

Herbals & Natural Remedies

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Nutritional and botanical modulation of the reward circuitry (limbic, HPA, and autonomic nervous system) as an adjunct in addiction therapy

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Addiction is a primary, chronic disease of brain reward, motivation, memory and related circuitry. Dysfunction in these circuits leads to characteristic, biological, psychological, social and spiritual manifestations. The goal of the integrative botanical holistic addiction treatment is to restore balance and wholeness in the lives of the people who come for help. Emerging on the horizon in addiction therapy is an expansion of the scope of treatment beyond drug replacement and maintenance therapy approaches to include molecular management of addiction physio-pathology. The goal in these integrative approaches, which extends beyond replacement of the addictive substance, is to “re-wire” the reward circuitry and create a new memory free from harmful cravings. Called neuroplasticity, this re-wiring of the nervous system could be accomplished through an herbal blend of nervine a natural restorative ecological system that enables the brain to create new healthy neural pathway. Nervines are plant remedies that restore balance and wholeness in the brain of the addict. Western Herbalism today differentiates between three kinds of herbs that act on the nervous system, collectively called nervines. These are nervine tonics, nervine relaxants, and nervine stimulants. One key new approach in the treatment of addiction appears to be modulation of the methylation and inflammatory cascade. Evolving expanding research links addiction initiation, promotion, and progression, to autonomic imbalances, methylation flaws and inflammatory events. This presentation offers a literature review of the evolving relationship between addiction and neuroendocrine imbalances, with a focus on autonomic imbalances disrupting the reward circuitry and creating a Reward Deficiency Syndrome (RDS). Accentuating the role of nervines in restoring the brain ecological landscape including autonomic balance involves proposing an effective anti-addictive action in a neuro-degenerated brain. Selected nutritional and botanical agents represent an overlooked but crucial component in complementary addiction therapies. Herbs that act on the nervous system are collectively called nervines. These nervine tonics, nervine relaxants, and nervine stimulants are capable to modulate and revamp both the nervous and autonomic nervous system and may advance the efficacy of addiction therapy.

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Caper: A precious medicinal plant from ancient times

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Capparis spinosa Linn. (Capparaceae) was traditionally used for pharmacological purposes and has potential for use in modern cosmetics. This review aims to assess the current available knowledge of *Capparis spinosa* and its constituents for management of several diseases. Bibliographic investigation was carried out by scrutinizing classical text books and peer reviewed papers, consulting worldwide accepted scientific databases to retrieve available published literature. Only articles on pharmacological and phytochemical studies of *Capparis spinosa* have been selected. The main pharmacological activities of caper are anti-diabetic, anti-hypertensive, hypo-lipidemic, anti-oxidant, anti-mutagenic, anti-allergic, hepato-protective, anti-bacterial, anti-viral, anti-fungal, immuno-modulatory, anti-apoptotic and anti-inflammatory activities. Phytochemicals studies of this plant revealed the existence of many bioactive components such as saccharides and glycosides, flavonoids, alkaloids, terpenoids and volatile oils, fatty acids, vitamin C, vitamin E and steroids. We conclude that *Capparis spinosa* is beneficial for the treatment of many pathologies supporting its use in human nutrition and healthcare.

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