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Phyllanthus niruri against hepatitis

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Hepatitis is a kind of inflammatory liver disease that is commonly caused by the hepatitis virus. The virus is of 5 types A, B, C, D and E, causing 5 types of hepatitis diseases respectively. The hepatitis viruses range from being single-stranded RNA viruses to double-stranded DNA viruses. Some of the common symptoms observed due to hepatitis infection include inflammation in the liver, pale or yellow skin and eyes, abdominal pain, vomiting, diarrhoea and breakdown of red blood cells. It is a tough disease to treat due to its infectious nature as well as drug resistance. Alternative treatments using Ayurveda have been studied. One such method is the use of Phyllanthus niruri (gale of the wind) which is generally found all over the world and has very effective medicinal properties for the treatment of hepatitis B. It was observed that the extract of Phyllanthus niruri inhibits the DNA polymerase reaction in the hepatitis B virus by binding to the surface antigen of the virus. The plant is known for its antiviral properties and contains alkaloids such as securinine, nor-securinine, epibubbialine, isobubbialine and dihydrosecurinine; flavonoids, namely quercetin, kaempferol, astragalin, quercetin-3-O-glucoside and quercitrin; tannins such as amarulone, geraniin, amariin, furosin, corilagin, melatonin and phyllanthusin; as well as volatile oils such as linalool which has hepatitis disease control properties. However, although this method of treatment is slow, it is safe and effective. In relation to cost, Ayurveda treatment is less expensive and requires a maximum of 10-12 months for this treatment. In contrast, drug therapy has potentially toxic effects on the liver, as recently there was a report from the world health organisation (WHO) that around 10% of patients died due to drug toxicity. According to the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) report’s in 2017, 77% of people in India use Ayurveda as primary health care, hence, as reports suggest, slow but effective treatment of hepatitis B could be carried out using Phyllanthus niruri.

Keywords: Phyllanthus niruri, Hepatitis B, Ayurveda, Drug resistance, Antiviral properties

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