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Traditional herbals in treatment of cancer: A clinical research review

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Plants have been used for medicinal purposes long before recorded history. Indigenous cultures like, African and Native Americans use herbs in their healing rituals, while others developed traditional medical systems in which herbal therapies were used. Medicinal herbals and their derived phytochemicals have gained increased recognition with regards to their use in cancer treatments. The fact that these herbs are natural, and could be absorbed naturally by the human body, with possible less toxic effect, gives credence to researches concerning their use in treatment of cancers. Clinical studies have reported beneficial effects of herbal medicines on the survival, quality of life of cancer patients, and on their immune systems, when these herbal medicines were used together with conventional medicine. This study reviewed some past clinical studies which looked into the use of herbal medicines for different cancer cases and the effect of herbal therapy against cancer cells. Literature is rich and evidences abound of the extent of the use of natural herbs for the treatment of cancers in countries like China, India, Nigeria and United States of America. This review documented the efficacy of such intervention and the probable improvement in the quality of life in these countries. Clear comparison of results in relation to success achieved, side effects and level of toxicity between orthodox medicine and herbal medicine were reviewed. Major research effort to understand the effect of these herbs in the treatment of cancer has been by randomized controlled trials. This study reviewed some recent studies on the mechanism of action of these herbs in certain cancer cells. It also reviewed the potential application of derived phytochemicals in development of cell-based cancer vaccine, safety of herbal anticancer compounds and chemo-preventive herbal compounds whose mechanism, biological response, and anticancer elements were studied.

Biography

Ogbonna Shadrach Chidubem earned his Bachelor of Science degree in Biochemistry from the University of Jos, Nigeria. After his BSc in Biochemistry, he had a five year High School teaching experience in Chemistry from 2009 to 2014. He was not only involved in the academic teaching, but served in the administration, during which he was the Head of Department of Science. He has taught with the Ejeme Senior Secondary School Delta State as a Member of the National Youth Service Corps 2009-2010, and was recognized by the Delta State Government for his contribution in HIV/AIDS awareness and voluntary testing among teenagers. He also taught with the Word of Faith Group of Schools Delta State Nigeria (2011-2012) and Cornerstone International School, Delta State, Nigeria (2012-2014) and was awarded Best Teacher with the CIS 2012 and has since then maintained a high level of performance with the said school before leaving the country to commence his medical career. He is currently a student of All Saints University School of Medicine in Commonwealth of Dominica.

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