

Use of Herbal Medicines: A Growing Trend

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Abstract: *In today's world, using herbal remedies is becoming more popular. Herbal remedies are getting more and more well - liked as people become more health - conscious and look for alternative treatments. Herbal remedies have been used for millennia to treat a wide range of illnesses since they are made from natural sources like plants. Due to the apparent safety and efficacy of herbal medications, interest in them has increased recently. Many people feel that herbal medicines are less harmful to the body and have less negative effects than conventional pharmaceuticals. Herbal remedies are frequently more accessible and inexpensive than prescription drugs as well. The effectiveness and safety of herbal treatments are questioned, though. Herbal medicines, unlike prescription drugs, are not subject to FDA regulation and lack dose and quality standards. Also, there is a chance that herbal medicines and prescription medications will interact, which could have negative effects. Notwithstanding these reservations, the use of herbal medications is on the rise, and healthcare providers need to be aware of this development. Patients may fail to reveal their use of herbal remedies, which might result in adverse drug reactions and other problems. In order to create safe and successful treatment programmes, healthcare providers need both educate themselves and their patients about the advantages and hazards of herbal remedies.*

Keywords: Herbalism, Herbal Pharmaceuticals, Subpar Products, Allergic Reactions, Novel Herbs

1. Introduction

Herbal medicine, also referred to as plants materials or herbalism, is the practise of using whole plants or plant parts to treat wounds or illnesses. Therapeutic herbs and other substances are combined to create herbal remedies, which are used to treat or prevent disease. These are ingredients that are utilised in drugs or preparations made from a plant or plants, and they can be used for any of these purposes. Herbal medicine is the oldest known form of medical care. The market is flooded with herbal medicines that promise to alleviate the signs and symptoms of a variety of diseases, from depression to the common cold and flu. Herbal pharmaceuticals are defined by the World Health Organization⁴ (WHO) as full - spectrum, labelled medications that contain active compounds, aerial or secretive elements of the plant, other plant material, or mixtures of these.

1.1 Benefits of Herbal Medicines

Natural: The fact that herbal medication is natural is one of the most frequently mentioned advantages. Herbal treatments are sometimes regarded as a more natural and less synthetic substitute for prescription drugs because they are created from plants and plant extracts.

Reduced Cost: For those who are having difficulty paying for their medical expenses, herbal remedies are frequently significantly more affordable than prescription drugs.

Traditional and cultural value: Herbal treatments are frequently passed down through generations and have significant traditional and cultural value. They are ingrained in many different cultural traditions.

Reduced danger of adverse effects: Although this isn't always the case, herbal remedies are regarded to have less negative effects than pharmaceutical medications.

Less risk of side effects: Herbal medicines are thought to have fewer side effects than prescription drugs, although this is not always the case.

Wide range of uses: There is a wide range of herbal medicines available, with each having specific health benefits. For instance, *echinacea* is often used to treat colds, while ginger is used to reduce inflammation and nausea.

1.2 Risks of Herbal Medicines

Lack of regulation: Compared to prescription drugs, herbal medicines frequently have less stringent regulations, which increases the danger of contaminated or subpar products.

Adverse effects: Although herbal medicines are frequently thought to have less negative effects than prescription medications, some people may still have unwanted effects from them. In addition, some plants can have negative interactions with prescription medications.

Quality and Dosage inconsistencies: Herbal medicines are not standardised, thus quality and dose can differ significantly between brands and even within the same product. This makes it difficult to administer the right medication.

Allergic reactions: Using certain herbs could result in an allergic reaction in certain people who are sensitive to them.

Lack of scientific evidence: While some herbal remedies have been scientifically shown to be useful, many others have not been sufficiently investigated to establish their safety and efficacy.

Table 1: Examples of herbal medicines**The Role of Regulations**

Herbal medicine	Health property	Plant source
Paclitaxel	Anti - Cancer Drug	Yew Tree Taxus
Etoposide	Anti - Cancer Drug	Mayapple (Podophyllum)
Artemisinin Derivatives	Plasmodium Falciparum Malaria	Wild Wormwood (Artemisia Vulgaris),
Metformin	Type 2 Diabetes	Galega Offi cinalis
Capsaicin	Pain	Capsicum Annuum (Cayenne)

Herbal medicine is a sort of complementary and alternative medicine that treats a range of medical issues using plants or plant extracts. Since the use of herbal medicine has become more widespread recently, there is a need for regulation to guarantee that these products are high - quality, safe, and efficient.

The Food and Drug Administration is responsible for overseeing herbal medicine regulation in the US (FDA). The Dietary Supplement Health and Education Act (DSHEA) of 1994 established the FDA's authority over herbal medicine as a dietary supplement. As a result, producers of herbal supplements are in charge of making sure that their goods are secure and properly labelled, but they are not obligated to show that the goods are efficient prior to marketing.

Also, the WHO has actively participated in regulating herbal medicine. The WHO has produced recommendations on the safety, effectiveness, and quality of herbal medicines in its guidelines for the evaluation of herbal medicines. The WHO also created the International Classification of Diseases (ICD), which has a section devoted to herbal and other forms of traditional medicine.

The enormous variety of herbs that are available presents one of the main obstacles to controlling herbal therapy. The safety and effectiveness of thousands of plants used in traditional medicine around the world have not been properly investigated. The absence of dose and quality standards is another difficulty. It might be challenging to evaluate different products because different producers may utilise different plant components, different extraction processes, and different quantities of active compounds.

It can be difficult to enforce laws across borders. There are laws governing herbal medicine in many nations, and some may have none at all. This might make it challenging to guarantee that goods meeting the safety and quality criteria of another country are sold in one country.

2. Future directions in herbal medicine

Herbal medicine is a field with a bright future, full of prospects and challenges. Here are a few suggested directions for improvement:

Creation of novel herbs and extracts: There is an increasing demand for new herbal remedies, particularly those derived from plants native to areas where traditional medicine is practised widely. In order to create herbal medicines that are stronger and more potent, researchers are

also looking into the possibility of novel extraction techniques.

Combining herbal medicine and conventional medicine:

Although many people now utilise herbal therapy in addition to conventional medicine, there is growing interest in researching the possible benefits of integrating the two modalities in a more methodical manner. This can entail employing herbal medicines to lessen the negative effects of conventional therapies or using herbs to increase the potency of traditional treatments.

Increased research into the safety and efficacy of herbal medicine:

Further research is needed to properly understand the possible advantages and hazards of using these treatments, despite some research already being done on the safety and effectiveness of herbal medicine. This might entail more clinical trials and research, as well as closer cooperation between researchers and practitioners of traditional medicine.

Herbal medicine standardisation:

The absence of quality and dosage standards is one of the main obstacles to the regulation of herbal medication. More standardisation will be required as the usage of herbal medicine expands in order to guarantee the effectiveness and safety of the products.

Globalization of herbal medicine:

As the world gets more linked, traditional medical techniques from different countries are attracting more and more attention. This offers a chance for more cooperation between traditional medicine practitioners from various cultures and geographical locations, as well as for increased knowledge and comprehension of the potential advantages of herbal medicine.

Overall, the future of herbal medicine is promising and full of potential, but to fully reap its rewards, cooperation and innovation will be needed.

3. Conclusion

In conclusion, herbal medicine has a long history of use in numerous cultures around the world and is a fast expanding subject. While there are some laws in place to guarantee the security and effectiveness of herbal remedies, there are still many issues that need to be resolved, including the lack of quality and dosage standards, the enormous variety of herbs that are available, and the difficulty of enforcing laws across international borders.

Developing novel herbs and extracts, combining herbal medicine with conventional treatment, and conducting further study on the security and effectiveness of herbal medicine are just a few of the fascinating opportunities that lie ahead. Those who are interested in adopting herbal medicine should exercise caution and speak with a licenced healthcare professional before attempting any novel treatments, though.

Future advancements in herbal medicine ultimately depend on their ability to innovate and work together with those involved in traditional medicine, research, and governing

authorities. We can guarantee that the advantages of herbal medicine are completely realised while ensuring the safety and well - being of those who utilise these treatments with the correct investments and partnerships.

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