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Phytoceuticals

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ABSTRACT

Use of plants for medicinal purposes is herbal medicine or herbalism. It is also called as Botanical or phyto-medicine or simply Herbalism. The therapeutic activity is because of their active constituents that act either alone or in combination. The scope of herbal medicine is sometimes extended to include fungal and bee products, as well as minerals, shells and certain animal parts. If you are thinking about using an herbal medicine, first get information on it from reliable sources. Western Herbal Medicine aims to promote health and restore balance in disease

INTRODUCTION

The use of a part of a plant or as a whole plant for medicinal purpose is called herbal medicine. It is also called as Botanical or phyto medicine or simply Herbalism. It is becoming more main stream as improvements in analysis and quality control along with advances in clinical research show the value of herbal medicine in the treating and preventing disease ^[1-4]. Herbal remedies are herbs (leaves, flowers, seeds, fruits, roots etc.), materials derived from herbs (essential oils, fresh juices, gums and resins etc.) and plant preparations (fluid or dry extracts, tinctures, decoctions and infusions, oils etc.). Herbal remedies exert therapeutic activity because of their active constituents that act either alone or in combination ^[5,6]. It is in history form long about plants being used for medicinal purpose. Herbal Medicines use different alkaloids of medicinal plants for prevention and treatment of disease. Use of herbal medicine is cheaper for its easy availability. Modern day medicine already accepted herbalism as a form of alternative medicine.

History

It is known from 3000 BC about plants being used for medicinal purpose. This was described by ancient Chinese and Egyptian Papyrus writings. Herbs being used as healing medicines were used as Indigenous cultures by the Africans and Native Americans. However, others used herbal therapies as traditional medicines which includes the Ayurveda and Traditional Chinese medicine ^[7]. However, modern medicine makes use of the plant derived chemicals or constituents as medicinal use to treat wide range of illness. Knowledge about medicines related to herbal medicine is being created by different disciplines, e.g.:

Ethnobotany

It is the branch of herbal medicine where plants are used by ethnic societies. Apart from plants being used medicinally, they are also used as currency, cosmetics, cloths, wood, food, constructions etc.

Chinese medicine

The use of acupuncture and herbs, and the manipulation of the flow of qi with massage and specific exercises ^[8].

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Aromatherapy

Aromatherapy is one the oldest known method of treatment. The use of essential oils from herbs to manage a wide range of illness is a branch of herbal medicine called as Aromatherapy. It is basically the use of fragmented parts of a plant. It works by inhaling the aroma of the herbs. It is known to reduce stress, lift depression, soothe a soul etc. the healing power of the essential oil is the essence of Aromatherapy.

Western herbal medicine

Western Herbal Medicine is the use of plants, part (s) of a plants or the material derived from a plant for medicinal purpose. It aims to promote health and restore balance in disease^[9]. Basically, the active constituent of the plant is extracted, purified and administered.

Complementary medicine (CM)

It generally refers to a wide range of health care practices that do not use drugs or invasive techniques.

Naturopathy

It is an umbrella term that encompasses many forms of complementary and natural medicine modalities.

Natural medicine

It covers a range of disciplines within complementary health with a holistic approach, including nutritional medicine, western herbal medicine and naturopathy^[10].

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