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Integrated approaches towards drug development from Ayurveda and other Indian system of medicines

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Abstract

Biodiversity of natural resources has served not only for the primary human needs but also for health care, since time immemorial. The Indian subcontinent, with the history of one of the oldest civilization, harbors many traditional health care systems. Their development was supported by the diverse biodiversity in flora and fauna due to variations in geographical landscaping. Ayurveda, whose history goes back to 5000 B.C., is one of the ancient health care systems. The Ayurveda was developed through daily life experiences with the mutual relationship between mankind and nature. The ancient text of Ayurveda reports more than 2000 plant species for their therapeutic potentials. Besides Ayurveda, other traditional and folklore systems of health care were developed in the different time periods in Indian subcontinent, where more than 7500 plant species

were used. According to a WHO estimate, about 80% of the world population relies on traditional systems of medicines for primary health care, where plants form the dominant component over other natural resources. Renewed interest of developing as well as developed countries in the natural resources has opened new horizons for the exploration of natural sources with the perspectives of safety and efficacy. The development of these traditional systems of medicines with the perspectives of safety, efficacy and quality will help not only to preserve this traditional heritage but also to rationalize the use of natural products in the health care. Until recent past, the nature was considered as a compendium for templates of new chemical entities (NCEs). The plant species mentioned in the ancient texts of these Ayurveda and other Indian systems of medicines may be explored with the modern scientific approaches for better leads in the health care.



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Abbreviations

WHO, World Health Organization; ISM, Indian system of medicines; GMP, good manufacturing practices; ASU, Ayurveda; Siddha and Unani; CCRIMH, Central Council for Research on Indian Medicine and Homoeopathy; CCRAS, Central Council for Research in Ayurveda and Siddha Medicines; CCRUM, Central Council for Research in Unani Medicines; CCRH, Central Council for Research in Homeopathy; CCRYN, Central Council for Research in Yoga and Naturopathy; ISM & H, Indian system of medicine and homeopathy; NCEs, new chemical entities; NMPB, National Medicinal Plant Board

Keywords

Indian system of medicines; Ayurveda; Siddha; Unani; Homeopathy

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