

PROSPECTS OF DEVELOPMENT OF NEW HERBAL DRUGS

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Plants are important sources of medicines and presently about 25% of pharmaceutical prescriptions contain at least one plant-derived ingredient. In the last century, roughly 121 pharmaceutical products were formulated based on the traditional knowledge obtained from various sources.

Plant derived drugs came into use in the modern medicine through the uses of plant material as indigenous cure in folklore or traditional systems of medicine. The world is now moving towards the herbal medicine or phytomedicines that repair and strengthening bodily systems (especially the immune system, which can then properly fight foreign invaders) and help to destroy offending pathogens without toxic side effects.

Over 80,000 species of plants are in use throughout the world. In India around 20,000 medicinal plant species have been recorded, but more than 500 traditional communities use about 800 plant species for curing different diseases. Currently 80% of the world population depends on plant-derived medicine for the first line of primary health care for human alleviation because it has no side effects.

Calendula one of the most valuable medicinal herbs with an enormous spectrum of healing applications. Cultivated by the Egyptians, Greeks, Hindus and Arabs, calendula grew in European gardens and has been used medicinally since the 12th century.

Calendula was taken internally to treat fevers, promote menstruation and treat cancer. Most importantly, the flowers were made into extracts, tinctures, balms and salves and applied directly to the skin to help heal wounds and to soothe inflamed and damaged skin.

At the moment, there is a large assortment of drugs containing in its composition *Calendula officinalis*. But prospectively direction of modern pharmaceutical science is to create new combined drugs, consisting of both vegetable and mineral components.

As part of this work we planning studies in development of formulation of complex action containing as active ingredients calendula extract and natural clays.