

## **Chinese Herb Extracts for Type-2 Diabetes**

10% of the population in HK has diabetes. There are 2 types of diabetes, namely type-1 diabetes and type-2 diabetes. Over 95% of diabetes patients in Hong Kong belong to type-2 diabetes, which results from insulin resistance, i.e. the body fails to properly use insulin, combined with relative insulin deficiency, and patients are overweight in general.

A previous study conducted by The Faculty of Medicine, HKU, confirmed that Body mass Index was an independent predictor of diabetes. And some other studies have found that a new hormone called ADIPONECTIN, which was made by fat cells, might play an important role in linking obesity with its related metabolic syndromes. As the amount of fat in the fat cells increases, ADIPONECTIN secreted from these cells decreases and the chance of developing diabetes increases.

While a couple of existing drugs for diabetes can increase ADIPONECTIN level, they can also lead to side effects including water retention, and they cannot be used by patients with heart failure. In view of this, the Faculty of Medicine, HKU, has tried to look for a new way and has successfully identified 2 Chinese herbs which can be used to produce anti-diabetic drugs by raising ADIPONECTIN level in the body. As the new drugs are from natural products, and hence would have fewer side effects. The Faculty will then conduct animal tests and identify the major active components. It is expected that the new drugs would be registered within 2005.