



The Impact of Pharmacognesy

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Editorial

As the world of medicine continues evolve, it seems only right that we move in unison with the continuous advances of modern medicine. Furthermore, as people researchers continue to search for the solutions to our world's health problems, the use and need for natural products and pharmacognesy became more apparent. Pharmacognesy is a branch of science that involves the medicinal healing properties of drugs that encompass both traditional and non-traditional practice in health care. Pharmacognesy is mostly focused on the development of natural therapeutic agents obtained from organisms such as most plants, microbes, and animals [1]. Moreover, this area of medicine includes the analysis of their biological, chemical, biochemical, and physical properties, which in turn creates an abundant amount of opportunities for new therapy options [2]. As it pertains to traditional standards of care, many of the drugs we use are derived from natural resources including medications like morphine, atropine, ephedrine, and caffeine [1,2]. There are several developing countries around the globe, approximately 80%, who rely on traditional medicine, mainly consisting of herbal prescriptions and other complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) [1,3]. With more patients in the U.S. and other developed countries exploring and increasing their use of complementary and alternative medicines, it is vital for more healthcare providers to become more familiar with the world of pharmacognesy. For centuries, natural medicine has been utilized in all corners of the globe, without any signs of this trend slowing down. It is believed that the human body finds plant-derived medicine easier to accept. More than likely, this philosophy is due to the fact that many medicines, derivatives, and ingredients exist in nature and are not synthetic products. About 25% of prescription medications in the United States are believed to have an active ingredient from a natural source and point towards the importance of our natural resources [1,4]. Pharmacognesy serves a pivotal role in modern medicine, especially with the growing trend of patients utilizing these natural agents in combination with more traditional medications, including those approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Over time, patient autonomy, patient-centered care and control over their health has grown exponentially, with just cause. People want to be more in control of their health and self-care is an essential component in this emerging interest in maintaining a holistic healthy lifestyle. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines self-care as "activities individuals, families, and communities undertake with the intention of enhancing health, preventing disease, limiting illness, and restoring health. These activities are derived from knowledge and skills from the pool of both professional and lay experience. They are undertaken by lay people on their own behalf, either separately or in participative collaboration with professionals [5]". In addition, patients want to avoid the ingestion of unnecessary toxins and are incorporating other homeopathic, natural remedies into the maintenance of a healthy lifestyle in order to mitigate those concerns. There is a false perception that natural medications are equivalent to "safe medications." It is our role as health care professionals to be aware of our patients' interest and/or use of alternative medications and also address these concerns for the safety and mental health of our patients. It is our duty to educate them on the possible drug interactions, adverse effects, and other unwarranted outcomes that these products may have and how this can impact their overall health. Overall, pharmacognesy serves as the vessel to lead us into a healthier nation and hopefully the world can benefit greatly from this underappreciated and under-researched expanse of scientific discovery.

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