

Initial potential relevant articles (n = 1766):

Medline (n = 121)
AMED (n = 1)
Cochrane (n = 3)
EMBASE (n = 93)
CNKI (n = 720)
CBM (n = 428)
CMCC (n = 247)
TCMOline (n = 153)

Publications excluded after screening the title and abstract (n = 1455):

Review articles (n = 45);
Non clinical trials (n = 301);
Inappropriate population, intervention and outcome measure (n = 974);
Duplicates (n = 135)

**Full-text for detailed evaluation
(n = 311)**

Publications excluded (n = 288):

Non RCTs (n = 41);
Intervention not meeting inclusion criteria (n = 7);
Patient not diagnosed LF (n = 55);
CHM used in the control group (n = 123);
Control group not Western medicine, placebo or no intervention (n = 40);
Other reasons (n = 22)

Publications selected for appraisal (n = 23):

Chinese studies (n = 22);
English studies (n = 1)

Trials included in meta-analysis (n = 21):

CHM versus Western medicine (n = 6);
CHM combined with Western medicine *versus* Western medicine (n = 14);
CHM versus placebo (n = 3)