Supplementary Table 1 Search Strategy for the EMBASE

No.	Query
#1	rheumatoid arthritis'/exp
#2	(rheumatoid OR reumatoid OR revmatoid OR rheumatic OR reumatic OR revmatic OR rheumat* OR reumat* OR revmarthrit*) NEXT/3 (arthrit* OR artrit* OR diseas* OR condition* OR nodule*)
#3	felty* NEXT/2 syndrome
#4	caplan* NEXT/2 syndrome
#5	sjogren* NEXT/2 syndrome
#6	sicca* NEXT/2 syndrome
#7	'still$ disease'
#8	'bechterew$ disease*'
#9	#1 OR #2 OR #3 OR #4 OR #5 OR #6 OR #7 OR #8
#10	'gui-zhi shao-yao zhi-mu decoction' OR 'gui-zhi decoction' OR 'shao-yao decoction' OR 'zhi-mu decoction' OR (guizhi AND shaoyao AND zhimu)
#11	methotrexate'/exp
#12	amethopterin OR methotrexate* OR 'methotrexate sodium' OR mexate OR 'methotrexate hydrate' OR 'dicesium salt methotrexate'
#13	#11 OR #12
#14	#9 AND #10 AND #13

Supplementary Table 2 Search Strategy for the PubMed

No.	**Query**
#1	arthritis, rheumatoid
#3	rheumatoid
#4	reumatoid
#5	revmatoid
#6	rheumatic
#7	reumatic
#8	rheumat*
#9	reumat*
#10	#3 OR #4 OR #5 OR #6 OR #7 OR #8 OR #9
#11	arthrit*
#12	artrit*
#13	diseas*
#14	condition*
#15	nodule*
#16	vasculitis*
#17	#11 OR #12 OR #13 OR #14 OR #15 OR #16
#18	#10 AND #17
#19	felty* syndrome
#20	caplan* syndrome
#21	sjogren* syndrome
#22	sicca* syndrome
#23	still* disease
#24	bechterew disease
#25	Still's Disease, Adult-Onset
#26	#1 OR #18 OR #19 OR #20 OR #21 OR #22 OR #23 OR #24 OR #25
#27	Methotrexate
#28	Amethopterin
#29	methotrexate sodium
#30	methotrexate hydrate
#31	dicesium salt methotrexate
#32	Sodium, Methotrexate
#33	Mexate
#34	#27 OR #28 OR #29 OR #30 OR #31 OR #32 OR 33
#35	gui-zhi shao-yao zhi-mu
#36	guizhi shaoyao zhimu decoction
#37	guizhi shaoyao zhimu
#38	gui-zhi shao-yao zhi-mu decoction

#39	#35 OR #36 OR #37 OR #38
#40	#26 AND #34 AND #39

Supplementary Table 3 Search Strategy for the Cochrane library

No.	Query
#1	MeSH descriptor: [Arthritis, Rheumatoid] explode all trees
#2	felty near/2 syndrome
#3	caplan near/2 syndrome
#4	sjogren* near/2 syndrome
#5	sicca near/2 syndrome
#6	still* next disease
#7	bechterew* next disease
#8	((rheumatoid or reumatoid or revmatoid or rheumatic or reumatic or revmatic) near/3 (arthrit* or artrit* or diseas* or condition* or nodule*)):ti,ab
#9	#1OR#2OR#3OR#4OR#5OR#6OR#7OR#8
#10	MeSH descriptor: [Methotrexate] explode all trees
#11	Guizhi decoction
#12	shaoyao decoction
#13	zhimu decoction
#14	guizhi-shaoyao-zhimu decoction
#15	#11OR#12OR#13OR#14
#16	#9AND#10AND#15

Supplementary Table 4 Search Strategy for the Web of Science

No.	**Query**
# 1	TS=(arthritis, rheumatoid)
# 2	TS=((rheumatoid OR reumatoid OR revmatoid OR rheumatic OR reumatic OR revmatic OR rheumat* OR reumat* OR revmarthrit*) NEAR/3 (arthrit* OR artrit* OR diseas* OR condition* OR nodule*))
# 3	TS=(felty* NEAR/2 syndrome)
# 4	TS=(caplan* NEAR/2 syndrome)
# 5	TS=(sjogren* NEAR/2 syndrome)
# 6	TS=(sicca* NEAR/2 syndrome)
# 7	TS=("still$ disease")
# 8	TS=("bechterew$ disease*")
# 9	#1 OR #2 OR #3 OR #4 OR #5 OR #6 OR #7 OR #8
# 10	TS=("gui-zhi shao-yao zhi-mu decoction" OR "gui-zhi decoction" OR "shao-yao decoction" OR "zhi-mu decoction" OR (guizhi AND shaoyao AND zhimu))
# 11	TS=(Methotrexate* OR Amethopterin OR Mexate)
# 12	#9 AND #10 AND #11

Supplementary Table 5 Search Strategy for CNKI, Wanfang and VIP

No.	Query
#1	Guizhi-shaoyao-zhimu tang [Title/Abstract]
#2	Jia an die ling [Title/Abstract]
#3	An jia die ling [Title/Abstract]
#4	MTX [Title/Abstract]
#5	#2 OR #3 OR #4
#6	Lei feng shi guan jie yan [Title/Abstract]
#7	Lei feng shi xing guan jie yan [Title/Abstract]
#8	Lei feng guan [Title/Abstract]
#9	#6 OR #7 OR #8
#10	#1 AND #5 AND #9

Supplementary Table 6. Sensitivity Analysis

Research content	Results
Fig 3-Effective rate Forest plot	**RR=1.24, 95% CI: 1.18 – 1.30**
Cui 2019	RR=1.25, 95% CI: 1.18 – 1.32
Dong et al. 2020	RR=1.24, 95% CI: 1.18 – 1.31
Huang et al. 2013	RR=1.23, 95% CI: 1.17 – 1.30
Ji 2015	RR=1.25, 95% CI: 1.18 – 1.32
Li and Guan 2018	RR=1.24, 95% CI: 1.17 – 1.31
Li et al. 2019	RR=1.23, 95% CI: 1.16 – 1.29
Liang and Yang 2013	RR=1.24, 95% CI: 1.18 – 1.31
Wu 2014	RR=1.24, 95% CI: 1.18 – 1.31
Xiao 2012	RR=1.23, 95% CI: 1.17 – 1.30
Yu and Zhang 2010	RR=1.24, 95% CI: 1.17 – 1.30
Yuan 2018	RR=1.23, 95% CI: 1.17 – 1.30
Zhang et al. 2019	RR=1.24, 95% CI: 1.17 – 1.31
Zhou and Liu 2007	RR=1.23, 95% CI: 1.17 – 1.30
Fig 3-Partial remission rate Forest plot	**RR=1.47, 95% CI: 1.24 – 1.75**
Huang et al. 2013	RR=1.45, 95% CI: 1.21 – 1.73
Ji 2015	RR=1.52, 95% CI: 1.23 – 1.88
Li and Guan 2018	RR=1.51, 95% CI: 1.25 – 1.83
Li et al. 2019	RR=1.47, 95% CI: 1.23 – 1.76
Liang and Yang 2013	RR=1.48, 95% CI: 1.22 – 1.79
Wu 2014	RR=1.47, 95% CI: 1.22 – 1.78
Xi et al. 2020	RR=1.53, 95% CI: 1.33 – 1.75
Yu and Zhang 2010	RR=1.43, 95% CI: 1.21 – 1.68
Yuan 2018	RR=1.47, 95% CI: 1.22 – 1.76
Zhang et al. 2019	RR=1.45, 95% CI: 1.22 – 1.72
Zhou and Liu 2007	RR=1.47, 95% CI: 1.23 – 1.75
Fig 3-Remission rate Forest plot	**RR=1.51, 95% CI: 1.16 – 1.95**
Cui 2019	RR=1.43, 95% CI: 1.01 – 2.04
Dong et al. 2020	RR=1.54, 95% CI: 1.16 – 2.05
Xi et al. 2020	RR=1.61, 95% CI: 1.19 – 2.18
Yu and Zhang 2010	RR=1.46, 95% CI: 1.12 – 1.89
Zhou and Liu 2007	RR=1.49, 95% CI: 1.15 – 1.93
Fig 4-index CRP Forest plot	**RR=-1.08, 95% CI: -1.48 – -0.68**
Cui 2019	RR=-0.97, 95% CI: -1.36 – -0.58
Huang et al. 2013	RR=-1.15, 95% CI: -1.57 – -0.72
Ji 2015	RR=-1.03, 95% CI: -1.48 – -0.58
Li and Guan 2018	RR=-1.04, 95% CI: -1.48 – -0.59

Li et al. 2019	RR=-1.04, 95% CI: -1.49 – -0.60
Liang and Yang 2013	RR=-1.21, 95% CI: -1.56 – -0.86
Wu 2014	RR=-1.12, 95% CI: -1.56 – -0.69
Yu and Zhang 2010	RR=-1.14, 95% CI: -1.57 – -0.71
Zhang et al. 2019	RR=-1.02, 95% CI: -1.45 – -0.59
Fig 4-index DMS Forest plot	**RR=-1.58, 95% CI: -2.38 – -0.78**
Huang et al. 2013	RR=-1.74, 95% CI: -2.67 – -0.80
Li and Guan 2018	RR=-1.74, 95% CI: -2.71 – -0.77
Liang and Yang 2013	RR=-1.62, 95% CI: -2.55 – -0.69
Wu 2014	RR=-1.76, 95% CI: -2.69 – -0.82
Xi et al. 2020	RR=-1.75, 95% CI: -2.77 – -0.73
Yu and Zhang 2010	RR=-1.74, 95% CI: -2.70 – -0.79
Zhang et al. 2019	RR=-0.87, 95% CI: -1.09 – -0.66
Fig 4-index ESR Forest plot	**RR=-1.52, 95% CI: -2.10 – -0.93**
Cui 2019	RR=-1.52, 95% CI: -2.18 – -0.86
Huang et al. 2013	RR=-1.59, 95% CI: -2.23 – -0.95
Ji 2015	RR=-1.52, 95% CI: -2.21 – -0.84
Li and Guan 2018	RR=-1.37, 95% CI: -1.94 – -0.80
Li et al. 2019	RR=-1.21, 95% CI: -1.66 – -0.76
Liang and Yang 2013	RR=-1.66, 95% CI: -2.24 – -1.07
Wu 2014	RR=-1.58, 95% CI: -2.22 – -0.94
Xiao 2012	RR=-1.65, 95% CI: -2.25 – -1.04
Yu and Zhang 2010	RR=-1.56, 95% CI: -2.22 – -0.91
Zhang et al. 2019	RR=-1.52, 95% CI: -2.18 – -0.87
Fig 4-index RF Forest plot	**RR=-1.36, 95% CI: -2.14 – -0.58**
Cui 2019	RR=-1.45, 95% CI: -2.40 – -0.51
Huang et al. 2013	RR=-1.49, 95% CI: -2.38 – -0.60
Ji 2015	RR=-1.27, 95% CI: -2.14 – -0.39
Li et al. 2019	RR=-1.40, 95% CI: -2.33 – -0.48
Liang and Yang 2013	RR=-1.57, 95% CI: -2.40 – -0.73
Wu 2014	RR=-1.49, 95% CI: -2.38 – -0.59
Zhang et al. 2019	RR=-0.90, 95% CI: -1.44 – -0.36
Fig 4-index SJC Forest plot	**RR=-0.81, 95% CI: -1.05 – -0.57**
Huang et al. 2013	RR=-0.80, 95% CI: -1.10 – -0.49
Liang and Yang 2013	RR=-0.72, 95% CI: -1.00 – -0.44
Wu 2014	RR=-0.90, 95% CI: -1.18 – -0.62
Yu and Zhang 2010	RR=-0.82, 95% CI: -1.15 – -0.50

Fig 4-index TJC Forest plot	RR=-0.93, 95% CI: -1.28 – -0.57
Wu 2014	RR=-1.10, 95% CI: -1.37 – -0.82
Xi et al. 2020	RR=-0.76, 95% CI: -1.19 – -0.34
Yu and Zhang 2010	RR=-0.88, 95% CI: -1.50 – -0.26
Fig 6-AEs-Gastrointestinal Forest plot	**RR=0.46, 95% CI: 0.24 – 0.88**
Dong et al. 2020	RR=0.46, 95% CI: 0.23 – 0.90
Huang et al. 2013	RR=0.47, 95% CI: 0.25 – 0.92
Li and Guan 2018	RR=0.44, 95% CI: 0.22 – 0.87
Xi et al. 2020	RR=0.54, 95% CI: 0.26 – 1.10
Yu and Zhang 2010	RR=0.46, 95% CI: 0.19 – 1.09
Yuan 2018	RR=0.42, 95% CI: 0.21 – 0.83
Fig 6-AEs-Liver Forest plot	**RR=0.31, 95% CI: 0.05 – 1.90**
Huang et al. 2013	RR=0.34, 95% CI: 0.04 – 3.15
Yu and Zhang 2010	RR=0.25, 95% CI: 0.01 – 5.96
Fig 6-AEs-Nervous system Forest plot	**RR=0.97, 95% CI: 0.24 – 3.85**
Li and Guan 2018	RR=0.93, 95% CI: 0.13 – 6.74
Xi et al. 2020	RR=1.77, 95% CI: 0.37 – 8.43
Yu and Zhang 2010	RR=0.72, 95% CI: 0.13 – 3.84
Yuan 2018	RR=0.68, 95% CI: 0.11 – 4.34
Fig 6-other AEs Forest plot	**RR=0.65, 95% CI: 0.15 – 2.83**
Huang et al. 2013	RR=0.51, 95% CI: 0.05 – 5.43
Yu and Zhang 2010	RR=0.75, 95% CI: 0.11 – 4.99
Fig 5-total AEs Forest plot	**RR=0.46, 95% CI: 0.26 – 0.83**
Dong et al. 2020	RR=0.45, 95% CI: 0.23 – 0.88
Huang et al. 2013	RR=0.47, 95% CI: 0.23 – 0.94
Li and Guan 2018	RR=0.42, 95% CI: 0.21 – 0.83
Liang and Yang 2013	RR=0.50, 95% CI: 0.30 – 0.85
Xi et al. 2020	RR=0.56, 95% CI: 0.33 – 0.94
Yu and Zhang 2010	RR=0.43, 95% CI: 0.19 – 0.98
Yuan 2018	RR=0.41, 95% CI: 0.24 – 0.70

Supplementary Table 7. Adverse events.

Author	Yu and Zhang 2010		Huang et al. 2013		Liang and Yang 2013		Yuan 2018		Li and Guan 2018		Xi et al. 2020		Dong et al. 2020		**Total**
Group	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	
Number of patients	40	41	36	27	40	38	44	44	45	45	75	80	30	30	**615**
Patients with AEs	8	16	2	4	0	6	4	3	3	4	2	13	1	2	**68**
Xerostomia							1	1	1	2					**5**
Oral Ulcer	1	3													**4**
Nausea	2	4		1			1	1	1	1	2	9	1	1	**24**
Epigastric Discomfort	2	4													**6**
Diarrhea														1	**1**
Liver Damage	1			1											**2**
Elevated Liver Enzyme		3													**3**
Vertigo	1						2	1	1	1		4			**10**
Skin Rash	1		1												**2**
Leukopenia		2	1	1											**4**
Fatigue				1											**1**

A: experimental group; B: control group