



# EXPLORING HERBAL REMEDIES AND COMPLEMENTARY THERAPIES WITHIN PHARMACOLOGY.

Supriya Malappa Talavar, Ganesh R Phadtare, Sakshi Ajit Pinjan, Rohit Omprakash Kumawat

Student Bachelor of Pharmacy, Associate Professor, Student Bachelor of Pharmacy, Student Bachelor of Pharmacy

Department of Pharmacology

Krishnarao Bhegade Institute of Pharmaceutical Education and Research, Pune, India

**Abstract:** This article explores the evolving relationship between herbal and alternative medicines and contemporary pharmacology. It delves into the historical significance of natural remedies across various cultures and their resurgence within modern medical practices. Through a detailed examination of the scientific processes involved in validating the efficacy and safety of these remedies, including phytochemical analysis, preclinical studies, and clinical trials, the article highlights both the potential and the challenges of integrating herbal medicines into conventional healthcare. Key challenges such as quality control, regulatory oversight, drug-herb interactions, and the evidence gap are discussed, emphasizing the need for a comprehensive approach to standardization and research. The future prospects of this integration are considered, suggesting that a harmonious blend of traditional wisdom and scientific research could lead to significant advancements in healthcare.

**Keywords:** Herbal medicine, Alternative medicine, Pharmacology, Complementary therapies, Traditional knowledge, Drug-herb interactions.

## Introduction:

Herbal medicine is the science of using herbal remedies to treat the sick. It covers everything from medicinal plants with powerful actions, such as black turmeric, star anise, sandalwood, ginkgo biloba, ginseng, etc. [1]. Herbal medicines are the synthesis of therapeutic experiences of generations of practicing physicians of indigenous systems of medicine for over hundreds of years while nutraceuticals are nutritionally or medicinally enhanced foods with health benefits of recent origin and marketed in developed countries. Herbal medicines are also in great demand in the developed world for primary health care because of their efficacy, safety and lesser side effects. They also offer therapeutics for age-related disorders like memory loss, osteoporosis, immune disorders, etc. Herbal drugs constitute only those traditional medicines which primarily use medicinal plant preparations for therapy. Herbal medicines are being used by about 80% of the world population primarily in the developing countries for primary health care. The chemical constituents present in them are a part of the physiological functions of living flora and hence they are believed to have better compatibility with the human body.[2] Herbs can be processed and can be taken in different ways and forms and they include the whole herb, teas, herbs, syrup, essential oils, ointments, salves, rubs, tablets and capsules, tablets that contain a ground or powdered form of a raw herb or its dried extract.



fig 1: herbal medicine

### ❖ BLACK TURMERIC:

*Curcuma caesia* Roxb, commonly known as Black turmeric, is a perennial herb with bluish-black features and belongs to the Zingiberaceae family, which is significant for its medicinal properties. The rhizomes of *Curcuma caesia* are economically valuable due to their presumed medicinal benefits. These rhizomes are used in various treatments, such as addressing smooth muscle relaxant activity, hemorrhoids, leprosy, asthma, cancer, epilepsy, fever, wounds, vomiting, menstrual disorders, anthelmintic properties, aphrodisiac qualities, inflammation, and gonorrheal discharges, etc [3]



fig 2: black turmeric

**Constituents:** Its main constituents are:- Alkaloids, Terpenes, amino acids, carbohydrates, tannins, flavones, flavonoids, steroids, reducing sugars, proteins, anthraquinones, glycosides, cardiac glycosides. The oil which rhizomes contains of 30 components which almost include 97.48% of oil and along with are their some substance like camphor (28.3%), ar-turmerone(12.3%), (Z) ocimene (8.2%), 1,8-cineole (5.3%), elemene (4.8%), borneol(4.4%), bornylacetate (3.3%) and curcumene (2.82%), ar- curcumene (6.8%) are also present. Which are very much helpful and have high medicinal value.[5]

### Pharmacological activities:

- **Anti –oxidant activity:** The rhizome extract of *C. caesia* Roxb. Plays an important role in cancer chemoprevention, particularly in defending cells from DNA damage induced by oxidative mutagens and by inhibiting CYP enzymes.
- **Anti-cancer activity:** Black turmeric consists of Germacrone and curcumin derivatives which show to have anticancer activity with little bitter and pungent smell.
- **Antibacterial activity:** Methanol and ethanolic extracts present in black turmeric rhizome help in showing antibacterial activity. Several human as well as plant pathogenic bacteria can be treated with this.
- **Antiulcer activity:** Ethanolic extract help in reduction of ulcer gastric extract acid volume pepsin and this plant bear these constituents in its so its shows anti ulcer activity
- **Antifungal activity:** The main ethanolic and aqueous extracts of *Caesia* show the antifungal activity.[5]

**Medicinal uses:[4]**

- ✓ Pneumonia, cough and cold in children
- ✓ Asthma, migraine
- ✓ Epilepsy, cancer, HIV&AIDS
- ✓ Smooth muscle relaxant, anti tumor, anti oxidant
- ✓ Quick wound healing
- ✓ Menstrual disorders
- ✓ Rheumatic arthritis, stomach ache

**❖ SANDALWOOD:**

Sandalwood (*Santalum album* L.) is a commercially and culturally important plant species belonging to the family Santalaceae and the genus *Santalum*. It is extracted from the heartwood has been used for perfumery, medicinal, religious and cultural purposes over centuries of years.[3] The heartwood is tough, bitter, and durable with a yellow or brown color and oily texture. It's moderately hard and ranks as the second most expensive wood globally.



fig 3: sandalwood

**Chemical Constituents:**

P-Benzoquinone (0.17%, 0.14%),  $\alpha$ -Santalene (0.86%, 1.21%) TereSantalol (1.17%, 1.19), Epi-  $\alpha$ -Santalene (1.02%, 1.28%),  $\alpha$ -Curcumene (0.41%, 0.40%),  $\alpha$ -Santalol (54.28%, 55.16%), Z- $\alpha$ -trans-Bergamotol (2.06%, 2.15%), E-Nuciferol(1.63%, 0.83%), trans  $\alpha$  Santalol (1.02%, 0.64%) and cisLanceol (0.89%, 1.08%) [7]

**Pharmacological activities:****▪ Hepatoprotective activity:**

Hydro-alcoholic extract of the leaves of *S. album* showed significant hepatoprotective activity against CCl<sub>4</sub> and paracetamol induced hepatotoxicity by decreasing the activities of serum marker enzymes, bilirubin and lipid peroxidation and significant increase in the levels of glutathione, superoxide dismutase, catalase and protein in a dose dependent manner.[8]

**▪ CNS activity:**

Santalols have central nervous system (CNS) depressant effects such as sedation, and they affected sleep-wake cycle in sleep-disturbed, such as decreased walking time and increase in non-rapid eye movements. Results suggested action of santalols 235 via circulatory system by adsorption into the blood through respiratory mucosa. [9]

**▪ Anti ulcer activity:**

The hydroalcoholic extract from *S. album* stem when administered orally, the extract is reported to exhibit a significant level of gastric protection in rats. This protection is attributed to the extract's ability to inhibit gastric ulceration induced by both physical stress and chemical factors, including local irritants and non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs). [11]

**▪ Cardio protective activity:**

Aqueous extract of sandalwood, it has been reported to inhibit cardiac tissue damage by reducing lipid peroxidation in a rat model of doxorubicin-induced cardiotoxicity. Additionally, the extract shows a significant protective effect against isoproterenol (ISO)-induced myocardial infarction in albino Wistar rats in a dose-dependent manner.[12]

**▪ Genitourinary system activity:**

Genitourinary tract infections such as cystitis and gonorrhoea have been treated by sandalwood oil for years owing to the astringent properties of the oil and its effect on the mucus membranes of genitourinary tract;

helps remove mucous congestion, restore mucous membrane and minimize the risk of infections such as herpes virus. [13]

#### Uses:

- ✓ Coolant
- ✓ Sedative and astringent effect
- ✓ Disinfectant in genitourinary
- ✓ Perfume industry
- ✓ Bleeding intrinsic hemorrhage bleeding piles
- ✓ Urticaria, diuretic
- ✓ Eye infections
- ✓ Tonic for heart, stomach liver, anti-poison, fever, memory improvement and as a blood purifier.[6]

#### ❖ STAR ANISE:

Star anise (*Illicium verum*), an evergreen, medium-sized tree with star-shaped fruit, belongs to the Magnoliaceae family and is an aromatic plant. It is a commonly used spice. It is a highly regarded medicinal plant with a number of medicinal properties in the countries like China and Vietnam. Several biologically important phytochemicals have been reported from star anise. It also possesses antimicrobial, antiviral, and antioxidant properties.[14]



fig 4 : star anise

#### Chemical constituents:

*trans*-anethole (94.37%), methyl chevicol (1.82%) and *cis*-anethole (1.59%). 15 Components were identified from its acetone extract accounting for 80.27% of the total amount. *trans*-Anethole (51.81%) was found as a major component along with linoleic acid (11.6%), 1-(4-methoxyphenyl)-prop-2-one (6.71%), foeniculin (5.29%) and palmitic acid (1.47%)

#### Classification:

|          |                  |
|----------|------------------|
| kingdom  | plantae          |
| division | magnoliophyta    |
| class    | magnoliopsida    |
| order    | austrobaileyales |
| family   | illiciaceae      |
| genus    | illicium         |
| species  | verum            |

#### Pharmacological activities:

##### ▪ Anti microbial activity:

Staranise have excellent antimicrobial properties. Trans-anethol is a principal component of star anise which exhibit antiparasitic, antiviral, antibacterial and antifungal properties.

##### ▪ Anti cancer activity:

The human body has numerous natural set ups to deal with free radicals; in any case, it has additionally been demonstrated that eating nutritional items rich in cancer preventing agent can enhance innate protection. Diseases induced by free radicals and nicotine can be cured by star anise because it has anti-carcinogenic agents. The anticancer action is because of flavonoids, resveratrol and curcumin.[15]



- **Anti viral activity:**

Star anise has a powerful antiviral activity. The chemical, Shikimic acid, present in star anise is responsible for antiviral action of this plant. Shikimic acid shows this activity well when it is mixed with another compound called quercetin, (a cancer prevention agent). A mixture of these two chemicals averts flu. The mixture of these two chemicals can cure flu as well.[10]

- **Anti inflammatory activity:**

The essential oil of I.verum produces an anti-inflammatory effect similar to an antioxidant effect through the production of free radicals, inhibition of lipid peroxidation, and protein breakdown<sup>30</sup>. Furthermore, different concentrations of star anise extract prevent heat-induced albumin breakdown<sup>31</sup>. Star anise component trans-anethole also possesses anti-inflammatory activity by making fewer IL1b, IL6, MDC (macrophage-derived chemokine), and TARC (thymus activation regulated chemokine)[16]

- **Anti diabetic activity:**

The seed extract of star anise has anti-diabetes action through in vitro dose-dependent inhibition of  $\alpha$ -amylase.[16]

**Uses:**

- ✓ Cough reducing, Anti asthmatic
- ✓ Relieving pain, rheumatism, swelling and cold
- ✓ Warming spleen
- ✓ Relaxing the muscles and stimulating blood circulation
- ✓ Nourishing the liver, kidneys and blood
- ✓ Analgesia and anti-inflammatory effects.
- ✓ The influenza (flu) [17]

## COMPLEMENTARY AND ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE

Complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) refers to a broad range of healing philosophies, methods, and therapies that often operate independently of conventional health care institutions. However, some of these approaches have become part of established institutions. While complementary medicine is becoming more prevalent in healthcare.[18]



fig 5 : complementary and alternative medicine.

Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM) encompasses a wide range of therapies, practices, and systems that are not considered part of conventional medicine. Here are some common types of CAM:

- Acupuncture
- Ayurveda
- Chiropractic care
- Homeopathy
- Massage therapy
- Mind body interventions
- Naturopathy
- Hypnotherapy
- Nutraceuticals
- Dietary supplementary

- Reflexology

### ACUPUNCTURE:

- Acu = greek for needle
- Acupuncture = puncture with needles
- Insertion of very fine needles into the skin at specific points [19].

The human body is seen as an energy system, and acupuncturists use needles along energy pathways (meridians) to influence and balance the energy flow. Restoring this balance is believed to bring health and harmony to the individual. [20].It works by affecting nerves and releasing certain substances that help with pain.



fig 6 : acupuncture

**Various factors can be influence health:** [21]

#### 1. Promoting Health and Well-Being:

Regular exercise, balance diet, adequate sleep.

#### 2. Preventing illness:

- Vaccinations: immunizations protect against infectious diseases.
- Healthy lifestyle choices: Avoiding tobacco, limiting alcohol intake, and practicing safe behaviors reduce the risk of chronic diseases.

#### 3. Treating various symptoms and medical conditions:

- Medications: drugs prescribed by healthcare professionals can alleviate symptoms and manage diseases.
- Therapies: Physical therapy, occupational therapy, and other rehabilitative approaches help manage and improve conditions.

### Different techniques of Acupuncture:

- Moxibustion
- Cupping therapy
- Scalp
- Acupressure
- Electroacupuncture

### Uses:

- Chronic pain (lower back pain)
- Headaches and Migraines
- Osteoarthritis
- Chemotherapy (induced nausea and vomiting)
- Insomnia and Depression
- Infertility
- Menstrual pain (dysmenorrhea)

## MASSAGE THERAPY:

Massage therapy is an ancient form of treatment in the world. It support for facilitating growth, reducing pain, increasing alertness, diminishing depression, and enhancing immune function.[22] It increases blood flow and reduced muscle atrophy. It has been practiced for centuries and is used for various purposes, including pain relief, stress reduction, and injury recovery.[23]



fig 7 : massage therapy

### Several factors influence the health:

#### 1. Type of massage and technique:

Different types of massage and techniques may have varying effects. For example, a study on chronic neck pain found that specific massage techniques led to improvements in pain and function.[24]

#### 2. Individual health conditions:

Individual health conditions play a crucial role. In the context of low-back pain, a Cochrane review suggests that massage therapy may be beneficial, but the effects can vary based on the characteristics of the condition.[25]

#### 3. Client Expectations and Preferences:

In a study on generalized anxiety disorder, massage therapy was found to be effective, suggesting that individual preferences and comfort with the intervention may enhance its benefits.[26]

#### 4. Therapist Skills and Experience:

The skill and experience of the massage therapist can impact results. A study on chronic low back pain considered different types of massage and the expertise of therapists in the research design.

### Different techniques of massage therapy:

- Swedish massage
- Deep tissue massage
- Rigger point massage
- Sports massage
- Aromatherapy

### Uses:

- Pain management
- Anxiety and depression
- Musculoskeletal conditions
- Sleep disorders
- Cancer care



## CHIROPRACTIC THERAPY:

The chiropractic profession is the detection and correction of spinal subluxations. A form of health care that focuses on the relationship between the body's structure, primarily of the spine and function. An important role in health promotion and injury or disease prevention. It is a science of healing without drugs.[27]



fig 8 : chiropractic therapy

### Several factors influence the health:

#### 1. Musculoskeletal Alignment:

Chiropractors focus on adjusting the spine and other joints to restore proper alignment. This can influence the musculoskeletal system, potentially alleviating pain and improving mobility.[28]

#### 2. Pain Management

Chiropractic care is often sought for pain relief, especially in conditions such as low back pain and neck pain. It may offer a non-pharmacological approach to pain management. [29]

#### 3. Patient Education and Lifestyle Advice:

Chiropractors often provide education on posture, ergonomics, and lifestyle modifications. This holistic approach may contribute to overall health and well-being. [30]

#### 4. Quality of Life and Functional Improvement:

Chiropractic care may contribute to improvements in quality of life and functional outcomes by addressing pain and promoting better physical function.[31]

### Different technique of chiropractic therapy:

- Manual and manipulative therapy.
- Diversified technique.
- Atlas orthogonal technique.
- Extremity manipulating/adjusting.
- Activator methods.
- Graston technique.
- Koren Specific Technique.
- Gonstead technique.

### Uses:

- Pain Management
- Musculoskeletal Disorders
- Posture Improvement
- Pregnancy and Pediatric Care
- Sports Performance Enhancement
- Headache Management
- Stress Reduction
- Functional Improvement



**DIETARY SUPPLEMENTARY:**

"Dietary supplementary therapy" is a term that might refer to the use of dietary supplements as a therapeutic intervention. Dietary supplements are products intended to supplement the diet and typically contain one or more dietary ingredients, such as vitamins, minerals, herbs, amino acids, or other substances. [32]



fig 9 : dietary supplementary therapy

**Several factors influence the health:**

Here are several factors on the general use of dietary supplements:

**1. Interactions with Medications:**

Some dietary supplements may interact with medications, affecting their absorption, metabolism, or efficacy. Understanding potential interactions is crucial to avoid adverse effects. [33]

**2. Bioavailability and Absorption:**

The bioavailability of certain nutrients in dietary supplements can impact their effectiveness. Factors such as formulation, delivery method, and co-administration with food can influence absorption. [34]

**3. Patient Characteristics:**

Individual patient characteristics, such as age, gender, health status, and nutritional needs, can influence the efficacy and safety of dietary supplements in conjunction with pharmacological treatments. [35]

**4. Disease-Specific Considerations:**

The presence of certain medical conditions may impact the appropriateness and effectiveness of dietary supplements. Understanding disease-specific considerations is essential for safe and effective use.

**5. Regulatory Compliance and Quality:**

The quality and regulatory compliance of dietary supplements can vary. Ensuring that supplements meet quality standards and are free from contaminants is crucial for their safety and effectiveness.

**Uses:**

- Antioxidant Supplementation: such as vitamins C and E, beta-carotene, and selenium, are often used for their potential to neutralize free radicals and reduce oxidative stress.
- Omega-3 Fatty Acid Supplementation: Omega-3 fatty acids, found in fish oil supplements, are used for their potential cardiovascular benefits, including reducing triglyceride levels and supporting heart health. [36]
- Vitamin D Supplementation: Vitamin D supplements are often recommended for maintaining bone health, supporting immune function, and preventing vitamin D deficiency.
- Herbal Supplements for Stress and Anxiety: Herbal supplements like valerian root, passionflower, and chamomile are used to alleviate stress and anxiety symptoms. [37]

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