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Nutraceuticals from medicinal herbs**D D Patra**

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Phytotherapy has emerged as a new concept of health aid and consumption of plant mediated nutraceuticals has become very popular because of their less or no side effect. Risk of toxicity or adverse effect of drugs, led us to consider safer nutraceuticals and functional food based approaches for health management. Nutraceutical is a term to define substances, which are non-traditionally recognized nutrients but have positive physiological effects on human body. The active ingredients are phytochemicals, such as lycopene in tomatoes, allicin in garlic, isoflavones in soya beans, glucosamine in ginseng, Omega-3 fatty acids in linseeds, epigallocatechin gallate in green tea etc. These phytochemicals, also called functional food may be extracted and consumed as food supplements or may have therapeutic value when consumed in whole food. Promise of nutraceuticals is considered in two ways, viz. potential nutraceuticals and established nutraceuticals. Similarly, the food products used as nutraceuticals are categorized as: (1) Prebiotic, (2) Dietary fiber, (3) Omega-3 fatty acid, and (4) antioxidant. This development in this area is propelling expansion in the nutraceuticals market globally. The emerging nutraceutical industry seems destined to occupy the landscape in the new millennium. Its tremendous growth has implications for the food, pharmaceuticals, healthcare and agricultural industries. Fermentation technology using microbes to create new food products also has great potentials. The interaction of nutraceuticals with food and drugs is another area, which should be taken into consideration. The effect of different processing methods on biological availability and effectiveness of nutraceuticals remains to be determined.

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