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Prevention of pneumonia epidemics in multi-national refugee camps

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Infectious diseases considerably increase the rate morbidity and mortality among immigrated civilian survivors of war zones, armed conflicts, obligatory displacements and even natural disasters. This fact would be more prominent when the refugees are resided in populated camps. Respiratory tract infections (RTIs) have a huge role in such cultural hazards. Pneumonia in crowded shelters with a great deal of high risk populations including elderlies and children can be accompanied by catastrophic outbreaks. Therefore any approach by humanitarian agencies to prevent and control these contagious infections would be significantly life-saving. Considering the multiple international conflicts all over the world at present time, millions refugees lives are in danger by pneumonia. This means the costs of common preventive measures like vaccination or antibiotic therapy can be devastating for supportive agencies.

Introduction of an economic, safe and effective agent with both preventive and therapeutic potentials in this setting is excessively required. Historically nature has helped the human in such medical crises frequently. Herbal medicine has shown a great capacity for management of RTIs. As a theoretical candidate, Echinacea supplements will be worthwhile.

Echinacea supplements are well-known for immune-modulation and anti-RTI effects. These herbs vastly grows in different geographical territories. They are reasonably affordable and easily accessible almost all over the world. This can decrease the cost of transportation for raw materials to the local manufacturing plantations. As we published in a review article, there is a huge amount of evidence that shows promising results for Echinacea use in both prevention and treatment of RTIs. Also it would be potentially useful in susceptible travelers like refugees. It should be noted that despite all documented evidences in medical literatures and human experiences, there are some controversial findings in several scientific studies about the efficacy of such products. Hence this approach should be examined further in the future clinical trials to achieve certainty. In addition, making combinations with other immune-boosters can help reaching an assured synergy to fight outbreaks of pneumonia among camp refugees.

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