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HERBAL CARDIOTOXICAL: II

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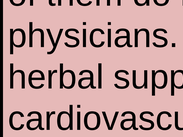
Introduction: Herbal products are commonly used by patients with cardiovascular diseases, but most of them do not share this information with their physicians. Although often considered harmless, herbal supplements may cause adverse cardiovascular effects from an herbal ingredient, a contaminant, or an herb-drug interaction. Public ignorance and or misinformation is largely responsible for this potentially dangerous situation. This abstract reviews the known cardiovascular dangers of herbal remedies used for non-cardiac indications.

Methods: PubMed interrogation revealed 65,034 entries under 'herbal medicines', 2,963 under 'herbal and cardiovascular' and 3,750 under 'herbal toxicity'. Relevant citations were reviewed. Other pertinent published scientific material was also consulted.

Results:

Aloe:



Abnormal heart rhythms.

Arnica:

Elevates blood pressure.

Feverfew: May interfere with blood clotting.

Ginger:

May increase bleeding and cause abnormal heart rhythms in high doses.

Ginseng:

High blood pressure and increased risk of bleeding with blood-thinners.

Stinging nettle:

May increase fluid retention in heart failure.

Ephedra:

Increases heart rate and blood pressure.

Goldenseal:

May decrease or increase blood pressure, cause arrhythmias and increase risk of bleeding when taken with blood-thinning drugs.

Licorice root:

May raise blood pressure and cause cardiac arrhythmias.

Conclusions: There has been an extensive evidence based review of the potential adverse effects of herbal remedies in the recent years. Some if these have identified dangerous cardiovascular effects. Education is essential is essential in this matter. Patients should disclose herbal remedy use information, and health care workers should discuss adverse effects, and monitor and identify possible herb-drug interactions

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References:

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