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Challenges to the state of global herbalism

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The world view on the use and value of herbalism has radically changed in the past few years. This is primarily due to efforts to record and understand the worth of pharmacopeias both well-known and others of less known indigenous origin and the dissemination of this knowledge through the internet and other sources, e.g., monographs, etc. Add to this the inventiveness of this era which has caused the creation of a large number of new formulations often representing mixtures of medicinal and other plants from disparate cultures in addition to the presence of supplementary, sometimes hidden components such as pharmaceuticals. Within this context, there is always the risk of adverse reactions occurring should adulterations, unintentional or otherwise exist or if interactions between bioreactive plant components and orthodox drugs takes place. Under these circumstances, it is difficult to assess the safety, efficacy and value of many of these remedies particularly since there are different national policies associated with the oversight and regulation of their formulations and uses. In addition, there is a wide variance in how conventional medicine views or integrates these practices into their preventative or medicinal regimens. This presentation will provide an overview of this subject, providing examples of the issues involved and how the international community is seeking to overcome those of a more problematical nature.

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Protective effect of *Bacopa monnieri* on *streptozotocin-nicotinamide* induced diabetic nephropathy in rats

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Diabetic Nephropathy (DN) is the major cause of morbidity among diabetic patients. In this study, the effect of *Bacopa monnieri* Linn. (Brahmi, BM), was studied in a Streptozotocin (STZ)-induced experimental rat model of DN. Diabetic nephropathy was induced in male Wistar rats (body weight-300±10 gms) by single intra-peritoneal injection of STZ (45 mg/kg, i.p.) after 15 min of nicotinamide (230 mg/kg) administration. Different doses of hydro-alcoholic extract, i.e., 100, 200 and 400 mg/kg was given for 45 days by oral gavage after induction of DN. Blood glucose level, serum insulin, glycosylated haemoglobin, renal parameters (serum urea, uric acid, creatinine and BUN) and lipid profile (total cholesterol, triglycerides, HDL, LDL and VLDL levels) were measured. Concentration of Thiobarbituric Acid Reactive Species (TBARS) and levels of antioxidant enzymes of reduced Glutathione (GSH), Superoxide Dismutase (SOD), and Catalase (CAT) were evaluated in the kidney, liver and pancreas. At the end of treatment period the hydro-alcoholic extract of BM reduced the elevated level of blood glucose, serum insulin, renal parameters, lipid levels, TBARS and significantly increased body weight, HDL and antioxidant enzymes in dose-dependent manner as compared to diabetic control animals. These results suggested the BM possesses significant nephro-protective activity.

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