

Traditional Medicines in Drug Discovery and Development

Traditional Medicines in Drug Discovery and Development

Edited by

Varughese George

and Thadiyan Parambil Ijinu

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Top left: *Bacopa monnieri* (L.) Wettst. and the compound bacoside A

Top right: *Rauwolfia serpentina* (L.) Benth. ex Kurz and serpentine

Bottom left: *Withania somnifera* (L.) Dunal and withanolide A

Bottom right: *Piper nigrum* L. and piperine

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CONTENTS

List of Figures.....	ix
List of Tables.....	xi
Editors	xii
Contributors.....	xiv
Foreword	xxv
Preface	xxvii
Chapter One.....	1
Role of Traditional Knowledge and Medicines in Healthcare Mohan D. Nair	
Chapter Two	10
Scientific Validation of Traditional Knowledge: Development of Herbal Drugs and Exploration of Leads for Modern Drug Discovery Thadiyan Parambil Ijnu, Neenthamadathil Mohandas Krishnakumar, Athikot Saloni, Palpu Pushpangadan and Varughese George	
Chapter Three	56
Ayugenomics in Drug Discovery and Development Kalpana Joshi and Siddhesh Solanke	
Chapter Four	83
Phylogenomics in Plant-based Drug Discovery Mehar Hasan Asif and K. Narayanan Nair	
Chapter Five	119
Medicinal <i>Goniiothalamus</i> Species as Source of Bioactive Secondary Metabolites Nur Vicky Bihud, Kavindya Samarakoon, Lalith Jayasinghe and Nor Hadiani Ismail	

Chapter Six	150
Traditional Medicines of India and Thailand: A Rich Source of Phytochemicals with Promising Antiviral Properties against Coronaviruses	
Charu Gupta, Worapong Kitdamrongtham, Charinya Chankhampan, Dhan Prakash, Aranya Manosroi and Jiradej Manosroi	
Chapter Seven.....	201
Species from the Genus <i>Rosa</i> -Sources of Natural Medicines for Skin-Related Problems	
Katarzyna Gawel-Bęben and Beata Antosiewicz-Klimeczak	
Chapter Eight.....	252
Therapeutic Potential of Swertisin: A Flavone-C-Glycoside from Natural Plant Sources	
Abhishek Gour, Shipra Bhatt, Diksha Manhas, Ashiya Jamwal and Utpal Nandi	
Chapter Nine.....	286
Phytochemicals as Potential Lead Molecules in Cancer Drug Research and Development	
Tennyson P. Rayginia, Chenicheri K. Keerthana, Anwar Shabna, Sreekumar U. Aiswarya, Sadiq C. Shifana and Ruby John Anto	
Chapter Ten	318
Potential Bioactive Compounds from Indian Medicinal Plants as Anti-Diabetic Agents	
Km Swati and Pamita Bhandari	
Chapter Eleven	347
Medicinal Mushroom Bioactives: Potential Sources for Cardioprotective Drug Discovery and Development	
Thekkuttuparambil Ananthanarayanan Ajith, Sneha Das and Kainoor Krishnankutty Janardhanan	
Chapter Twelve	362
Chemistry and Therapeutic Potential of Plant-based Fatty Acids	
Maheswari Priya Rani and Koranappallil Bahuleyan Rameshkumar	

Chapter Thirteen	395
Exploring the Potential of <i>Rasayana</i> Herbs in Ayurvedic Medicine for Developing Phytopharmaceuticals	
Neenthamadathil Mohandas Krishnakumar and Thadiyan Parambil Ijinu	
Chapter Fourteen	429
Essential Oils and their Constituents in Skin Care and Cosmetics	
Rajani Kurup Sukumaryamma Remadevi, Anil John Johnson and Sabulal Baby	
Chapter Fifteen	490
Chemotaxonomy-guided Effective Herbal Product Development: A Sustainable Model for AYUSH Industries	
Mridul Kant Chaudhary, Ankita Misra, Bhanu Kumar and Sharad Srivastava	
Chapter Sixteen	502
Observations on the Zingiberaceae Members Used in Traditional Medicines	
Mathew Dan and Valukattil Ponnachan Thomas	
Chapter Seventeen	519
Toxicology in Plant-based Drug Research and Development	
Sakthivel Jafni, Malaisamy Arunkumar and Kasi Pandima Devi	
Chapter Eighteen	578
Sustainable Greener Approaches for Extraction and Separation of Bioactive Natural Products	
Zeena Subramonia Pillai, Sasidharan Lathikumari Sreejith, Thadiyan Parambil Ijinu, Divya Sylaja Balachandran, Diyarag Priji Sabu, Greeshma Manju Girish, Lakshmi Anil and Aleena Najeeb	
Chapter Nineteen	606
Phytosome-mediated Targeted Delivery of Herbal Drugs and Isolated Molecules	
Zeena Subramonia Pillai, Sachu Sadan, Hari Prasad Parayilpurayidathil Mohanan, Aiswarya Manoj, Alakaveni Rekha and Nanditha Bindhu Krishnan	

Chapter Twenty	638
Regulatory Aspects in Quality Control and Standardization of Plant-based Drugs	
Govindarajan Raghavan, Arohi Bapna, Ramesh Prajapati, Tejas Vyas	
and Palpu Pushpangadan	

LIST OF FIGURES

- Figure 2.1 Drug discovery and development cycle
- Figure 2.2 Diverse strategies for plant selection and stepwise procedure for bioactivity-guided isolation of compounds
- Figure 2.3 Diverse approaches in computational drug discovery process
- Figure 2.4 Lead optimisation and preclinical studies in the drug development process
- Figure 2.5 Phases of clinical trials in the drug development process
- Figure 2.6 Artificial intelligence in drug target identification and lead discovery
- Figure 3.1 Concept of *tridosha* and *panchamahabhutas*
- Figure 3.2 Stages of drug discovery from Ayurvedic medicinal plants
- Figure 3.3 Reverse pharmacology for drug discovery and development
- Figure 4.1 Progress in medicinal plant genome sequencing along with development in genome sequencing techniques
- Figure 7.1 Structures of condensed tannins responsible for anti-inflammatory effects of *R. multiflora* root extract, (a) Procyanidin B-3 (ProB3) (b) RM-1 (ent-guibourtinidol-(4 β →6)-catechin) (c) RM-3 (2-(3,4-dihydroxyphenyl)-6-(4-hydroxyphenyl)-8-(2,4-dihydroxyphenyl)-2,3-trans-6,7-cis-7,8-trans-3,4,7,8-tetrahydro-2H,6H-pyrano(2,3-f) chromene-3,7,9-triol)
- Figure 8.1 Pictorial representation for available reports on isolation of swertisin from different plant parts
- Figure 8.2 Chemical constituents under the flavone class from various plant sources of swertisin
- Figure 8.3 Chemical constituents other than the flavone class from various plant source of swertisin
- Figure 8.4 Chemical structure of swertisin with assigned numbers for NMR-based structure elucidation
- Figure 8.5 Pictorial representation for various pharmacological actions of swertisin
- Figure 8.6 Pictorial representation for available reports on pharmacological explorations of swertisin

- Figure 9.1 Chemical structure of phytochemicals that act as potential anticancer agents (a) allicin (b) curcumin (c) gingerol (d) licochalcone A (e) nimbolide (f) resveratrol (g) pterostilbene (h) sulforaphane (i) thymoquinone (j) ursolic acid (k) uttroside B and (l) withaferin A
- Figure 10.1 Chemical structure of isolated plant metabolites with antidiabetic activity
- Figure 11.1 Major factors contributing to the antiatherogenic effect of mushrooms
- Figure 12.1 General structure of a fatty acid
- Figure 12.2 A typical triglyceride
- Figure 12.3 Major plant-derived saturated fatty acids
- Figure 12.4 Structure of essential fatty acids
- Figure 12.5 Structure of polyunsaturated fatty acids
- Figure 12.6 Structure of some unusual fatty acids
- Figure 12.7 Structure of endocannabinoids
- Figure 13.1 Classification of *Rasayana*
- Figure 15.1 Predicted distribution of the climatically suitable areas for *Centella asiatica* germplasm with high metabolite contents viz., asiatic acid, asiaticoside, madecassic acid and madecassoside
- Figure 16.1 Some species of Zingiberaceae
- Figure 18.1 Structure of common anions and cations used in ionic liquids
- Figure 18.2 Structure of some hydrogen bond acceptors and hydrogen bond donors used for deep-eutectic solvents
- Figure 18.3 Typical constituents used for natural deep-eutectic solvent synthesis
- Figure 19.1 Schematic representation of phytosome and liposome
- Figure 19.2 Sonication method
- Figure 19.3 Mechanistic action of phytosomes

LIST OF TABLES

- Table 3.1 List of traditional herbs with potential for drug discovery
- Table 4.1 Metabolites and pathways identified using high-throughput genomics and transcriptomics in medicinal plants
- Table 6.1 Antiviral properties of some plant extracts
- Table 6.2 Antiviral polysaccharides from medicinal plants
- Table 6.3 Flavonoids with antiviral activities
- Table 7.1 Antimicrobial activity of *Rosa* species oils and extracts against common skin pathogens
- Table 7.2 *In vitro* cytotoxicity of *Rosa* species preparations against skin cancer cell lines
- Table 7.3 *In vitro* cytotoxicity of *Rosa* species preparations against non-cancerous skin cells
- Table 8.1 Various plant sources of swertisin and its availability in different plant parts
- Table 11.1 Mushrooms and bioactive compounds showing cardioprotective effect
- Table 12.1 Some common plant-derived saturated fatty acids and their sources
- Table 12.2 Major plant-derived unsaturated fatty acids and their sources
- Table 13.1 List of some of the medicinal plants mentioned as *Rasayanas* in Ayurveda treatises and their reported *Rasayana* properties
- Table 14.1 Essential oils with skin care and cosmetics applications
- Table 14.2 Essential oil-based nanoparticles and their skin care and cosmetics applications
- Table 17.1 The OECD guidelines for *in vivo* toxicity studies
- Table 17.2 *In vivo* models, guidelines, parameters, and organs isolated to examine the plant extract toxicity
- Table 17.3 OECD guidelines for *in vitro* toxicity studies
- Table 17.4 *In vitro* bio-printed models for toxicity analysis
- Table 17.5 Examples of biomarkers employed in various *in vitro* methods
- Table 17.6 *In vitro* organ-on-a-chip models
- Table 19.1 Applications of phytosomes in drug delivery
- Table 20.1 Quality parameters of herbal drugs and their formulations

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Dr. Thadiyan Parambil Ijinu (Ph.D., MRSB, MRSC, FNSE, FLS) is an ethnopharmacologist and an entrepreneur leading Naturæ Scientific, a startup at Kerala University Business Innovation and Incubation Centre in Thiruvananthapuram, India. He holds a doctoral degree in biotechnology from the KSCSTE-Jawaharlal Nehru Tropical Botanic Garden and Research Institute (University of Kerala), where he studied the ethnopharmacological properties of plants in the Western Ghats. He is a recipient of the Young Scientist Fellowship instituted by the Department of Science and Technology, Govt. of India for postdoctoral research. Between 2008 and 2014, Dr. Ijinu and colleagues documented 6,008 instances of traditional knowledge about medicinal and food plants throughout Kerala state, India, and created a valuable database useful for developing scientifically validated products and benefit-sharing models to support sustainability and welfare of the society. He actively engaged in projects promoting the well-being of vulnerable populations, including initiatives in rural nutrition and maternal health. His extensive research output includes 26 journal papers, 56 book chapters, 2 authored books, 14 popular articles, and 2 patents filed. He prepared digitised monographs of 10 economically valuable medicinal plants for the National Medicinal Plant Board, Govt. of India. His areas of interest include ethnopharmacology and applied natural-product-based discoveries and innovations.

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FOREWORD

Medicinal plants have been the basis of traditional medicines since antiquity. In the contemporary era, they have played a central role as sources of new medicines and nutraceuticals. With tens of thousands of plants on earth, an enormous wealth of chemical constituents is within reach. Theoretically each phytochemical is capable of locking a particular disease mechanism. Despite popularization of modern synthetic medicines, natural products, and their derivatives still represent over 50% of all the drugs in clinical use.

“As an organic chemist, I have been truly captivated from the enormous chemical diversity present in biodiversity”.

I was excited when I received an invitation from distinguished Prof. Dr. Varughese George to write a Foreword for his book entitled, “*Traditional Medicines in Drug Discovery and Development*”. His kind invitation was in line with my lifelong commitment to promote bioorganic, natural products, and medicinal chemistry for human welfare. In all those years, I tried to highlight the significance of plant-based medicines as better, sustainable, inclusive, and safe alternatives of chemical drugs. I am delighted that Prof. George and his team are contributing in this field through their original research, and through raising awareness. Prof. George is known to me since the past three decades. I am a silent admirer of his vision and contributions in the field of phytochemistry and phytomedicine. He has a vast experience in medicinal plant research, and has made significant contributions in this field.

Based on traditional knowledge and practices, diverse methods of treatments were successfully adopted in different communities and countries. In context of successful practices of traditional medicine, there is a need of developing applications of modern scientific methods for not only validating the safety and efficacy of pharmacopeial medicines, but also to investigate traditionally used plants for their bioactive constituents. Plants produce a diverse array of secondary metabolites and are great sources of drug candidates. There are numerous unmet medical needs such as infections, cancers, cardiovascular abnormalities, diabetes, gastrointestinal disorders, skin diseases, neurodegenerative, tropical diseases, etc. Medicinal plants and associated ethnomedical knowledge can form the basis of innovative

and novel therapies. However, drug discovery from traditional medicines is not without challenges. Inherent inconsistency in plant chemistry makes it challenging to produce standardized and consistent products. Complex multicomponent traditional remedies are difficult to be standardized by currently available hyphenated methods. Complex chemical constituents often work in synergy and it is often difficult to identify “one single compound” responsible of activity. Similarly yield of bioactive compound from plants is insufficient to conduct preclinical, toxicological, and clinical trials and often needs the help of synthetic chemistry. However, despite all challenges, drug discovery from medicinal plants is truly rewarding. Modern scientific methods enable us to overcome many of these obstacles. I am glad how well these contemporary challenges are highlighted and addressed in this book, which will give readers a broader overview of modern scientific methods, capable of overcoming such obstacles.

Within the foregoing context it needs to be emphasized that while much scientific literature is available, there is a serious dearth of focused literature which addresses the enduring question of *how traditional medicines can be transformed into evidence-based therapies and modern drugs?* The presented book is an excellent effort to fill this void. The contents of the book sufficiently cover the whole spectrum of medicinal plant-related topics in easy-to-understand language, but without losing the scholarly finesse. I am confident that “*Traditional Medicines in Drug Discovery and Development*”, will receive a wide appreciation, both from novice, as well as professional readers.

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PREFACE

Traditional medicine is one of the pillars on which modern medicine is built. Pain, disease, and pestilence accompanied humanity right from the beginning. Unlike other life forms, humanity alone is endowed with the capability of rational thinking, and they are naturally empowered with the ability to meet all sources of challenges with their power of reasoning, observation, and inference. Having lived close to nature, our early ancestors attempted to find remedies for their afflictions in their immediate neighbourhood. Through trial and error, they slowly discovered the healing power of plants, plant products, fauna, and minerals. Gradually they developed the healing art, and as the civilisation advanced, they started developing sound explanations for the causative factors of diseases and the principles of the healing art. They developed methods to prevent the occurrence of diseases. They discovered the prophylactic, promotive and curative properties of plants, animal products and minerals through experiments and observations.

Until the introduction of Western medicine in the 19th century, the only available therapeutics were of natural origin. Initially, Western medicine also depended on TM to develop different therapeutic agents. Today more than 25% of prescription drugs in Western medicine are of natural origin, mostly developed from traditional medicines. Additionally, another 20% of prescription drugs in Western medicine are derivatives or synthetic modifications of naturally occurring bioactive molecules. Thus, traditional medicines have contributed substantially to the development of modern drugs.

Drug discovery and development have recently shifted from focusing on single active components and specific targets to a "multi-component" "multitarget" approach. This shift reflects a deeper understanding of traditional medicines like Ayurveda and traditional Chinese medicine (TCM), which have long been recognised as the intricate interactions between multiple components in traditional medicines and their effects on various targets in the body. These traditional medicine systems prioritise holistic healthcare, aiming to restore balance and harmony within the body. They acknowledge that therapeutic effects are not solely attributed to a single component acting on a single target but result from the synergistic interactions of multiple components on multiple targets.

The book “*Traditional Medicines in Drug Discovery and Development*” is a collection of scholarly articles from India and abroad by eminent scientists, academicians, scholars, and researchers. The chapters cover various topics, from the scientific validation of traditional knowledge to exploring leads for modern drug development.

Chapter 1, “Role of Traditional Knowledge and Medicines in Healthcare” by M. D. Nair, sets the foundation for the book by discussing the importance of traditional knowledge systems and their integration into modern healthcare. It explores the cultural and historical context of traditional medicines and highlights their relevance in addressing the modern healthcare needs of diverse populations.

Chapter 2, “Scientific Validation of Traditional Knowledge: Development of Herbal Drugs and Exploration of Leads for Modern Drug Discovery” by Ijini et al., delves into the scientific validation of traditional knowledge. It explores the methods and approaches used to develop herbal drugs based on traditional medicine principles, focusing on identifying and exploring leads for modern drug discovery.

Chapter 3, “Ayugenomics in Drug Discovery and Development” by Kalpana Joshi and Siddhesh Solanke, explores the emerging field of Ayugenomics, which combines traditional Ayurvedic principles with genomics and modern drug discovery approaches. It highlights the potential of reverse pharmacology in identifying novel drug targets and developing effective therapies.

Chapter 4, “Phylogenomics in Plant-based Drug Discovery” by Mehar Hasan Asif and K. Narayanan Nair, discusses the application of phylogenomics in plant-based drug discovery. It explores how using genomic techniques helps select plant species for drug discovery and development.

Chapter 5, “Medicinal *Goniiothalamus* Species as Source of Bioactive Secondary Metabolites” by Nur Vicky Bihud et al., focuses on the medicinal properties of the *Goniiothalamus* genus. It highlights the bioactive secondary metabolites present in these species and their potential applications in drug discovery.

Chapter 6, “Traditional Medicines of India and Thailand: A Rich Source of Phytochemicals with Promising Antiviral Properties against Coronaviruses” by Charu Gupta et al., explores the potential of traditional medicines from

India and Thailand in the context of viral diseases, with a particular focus on their antiviral properties against coronaviruses.

Chapter 7, “Species from the Genus *Rosa*-Sources of Natural Medicines for Skin Related Problems” by Gawel-Beben and Antosiewicz-Klimczak, delves into the therapeutic potential of species from the *Rosa* genus for skin-related problems. It discusses the bioactive constituents present in these plants and their potential applications in skincare.

Chapter 8, “Therapeutic Potential of Swertisin: A Flavone-C-Glycoside from Natural Plant Sources” by Abhishek Gour et al., focuses on the therapeutic potential of swertisin. It explores the pharmacological properties and potential applications of swertisin in drug development.

Chapter 9, “Phytochemicals as Potential Lead Molecules in Cancer Drug Research and Development” by Rayginia et al., highlights the role of phytochemicals in cancer drug research and development. It explores the diverse range of bioactive compounds present in plants and their potential as lead molecules for anticancer drug discovery.

Chapter 10, “Potential Bioactive Compounds from Indian Medicinal Plants as Antidiabetic Agents” by Km Swati and Pamita Bhandari, focuses on the potential of bioactive compounds derived from Indian medicinal plants. It explores the mechanisms of action of these compounds and their therapeutic potential in managing diabetes.

Chapter 11, “Medicinal Mushroom Bioactives: Potential Sources for Cardioprotective Drug Discovery and Development” by Ajith et al., explores the medicinal properties of molecules derived from medicinal mushrooms. It highlights their potential applications in cardioprotective drug development and discusses their mechanisms of action.

Chapter 12, “Chemistry and Therapeutic Potential of Plant-based Fatty Acids” by Priya Rani and Rameshkumar, delves into the chemistry and therapeutic potential of plant-based fatty acids. It explores their diverse applications in drug discovery and development, ranging from cardiovascular health to inflammation.

Chapter 13, “Exploring the Potential of *Rasayana* Herbs in Ayurvedic Medicine for Developing Phytopharmaceuticals” by Krishnakumar and Ijini, focuses on *Rasayana* herbs in Ayurvedic medicine and their potential for developing phytopharmaceuticals. It explores the concept of rejuvenation and highlights the medicinal properties of these herbs.

Chapter 14, “Essential Oils and their Constituents in Skin Care and Cosmetics” by Rajani et al., discusses the therapeutic potential of essential oils and their constituents in skincare and cosmetics. It explores their antimicrobial, antioxidant, and anti-inflammatory properties.

Chapter 15, “Chemotaxonomy-guided Effective Herbal Product Development: A Sustainable Model for AYUSH Industries” by Mridul Kant Chaudhary et al., explores the chemotaxonomy-guided approach to herbal product development. It discusses how this approach can facilitate the standardisation and quality control of plant-based drugs in the AYUSH industries.

Chapter 16, “Observations on the Zingiberaceae Members Used in Traditional Medicines” by Mathew Dan and V. P. Thomas, focuses on the taxonomy of the Zingiberaceae family members used in traditional medicines. It provides valuable insights into the classification, identification, ethnomedicinal uses and essential oil components of these plant species.

Chapter 17, “Toxicology in Plant-based Drug Research and Development” by Sakthivel Jafni et al., delves into the importance of toxicology studies in plant-based drug research and development. It explores the various standard approaches and methodologies used to assess the safety and toxicity of natural products.

Chapter 18, “Sustainable Greener Approaches for Extraction and Separation of Bioactive Natural Products” by Zeena Pillai et al., highlights the importance of sustainable and environmentally friendly approaches for extracting and separating bioactive natural products. It explores innovative techniques and methods that minimise environmental impact.

Chapter 19, “Phytosome-mediated Targeted Delivery of Herbal Drugs and Isolated Molecules” by Zeena Pillai et al., explores the phytosome-mediated targeted delivery of herbal drugs and isolated molecules. It discusses the formulation and delivery strategies that enhance the bioavailability and efficacy of plant-based therapeutics.

Finally, **Chapter 20**, “Regulatory Aspects in Quality Control and Standardization of Plant-based Drugs” by Govindarajan Raghavan et al., discusses the regulatory aspects and challenges involved in the quality control and standardisation of plant-based drugs. It highlights the importance of ensuring safety, efficacy, and consistency in herbal medicinal products.