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Challenges in the standardization of Traditional Herbal Medicine

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Consumers and health professionals alike are justifiably apprehensive about the quality of commercial herbal medicines. It is only through great effort that consumers can learn which companies are scientifically and technically competent, experienced with the preparation of particular herbal medicines, and whose products are supported by clinical and other experimental data. Physicians who wish to use herbal medicines want to be assured of consistently high quality, efficacious products, and comparable responses from the same dose of an herbal product.

The standardization of the plant materials includes the following steps: Authentication (Stage of collection, parts of the plant collected, regional status, botanical identity like phytomorphology, microscopical and histological analysis, taxonomical identity, etc.).Foreign matter (herbs collected should be free from soil, insect parts or animal excreta, etc. Organoleptic evaluation (sensory characters – taste, appearance, odor, feel of the drug, etc.) . Tissues of diagnostic importance are present in the drug powder. Ash values and extractive values. Volatile matter. Moisture content determination. Chromatographic and spectroscopic evaluation. TLC, HPTLC, and HPLC methods will provide qualitative and semi-quantitative information about the main active constituents present in the crude drug as chemical markers in the TLC fingerprint evaluation of herbals. The quality of the drug can also be assessed on the basis of the chromatographic fingerprint. Determination of heavy metals – e.g. cadmium, lead, arsenic, etc. Pesticide residue – WHO and FAO (Food and Agricultural Organization) set limits of pesticides, which are usually present in the herbs. Microbial contamination – usually medicinal plants containing bacteria and molds coming from soil and atmosphere.

For establishing standards for a particular Herbal Drug, besides standardization of Single Herbal Drugs, the method of processing should also be standardized. And the standardization of Finished Herbal Drug and their shelf life study should be taken up.

Biography

Kamil is a Chartered Chemist (London); Fellow and member of various International societies; Member of the Advisory Board for many International journals; Referee of various prestigious Journals e.g. Journal of Complementary and Integrative Medicine, The Berkeley Electronic Press, Journal of Food Composition and Analysis, Elsevier Publication; Reviewer of a couple of International Journals; Honorary Member, International Centre for Integrated Development Research-Nigeria; Member of Natural Product Registration Committee MoH-UAE;Member of Higher Complementary Medicine Committee –MoH-UAE ;Member Evaluation Committee for TCAM Practitioners & Therapists (MOH, UAE). He has been a recipient of Common Wealth Award-London; Convention Award of Chemical Society-India; Academic Exchange Fellowship from Association of Common Wealth Universities -London; and various other prestigious honors & awards..