

2nd Global Summit on

Herbals & Natural Remedies

October 17-19, 2016 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia



Prem P Rai

University of Papua New Guinea, Papua New Guinea

Response of herbal medicine and traditional healers in management of HIV/AIDS in Papua New Guinea

With medical care out of reach for majority of rural population in PNG, the role of herbalist is increasingly becoming important as the majority of the sick who cannot access health care resort to traditional herbal medicine for treatment- a good number suffering from HIV/AIDS related complications. Although, prevalence rate of HIV/AIDS has stabilized some estimates project that there may still be over 100,000 people living with HIV infections (PLHIV) in PNG. High cost and scarcity of antiretroviral drugs make the situation even more difficult. Evidence of herbalists providing health care to PLHIV in PNG abounds as in other parts of the world. A cross-sectional study was conducted in two provinces (Oro and Milne Bay) in PNG to determine the role of herbalists in the management of HIV-related illnesses, and to examine how such approaches could be integrated in the wider national program to fight HIV/AIDS. The findings showed that conditions such as diarrhoea, skin infections, thrush, weight loss, weakened immunity and opportunistic infections in general responded better to herbal medicines and many herbalists were able to treat these conditions effectively in PLHIV. It was established that herbalists were providing good support in alleviating suffering from HIV/AIDS patients. It is also known that some PLHIV use both ART drugs and herbal preparations together. Concern over the possible consequences of herbal use by PLHIV prompted the assessment of medicinal plants commonly used in PNG. The results showed that some of the most commonly used medicinal plants in PNG have dramatic activity in models of drug interaction, HIV suppression and/or in models of activation of latent HIV. Data obtained in vitro studies show that some PNG herbal medicines have the potential to suppress HIV in humans. Similarly, data also show that some PNG herbal preparations have the potential to actually induce latent HIV in infected but asymptomatic individuals, perhaps shortening their time to symptomatic AIDS. It was concluded that several specific plants might be recommended not to be used by PLHIV, since these plants contain highly cytotoxic components. In this instance counseling of PLHIV to avoid specific herbal medicines could be critical to successful management of PLHIV in PNG.

Biography

Prem P Rai (PhD) teaches at the University of Papua New Guinea, School of Medicine and Health Sciences. His specialty includes Pharmacognosy and Quality Control aspects of Herbal Medicine. He heads the Traditional Medicine Program of the National Department of Health in Papua New Guinea. He is an active researcher and has published more than 90 papers and authored number of technical books including one on Medicinal Plants in Papua New Guinea, published by the World Health Organization in 2009. He serves as an advisor and Member on Editorial Board of number of local and international scientific journals.

pprai.prem@gmail.com