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# Medicinal Plants and Non-Alcoholic Fatty Liver Disease

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## ABSTRACT

**Aim:** Nonalcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD) is characterized by excessive fat accumulation in the liver of patients who consume little or no alcohol. It has become increasingly common with rapid economic development. Medicinal plants with potential benefit in the treatment of NAFLD were reviewed to provide a knowledge base for the development of phytopharmaceuticals in future.

**Method:** We undertook an extensive bibliographic review by analyzing classical text books and peer reviewed papers, and further consulting well accepted worldwide scientific databases.

**Result:** Long-term excess fat accumulation leads to NAFLD that represents a global health problem with no effective therapeutic approach. NAFLD is considered to be a series of complex, multifaceted pathological processes involving oxidative stress, inflammation, apoptosis, and metabolism. Over the past decades, herbal medicines have garnered growing attention as potential therapeutic agents to prevent and treat NAFLD due to their high efficacy and low risk of side effects. In this review, we evaluate the use of herbal medicines (including herbal formulas, crude extracts from medicinal plants, and pure natural products) to treat NAFLD. The medicinal plants that have been subjected to thorough studies include *Hibiscus sabdariffa, Rosmarinus officinalis, Trigonella Foenum-graecum, Ginkgo biloba, Illicium verum, Terminalia arjuna, Brassica nigra, Calendula officinalis, Tagetes erecta, Jatropha tanjorensis, Fraxinus micrantha*. Majority of them have been evaluated by experimental studies and few by multicenter clinical trials.

**Conclusion:** These herbal medicines are natural resources that can make the basis for innovative drug research and the development of phytopharmaceuticals for the treatment for NAFLD in future. The experimental evidence suggest that a number of herbal medicines can prevent NAFLD through various underlying mechanisms. However, more systematic research needs to be undertaken.

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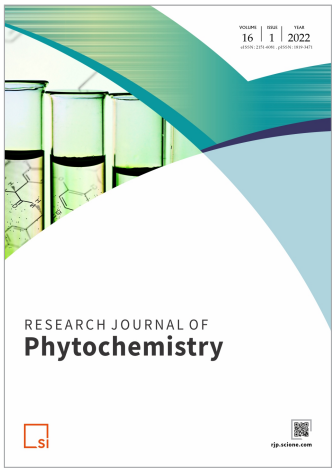


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