INPLASY

Protocol for a Systematic Review and Meta-analysis: Effectiveness and Safety of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) Nursing in Patients Undergoing Radiotherapy

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ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Support - None.

Review Stage at time of this submission - The review has not yet started.

Conflicts of interest - None declared.

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Amendments - This protocol was registered with the International Platform of Registered Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis Protocols (INPLASY) on 9 September 2025 and was last updated on 9 September 2025.

INTRODUCTION

Review question / Objective Objective: To evaluate the effectiveness and safety of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) nursing interventions in patients undergoing radiotherapy.

Condition being studied Malignant tumors treated with radiotherapy. The focus is on radiation-induced side effects such as mucositis, dermatitis, fatigue, nausea, and anxiety, and how TCM nursing interventions may alleviate them.

METHODS

Participant or population Patients diagnosed with malignant tumors who are undergoing radiotherapy.

Intervention Any TCM nursing interventions, including acupoint application, herbal fumigation, acupuncture-assisted nursing, Tuina, dietary or psychological care based on TCM theory.

Comparator Conventional nursing care, placebo, or no treatment.

Study designs to be included Randomized controlled trials, non-randomized controlled studies, cohort studies, case-control studies.

Eligibility criteria Inclusion: Studies involving TCM nursing for radiotherapy patients; reporting effectiveness or safety outcomes.

Exclusion: Case reports, reviews, conference abstracts without full data, animal studies.

Information sources Electronic databases, trial registers (ClinicalTrials.gov, Chinese Clinical Trial Registry), grey literature (theses, dissertations), and manual searching of reference lists.

Main outcome(s) Incidence and severity of radiotherapy-related adverse reactions (e.g., oral mucositis, radiation dermatitis).

Patient-reported quality of life (e.g., EORTC QLQ-C30).

Quality assessment / Risk of bias analysis RCTs will be assessed using the Cochrane Risk of Bias 2.0 tool.

Non-RCTs will be assessed using the Newcastle–Ottawa Scale (NOS).

Strategy of data synthesis Meta-analysis will be conducted using RevMan and Stata. Risk ratios (RR) with 95% CI will be calculated for dichotomous outcomes; mean differences (MD) or standardized mean differences (SMD) with 95% CI for continuous outcomes. Heterogeneity will be assessed using I^2 statistics. Random-effects models will be used if heterogeneity is high.

Subgroup analysis Subgroup analyses will be conducted based on cancer type, intervention type, treatment duration, and study quality.

Sensitivity analysis Sensitivity analyses will be performed by excluding low-quality studies and re-running the analysis to test robustness.

Country(ies) involved China, Sichuan.

Keywords Traditional Chinese Medicine; TCM nursing; radiotherapy; safety; effectiveness; systematic review; meta-analysis.

Contributions of each author
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