



Exploring the Potential of Herbal Plants in Treating Schizophrenia

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INTRODUCTION

Schizophrenia is a complex and debilitating mental disorder that affects millions of people worldwide. Characterized by disturbances in thinking, emotions, and perceptions, schizophrenia poses significant challenges for both patients and healthcare providers. While conventional antipsychotic medications are commonly used for treatment, there is growing interest in complementary and alternative approaches, such as herbal plants, to enhance therapeutic options. Recent research suggests that certain herbal plants may offer promising benefits in managing schizophrenia symptoms, offering hope for improved patient outcomes.

DESCRIPTION

Curcumin, the active compound in turmeric, has shown potential in alleviating oxidative stress and inflammation, both of which play a role in the development of schizophrenia. Research indicates that curcumin may modulate neurotransmitter systems and promote neuroprotective effects, making it a promising candidate for adjunctive therapy. Ginkgo Biloba known for its cognitive-enhancing properties, Ginkgo biloba has been investigated for its potential in improving cognitive deficits often observed in schizophrenia patients. Studies have suggested that Ginkgo biloba extracts may enhance blood flow to the brain, improve memory and attention, and possibly mitigate cognitive impairment associated with schizophrenia. Bacopa Monnieri widely used in traditional Ayurvedic medicine, Bacopa monnieri is believed to have cognitive-enhancing effects. Recent research has explored its potential in improving cognitive function and reducing psychotic symptoms in schizophrenia patients. The active compounds in bacopa, known as bacosides, exhibit neuroprotective properties that may impact the neurotransmitter imbalances seen in schizophrenia. Ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera*) is adaptogenic herb has gained attention for its ability to modulate stress responses. Schizophrenia patients often experience high levels of stress, which can exacerbate symptoms. Ashwagandha's anti-stress and anxiolytic properties may help in managing the emotional

and psychological aspects of schizophrenia, potentially complementing conventional treatments. Many herbal plants possess compounds that can interact with neurotransmitter systems, such as dopamine and glutamate, which are implicated in schizophrenia. By modulating these systems, herbal plants may help restore the balance of neurotransmitters and alleviate symptoms. Oxidative stress and inflammation are thought to contribute to the neurodevelopmental abnormalities observed in schizophrenia. Herbal plants with strong antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties, like turmeric, may help counteract these processes and protect neuronal cells. Herbal plants like bacopa monnieri and ashwagandha contain compounds that promote neuroprotection by supporting nerve cell growth and maintenance. This could potentially aid in reducing brain volume loss and structural abnormalities often seen in schizophrenia patients. Positive symptoms include hallucinations, where individuals experience sensations that aren't real, and delusions, which are false beliefs often resistant to reasoning. Negative symptoms involve a decrease in emotional expression, motivation, and social interaction. Cognitive symptoms can impact memory, attention, and decision-making abilities, making it challenging for individuals to maintain daily functioning.

CONCLUSION

The pursuit of alternative treatments for schizophrenia is driven by the desire to enhance therapeutic outcomes and alleviate the burden of this complex disorder. Herbal plants with their diverse mechanisms of action offer a novel avenue for managing symptoms, especially in combination with conventional treatments. As research continues to explore the potential benefits of herbs like turmeric, Ginkgo biloba, Bacopa monnieri, and ashwagandha, individuals with schizophrenia and their healthcare providers may have more options to consider in tailoring treatment plans to individual needs. However, it's crucial that any use of herbal remedies is guided by scientific evidence and medical expertise to ensure the best possible outcomes for patients living with schizophrenia.

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