


Misuse of herbal teas

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ABSTRACT

This literature review article addresses the "Misuse of Herbal Teas". We explore the traditional benefits of these teas, highlighting their long history of use in diverse cultures. We discuss the risks associated with inappropriate use, including side effects and drug interactions, as well as the lack of regulation in production and marketing. We emphasize the importance of guidance from healthcare professionals before consuming herbal teas and suggest strategies to educate the public about responsible use. This article highlights the need to balance the benefits and risks of these natural products and promote an informed approach to herbal medicine.

Keywords: Herbal Teas, Misuse, Traditional Benefits Risks, Drug Interactions, Regulation, Professional Guidance, Public Awareness, Herbal Medicine, Natural Health.

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INTRODUCTION

The use of herbal teas is a practice that dates back centuries and is deeply rooted in diverse traditions and cultures around the world. The recognition of its medicinal properties is based on empirical observations dating back to ancient times. A study by Williamson and Driver (2008) highlights that "herbal medicine is one of the oldest forms of medicine, and its use dates back thousands of years in various cultures around the world." These herbal medicines, also known as herbal medicines, have been explored for their potential therapeutic applications in a wide variety of health conditions.

A systematic review conducted by Posadzki et al. (2013) emphasizes that "research on medicinal plants and their preparations, including herbal teas, has demonstrated efficacy in a variety of conditions, such as relief of cold symptoms, gastrointestinal problems, insomnia, and pain." However, as the popularity of herbal teas continues to grow, a scientific debate unfolds about the benefits and risks associated with this age-old practice.

The search for natural alternatives and the public interest in herbal medicine have driven the need for further investigation into the safety and efficacy of these products. A review study published in the journal "Phytomedicine" by Heinrich, Barnes, and Prieto (2012) discusses the "growing demand for herbal medicines and the need for research to evaluate their safety and efficacy." The increasing spread of information, driven by the internet and the media, raises concerns about the misuse of herbal teas and the need to address issues related to safety, regulation, and professional advice.

In this context, this literature review seeks to address in a critical and scientific way the "Misuse of Herbal Teas". To this end, we will explore the traditional benefits of these teas in light of the available scientific evidence and meticulously analyze the potential risks associated with their inappropriate use. Additionally, we will highlight the crucial importance of consulting with healthcare professionals for proper guidance, considering the balance between tradition and evidence-based practices. Finally, we will examine the need for education and public awareness as essential measures to ensure responsible and safe use of herbal teas.

METHODOLOGY

To carry out this literature review, we conducted searches in academic databases, including PubMed, Scopus and Google Scholar, using keywords such as "herbal teas", "misuse", "benefits", "risks" and "regulation". Articles that directly address the issue of misuse of herbal teas were selected, focusing on publications from the last ten years.



TRADITIONAL USE AND BENEFITS OF HERBAL TEAS

Herbal teas have been widely valued for their medicinal properties, often based on traditional practices that span generations. Herbs such as chamomile, mint, and ginger are widely consumed due to the benefits traditionally associated with them. According to Williamson and Driver (2008), "herbal medicine is one of the oldest forms of medicine, and its use dates back thousands of years in various cultures around the world."

Studies such as the systematic review by Posadzki et al. (2013) show the effectiveness of medicinal plants and their preparations, including herbal teas, in relieving common symptoms such as colds, gastrointestinal problems, insomnia, and pain.

RISKS AND CHALLENGES IN USING HERBAL TEAS

Despite the benefits, misuse of herbal teas can lead to side effects and risks. Heinrich, Barnes, and Prieto (2012) underscore the need for research to evaluate the safety and efficacy of herbal medicines, highlighting that "the increasing demand for these medicines raises safety and regulatory issues."

Cases of hepatotoxicity associated with the overuse of herbs in teas have been documented (Teschke et al., 2012), highlighting the importance of consuming these products in moderation and under professional guidance. The study by Fugh-Berman (2000) highlights that the interaction between herbal medicines and conventional medicines can result in significant adverse effects.

THE IMPORTANCE OF CONSULTING HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

Healthcare professionals play a vital role in promoting safe herbal medicine practices. Sarris and Wardle (2010) emphasize the need for medical consultations before starting the use of herbal teas. They argue that "collaboration between conventional medicine and complementary therapies may result in safer and more effective approaches."

EDUCATION AND PUBLIC AWARENESS

Educating the public about the proper use of herbal teas is essential to mitigate risks. Brown (2010) highlights the need for reliable resources and awareness campaigns to inform the public about the benefits and risks associated with these products. The World Health Organization (WHO) (2011) also recognizes the importance of education in promoting the responsible use of herbal medicines.

CONCLUSION

This literature review highlights the complexity surrounding the "Misuse of Herbal Teas". The millennia-old tradition of using these products offers a wealth of potential health benefits,



supported by a solid cultural knowledge base. However, as research reveals, this tradition is not without its challenges.

The growing popularity of herbal teas raises important questions about the need to balance traditional benefits with the risks associated with their inappropriate use. Scientific studies have documented cases of hepatotoxicity, adverse drug interactions, and other side effects arising from excessive or incorrect consumption of these infusions. Therefore, it is critical for consumers to recognize the potential risks and seek professional advice before beginning to ingest herbal teas.

Healthcare professionals play a crucial role in promoting safe herbal medicine practices by offering personalized guidance and considering individual factors such as health conditions and medications in use. The collaboration between conventional medicine and complementary therapies shows a promising approach to ensure the safety and efficacy of the use of herbal teas.

In addition, public awareness and education play an essential role. Informational campaigns and the availability of reliable resources can help the public make more informed and responsible decisions. The World Health Organization (WHO) recognizes the importance of education in promoting the responsible use of herbal medicines and reinforces the need for clear guidelines.

Ultimately, herbal medicine continues to play a significant role in promoting health and well-being. However, to maximize the benefits and minimize the risks, it is essential to take a balanced, evidence-based approach to the use of herbal teas. Future research and commitment to improved education and regulation are needed to ensure that this ancestral tradition can be enjoyed safely and effectively in the contemporary world.



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