	Medical Research Information Center
	Oriental Medicine Advanced Searching Integrated System (OASIS)	http://oasis.kiom.re.kr	Free, full text	Korean/English	Korea Institute of Oriental Medicine
	Korean Traditional Knowledge Portal (KTKP)	http://www.koreantk.com/JZ0100.jsp	Free, full text	Korean/English	Korean Intellectual Property Office (KIPO)

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