

The Role and advances in Development of Herbal Medicines in Animal and Human Disease Prevention and Treatment

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Abstract

Medicinal plants have been used in healthcare since time immemorial. Studies have been carried out globally to verify their efficacy and some of the findings have led to the production of plant-based medicines. The global market value of medicinal plant products exceeds \$100 billion per annum. This paper discusses the role, contributions and usefulness of medicinal plants in tackling the diseases of public health importance, with particular emphasis on the current strategic approaches to disease prevention. A comparison is drawn between the 'whole population' and 'high-risk' strategies. The usefulness of the common-factor approach as a method of engaging other health promoters in propagating the ideals of medicinal plants is highlighted. The place of medicinal plants in preventing common diseases is further examined under the five core principles of the Primary Health Care (PHC) approach. Medicinal plants play vital roles in disease prevention and their promotion and use fit into all existing prevention strategies. However, conscious efforts need to be made to properly identify, recognize and position medicinal plants in the design and implementation of these strategies. These approaches present interesting and emerging perspectives in the field of medicinal plants. Recommendations are proposed for strategizing the future role and place for medicinal plants in disease prevention and treatment.

Keywords: Medicinal Plants, Prevention, Strategy, Primary Health Care