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Diabetes management in Nigeria and the risk of herb-drug interactions

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Previously held perceptions suggested that the use of herbal medicines in disease management were primarily by patients living in rural areas with little or no access to modern healthcare facilities. Various studies have now shown the increasing prevalence of herb use alongside conventional medical treatment including prescription drugs, by patients living in urban areas. One of the identified reasons is patients' desire to have more control of their treatment decisions, particularly for chronic diseases like diabetes; and are therefore willing to try out alternative medicine as a result, based on reported cases of efficacy. This practice however increases the risk of herb-drug interactions if not properly monitored, some of which may be clinically relevant. In Nigeria, the prevalence of herb used alongside prescription medicines for the management of diabetes in urban cities is approximately 50%. Despite this high use, there is paucity of information about the associated risks of herb-drug interactions amongst this cohort of patients. To address this, we conducted a field study to identify commonly used herbal medicines encountered in diabetes management in Nigeria. Thereafter, we carried out an evaluation of their pharmacokinetic profile based on their identified interaction(s) with several pharmacokinetic parameters. This enabled us make predictions about possible risks of interactions that could be encountered by diabetic patients, based on information about their prescription drug use. The results of this study would in turn provide healthcare practitioners with relevant information to better counsel patients on concurrent herb and drug use to forestall unwanted herb-drug interactions.

Biography

Udoamaka Ezuruike is a Pharmacist, who obtained her Bachelor of Pharmacy degree from the University of Benin in Nigeria. Thereafter, she went on to University of Oxford to study for an MSc in Pharmacology.

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