

DIABETES MELLITUS TREATMENT USING HERBAL DRUGS

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Annotation: The use of medicinal herbs is widespread among patients with diabetes mellitus. The purpose of this study is to determine the prevalence of herbal use among diabetic patients and to identify which herbs are most commonly used. In addition, the study examines the impact of certain demographic characteristics on the use of herbal remedies.

Key words: diabetes mellitus, herbal medicine, alternative medicine, hypoglycemic activity, health education.

Introduction

In recent years, the use of alternative medicine (AM) has increased significantly and attracted the attention of researchers worldwide. Despite their apparent harmlessness, some herbal remedies may cause adverse effects or interfere with prescribed medications. Alternative medicine includes pharmacological, physical, dietary, and cognitive treatments. Diabetes mellitus is one of the chronic diseases for which patients frequently seek alternative or herbal therapy.

Several studies conducted in different regions of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) identified twelve plants used for the treatment of diabetes, including *Teucrium oliverianum*, *Hammada salicornica*, and *Allium cepa*, which demonstrated significant hypoglycemic activity. Other plants, such as *Moringa oleifera*, were found to increase blood glucose levels. Patients tend to use AM more often for chronic conditions, often relying on friends' advice rather than medical recommendations.

In the present study, 17.4% of diabetic patients reported using herbs within the last year, with myrrh, black seed, helteet, and fenugreek being the most frequently used. About one-third of these patients temporarily stopped their prescribed medications while using herbs. Most did not inform their physicians about their herbal use, which highlights the need for improved health education and doctor–patient communication.

Conclusion

Diabetes mellitus is one of the most common endocrine disorders worldwide. Due to the limitations and side effects of conventional antidiabetic drugs, the use of herbal medicine has become increasingly popular. Herbal remedies are perceived to be safer and to possess a wide range of biological activities. This study suggests that health professionals should be aware of patients' use of herbal treatments and provide appropriate education on their benefits and potential risks. Developing evidence-based herbal therapies could play an important role in the effective management of diabetes mellitus.

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