



A Study on Herbal Medicine

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Description

Herbal medicines are one type of dietary supplement. They are sold as tablets, capsules, powders, teas, extracts, and fresh or dried plants. People use herbal medicines to try to maintain or improve their health. Governments, international agencies and corporations are increasingly investing in traditional herbal medicine research. Traditional herbal medicines are naturally occurring, plant-derived substances with minimal or no industrial processing that have been used to treat illness within local or regional healing practices. Traditional herbal medicines are getting significant attention in global health debates. Herbal medicine is the use of medicinal plants for prevention and treatment of diseases: it ranges from traditional and popular medicines of every country to the use of standardized and triturated herbal extracts. Generally cultural rootedness enduring and widespread use in a Traditional Medical System may indicate safety, but not efficacy of treatments, especially in herbal medicine where tradition is almost completely based on remedies containing active principles at very low and ultra-low concentrations, or relying on magical-energetic principles. In the age of globalization and of the so-called 'plate world', assessing the 'transferability' of treatments between different cultures is not a relevant goal for clinical research, while the assessment of efficacy and safety that should be based on the regular patterns of mainstream clinical medicine. The other black box of herbal-based treatments is the lack of definite and complete information about the composition of extracts. Herbal derived remedies need a powerful and deep assessment of their pharmacological qualities and safety that actually can be realized by new biologic technologies like pharmacogenomics, metabolomics and microarray methodology. Herbal medicine is the use of medicinal plants for prevention and treatment of diseases: it ranges from traditional and popular medicines of every country to the use of standardized and triturated herbal extracts. Because of the large and growing use of natural derived substances in all over the world, it is not wise to rely

also on the tradition or supposed millenarian beliefs; explanatory and pragmatic studies are useful and should be considered complementary in the acquisition of reliable data both for health caregiver and patients.

Traditional healers help individuals to make meaning out of the natural herbs seen around that can be useful to one's health. That being said, they have an edge over most modern-day health practitioners; particularly the pharmacists in terms of this knowledge. In China, traditional herbal medicine played a prominent role in the strategy to contain and treat severe acute respiratory syndrome. Eighty per cent of African populations use some form of traditional herbal medicine, and the worldwide annual market for these products approaches US\$ 60 billion. Many hope traditional herbal medicine research will play a critical role in global health. China, India, Nigeria, the United States of America and WHO have all made substantial research investments in traditional herbal medicines. Industry has also invested millions of US dollars looking for promising medicinal herbs and novel chemical compounds. This is still a relatively modest investment compared to the overall pharmaceutical industry; however, it raises interesting ethical questions, some of which are not faced in more conventional drug development. Herbs are natural products and their chemical composition varies depending on several factors and therefore varying from people to people, from energetic decoctions to the use of herbal extracts following Western methodologies of mainstream medicine. Traditional medicines has a very long history: it is the sum total of the practices based on the theories, beliefs and experiences of different cultures and times, often inexplicable, used in the maintenance of health, as like in the prevention, diagnosis, improvement and treatment of illnesses. In every country traditional medicines find foundation in magical or religious beliefs, or popular experience and the World Health Organization is engaged to establish definitive guidelines for methodology of clinical research and the appraisal of effectiveness of traditional medicine.