Author's response to reviews

Title: Sericin cream reduces pruritis in hemodialysis patients

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Author's response to reviews:

Responses to Reviewers
Reviewer's report # 1
Title: Sericin cream reduces pruritis in hemodialysis patients
Version: 2 Date: 30 May 2012
Reviewer: Chrysoula Pipili
Reviewer's report:
The study of Pornanong Aramwit et al adds information to the current knowledge about uremic pruritus of patients receiving hemodialysis. However, major compulsory revisions are recommended before publication be decided. The study is not well balanced and methodology and discussion are not clearly written. All the paper needs editing.
- Ans Thank you very much for your valuable comments. The entire article has been edited by a native English speaker, and we hope the new version is more balanced.

Title- pruritus instead of pruritis. Correction should be made along the paper
- Ans The term “pruritis” has been replaced with “pruritus” throughout the paper.

Abstract Structural errors on the first sentence in methodology
- Ans The grammatical errors have been corrected.

Main body
Background - Too long the background. Not a place for the all these studies, explaining the possible mechanisms of sericin action
Ans The background has been shortened, and the possible mechanisms of sericin action are explained on page 5.

Methodology
It not clearly stated the number of patients included into two groups. What were the biochemical parameters of patients including in the study? (serum phosphorus, hematocrit?) Did patients present any rash?

-Ans The total number of patients in each group was 47. There was an equal number of patients in the two groups because this was a split-body biometrological assessment; therefore, all of the patients included in this study received both treatments but on different sides of their bodies. The biochemical parameters of the patients have been added to Table 2. The patients who had rashes were excluded at the beginning of the study (this is specified in the exclusion criteria on page 17). Moreover, the sericin cream did not cause any allergic reactions or rashes at any time during the study.

Materials and methods
Why is useful to know the preparation of silk sericin and sericin cream preparation. Please define

-Ans Because commercialized sericin cream is unavailable, the sericin cream used in this study was specially prepared (page 14). Different sericin extraction techniques result in sericin formulations with different biological properties (page 14); therefore, the preparation of the silk sericin used in this study required custom specifications. Reviewer #2 requested more information on the extraction conditions, the molecular weight and the amino acid composition of sericin; this information has been added on pages 5-6, 14-15 and in Table 1.

Methods
The study design, the study treatment, the measurement and outcome are not clear. Probably the text would be more intelligible if all the study steps and the forms firstly mentioned and analysed.

-Ans The Methods section has been changed, hopefully in a way that improves the flow of the section. The entire article has been edited by a native English speaker; we hope this new edition will be more clear.

Results
Not understandable the table 2 and the figure legends. What represent the numbers in the cells on table?

-Ans The skin parameters and the numbers in the cells in Table 2 represent the hydration, irritation (from skin redness) and skin pigmentation. The numbers, which represent the hydration index and melanin index, have no units because they are generated by the instruments (i.e., the Corneometer and the Mexameter). This information was added to the title of Table 3 and the figure legend, as follows: “The skin parameters of hydration (measured by Corneometer) and irritation and pigmentation (measured by Mexameter) from the subjects’ extremities on each week after treatment”.

Discussion
Not adequately supported and well understood. Information should be focus on
patients on hemodialysis and not interchangeable about patients on CKD. The work upon which, authors are building, both published and unpublished, is not acknowledged. Is there any explanation about the sericin possible action mechanism?

-Ans We apologize for the errors. All of the information now focuses on the hemodialysis patients. The possible mechanism of sericin action is discussed on page 10, lines 10-12 and on page 11, lines 3-5.

Level of interest: An article of outstanding merit and interest in its field
Quality of written English: Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited
Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Reviewer's report #2
Title: Sericin cream reduces pruritis in hemodialysis patients
Version: 2 Date: 31 July 2012
Reviewer: Norihisa Kato
Reviewer's report:

- Authors should explain the preparation method of sericin in detail because the method is an important factor affecting the properties of obtained sericin. At least, the temperature and time of the treatment and the average molecular weight of sericin obtained are necessary. If possible, the amino acid composition also should be described.

-Ans Additional data on the sericin extraction conditions and the molecular weight and amino acid composition of the sericin were added on pages 5-6 and 14-15 and in Table 1.

- Authors should explain the originality of the findings more clearly.

-Ans The originality of the findings has been explained on page 10: “This clinical study is the first to suggest that a sericin cream is beneficial for treating pruritus in hemodialysis patients. The benefits of this treatment apparently result from increases in skin hydration and suppression of pro-inflammatory cytokines, as shown in our earlier study, thereby resulting in less skin irritation without any allergic reactions.”

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field
Quality of written English: Acceptable
Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.
Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interest

Editorial Comments:
As you will see from the referees' reports, several concerns have been raised that we would like you to address in a revised manuscript. Please ensure that you respond to each of their concerns as thoroughly as possible, as your revised
manuscript may be returned to the referees for further consideration.

-- In addition to the Referees' comments, could you please also address the following editorial points -

1. Trial Registration Number

Further to our previous email correspondence, we notice that you are reporting a clinical trial but have not cited a trial registration number within your manuscript. This must be obtained before we can proceed further with your manuscript.

Please note that we only accept registration numbers issued by registries that meet all of the ICMJE criteria (http://www.icmje.org/publishing_10register.html). Registries which meet the requirements of the ICMJE include WHO Primary Registries (http://www.who.int/ictrp/network/primary/en/index.html).

We would like you to confirm that your clinical trial is in a publicly accessible registry. The trial registration number should be included as the last line of the abstract of the manuscript.

- Ans The trial registration name and number are now included in the last line of the abstract.

2. Abstract

The last section of the abstract should be Trial Registration: listing the trial registry and the unique identifying number, e.g. Trial registration: Current Controlled Trials ISRCTN73824458. Please note that there should be no space between the letters and numbers of the trial registration number.

- Ans The trial registration name and number are now included in the last line of the abstract.

3. Trial Registration information on Manuscript Details Page

Can you please complete the trial registration details on the submissions page, http://www.biomedcentral.com/author/manuscript/details/view.do?manuscriptId=8369455586733389.

- Ans Completed

4 CONSORT

Can you please ensure that you follow the CONSORT checklist and flow diagram, and include these two completed documents as additional files when uploading your revised manuscript. Copies of the CONSORT checklist and flow diagram can be downloaded from their website here, http://www.consort-statement.org/index.aspx?o=1031

- Ans CONSORT checklist and flow diagram are attached.

5. Competing Interests

You state in your manuscript that fresh cocoons of Bombyx mori were supplied by Chul Thai Silk Co., Ltd. If the material was obtained free of charge, can you please declare this in the Competing Interests section.

- Ans We bought the material from Chul Thai Silk Co., Ltd. and we did made it
clear in the material and method section.

6. General Formatting
Please also ensure that your revised manuscript conforms to the journal style (http://www.biomedcentral.com/info/ifora/medicine_journals). It is important that your files are correctly formatted.

-Ans The revised manuscript conforms to the journal style.