

THE REVIEW OF NATURAL PRODUCTS

THE REVIEW OF NATURAL PRODUCTS – Monograph System

INTRODUCTION

The Review of Natural Products Monograph System is a comprehensive and up-to-date source of referenced, evaluated, factual information about natural products.

The Review of Natural Products Monograph System evolved from *The Lawrence Review of Natural Products* newsletter, which was established in 1980 to provide unbiased, referenced reviews of the history, chemistry, pharmacology, uses, abuses, and toxicities of natural products. Additional sources of natural product information are also included, such as Mushroom Societies, Poison Control Centers, Scientific and Trade Organizations, and Drug-Herb Interaction Tables.

The Monograph System is designed to make this current information readily accessible and to provide a format that permits easy and rapid updating.

MONOGRAPH SYSTEM MONTHLY UPDATES

The Review of Natural Products Monograph System is published in a single volume loose-leaf format with binder. Monographs describing new natural products along with updates of existing monographs are issued monthly. The loose-leaf format permits the subscriber to insert new and updated monographs easily in alphabetical order.

FORMAT AND ACCESSING INFORMATION

Information in *The Review of Natural Products* Monograph System is easily accessible. New and revised monographs are to be filed alphabetically. With revised monographs, retain only the most current monograph for reference; discard all earlier versions. The box in the upper right-hand corner of each monograph contains the monograph title and the month and year of issue.

The Primary and Therapeutic Uses Indices are updated once a year.

The Primary Index lists all monograph topics (in bold face) and the date of the most recent update, scientific names and common names (cross-referenced to the monograph topic) so that the monograph is accessible using any of these terms.

The Therapeutic Uses Index cross references the multiple applications of natural products to the monographs where they appear and identifies the uses as clinical, in vivo/in vitro, historic, or multiple.

Each monograph is generally divided into the following sections to facilitate location of information. Because of the nature of the products reviewed, all of these sections may not be applicable to each monograph.

- **CLINICAL OVERVIEW:** A summary of uses, dosing, contraindications, pregnancy/lactation, interactions, side effects, and toxicology.
- **SCIENTIFIC NAMES:** Latin nomenclature for the plant or animal that is the source of the product.
- **COMMON NAMES:** Synonyms and historical names.
- **BOTANY:** Brief description of important botanical or applicable biological information.
- **HISTORY:** A review of the historical and folk uses of the product.
- **CHEMISTRY:** A description of active and inactive compounds identified in the product.
- **USES AND PHARMACOLOGY:** A review of studies and case reports from primary literature that support or refute the use of a natural product for a particular condition and demonstrate a mechanism of action. For each use, both animal and clinical data are provided and sorted for easy analysis, enabling clinicians to reach their own conclusions. Emphasis is placed on scientific objectivity and legitimate clinical studies published in reputable journals.
- **DOSING:** A summary of the most common dosage used in clinical trials or in traditional use. Without clear information on which compounds are responsible for the actions of an herb, it is difficult to specify precise doses for most herbs. In addition, natural variation in the plant source is a common phenomenon. However, the range of doses used in published clinical trials can provide an approximation of a rational level for herb administration. The information presented in the monographs was gathered primarily from placebo controlled double-blind human trials published in reputable primary literature. No attempt has been made to distinguish trials in which the treatment was found to be efficacious from those in which it was not. Homeopathic trials have been intentionally ignored. In the absence of clinical information, classical texts such as *Claus' Pharmacognosy* (3rd ed.) have been consulted to define a dose that has not been found to be toxic to humans.
- **PREGNANCY/LACTATION:** A cautionary statement regarding the use of the natural product during pregnancy or

lactation. To date, no compelling evidence exists with regard to the safety and efficacy of natural products during pregnancy and lactation. Until more studies with large numbers of patients and well-done scientific evaluations have been completed, it is our opinion that **no** natural product be used medicinally during pregnancy or lactation other than those entities found to be Generally Recognized As Safe (GRAS) in quantities normally found in food and those found to be safe and effective by rigorous scientific study. Clinical decisions must be based on hard scientific analysis. Reliance on anecdotal or historical information or poorly done studies allows for potential risk to mother and child. (See the "Pregnancy and Lactation" appendix for further information.)

- **INTERACTIONS:** When information is available, a review of interactions with drugs and natural products is incorporated. The best documentation for the interaction is critically evaluated to ensure accuracy and proper interpretation of the data. When comprehensive scientific and clinical data are available, this information is assessed and included. For many of the interactions, documentation consists of a single case report. Often critical information that would assist in determining the occurrence of an interaction is missing from these reports. In addition, unlike drugs, the ingredients of natural products are not standardized. Therefore, it is difficult to determine the amount of the ingredient (eg, hypericin content of St. John's wort) an individual may be ingesting. This further confounds the prediction of possible interactions. Frequently, the clinical benefit from use of a natural product is questionable (ie, absence of substantiating clinical data). Therefore, when there is supporting documentation for a potential interaction, concomitant use of the drug and natural product may be unwarranted and, in general, should be avoided.
- **ADVERSE REACTIONS:** A description of any side effect associated with a natural product based on case reports or studies from primary literature and reputable references or product labeling.
- **TOXICOLOGY:** A review of the safety and, where applicable, treatment of toxicity.
- **REFERENCES:** Literature citations used to document the monograph.

Other natural product publications published by Facts and Comparisons®:

The Review of Natural Products, Bound Edition – The same information as *The Review of Natural Products*, Looseleaf, in a bound text.

Guide to Popular Products – A pocket-size, abridged version of *The Review of Natural Products* for quick referencing. This data also is available for the PDA.

e-Facts – A library of drug references that includes *The Review of Natural Products*, which is updated monthly and is available online or as a CD-ROM.

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