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Teucrium polium: Benefits versus risks

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Teucrium Polium (TP), family Lamiaceae or Labiatae is a shrub growing mainly in Mediterranean countries. Also, the herb is distributed in the rocky hills and deserts of Sini Egypt, Iran, Turkey, Jordan, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Greece, etc. TP is collected by the natives from April to August and stored as dry materials for medicinal use. The aqueous extract of the plant has a pleasant aromatic odor and a characteristic bitter taste. Also, TP was used in folk medicine for centuries to treat different human ailments. In children and adult's TP is used as antispasmodic, anti-diabetic, to treat rheumatism and in peptic ulcer, a coolant, a carminative. The volatile oil of TP contains several phytochemicals such as mono- and sesquiterpenes that may be responsible for the potent spasmolytic effects of the isolated intestine of rabbits and rats as well as the isolated heart of the rabbit. Other important components of TP are flavonoids, and the terpenoids, alkaloids and terpenoids. Unlike the benefits of TP, the toxicity of the plant use is not well studied. The acute administration of TP mice model was exhibited in a significant increase in enzymes leaked to serum such as: ALT, ALP, ADH and GGT. Such increases clearly indicate hepatotoxicity, while the pathological picture of the liver exhibited lobar hepatitis, infiltration of lymphocytes, coagulation necrosis and fatty changes of the liver. In conclusion, the herbal preparations have to be subjected to rigorous investigation to elucidate the efficacy and the safety before of the plant is used by human.

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