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Ginger constituents for the treatment of gastrointestinal tract cancer

Gajalakshmi R

Ginger is an Indian spice that is greatly noted for its aromatic fragrance, strong taste and healing characteristics. It is a member of the Zingiberaceae family and is the most abundant in Asian countries. A research article estimates that Ginger has about 400 different compounds with distinctive medicinal properties. Ginger has many medicinal properties which can be used to cure many diseases and disorders, like bronchitis, cough, loss of appetite, dysentery, nausea, etc. Our historical and traditional literature gives strong evidence of the usage of ginger in cancer treatment. Further, two compounds, namely 6-gingerol and 6-shogaol, are found in higher quantities in ginger when compared to the other compounds. These two compounds can be easily extracted from ginger and used for cancer treatment. Other compounds like zingiberene and zingerone also exhibit efficient anticancer properties. They are specially used for the treatment of gastrointestinal tract cancer. The most common cancer found among people in today's generation is gastrointestinal (GI) tract cancer which attacks different organs involved in the digestive system. In recent times, a large number of deaths have occurred due to GI tract cancer. The causes of this cancer include a fatty diet, smoking, drinking alcohol, family history, geographical location, etc. Among the many GI tract cancers, colorectal cancer is the most common among people of different categories. Although certain studies prove that the change in food habits and lifestyle could alleviate cancer, there is a need for chemotherapeutic drugs, radiation and other possible treatments with reduced side effects. These chemotherapeutic drugs and radiation treatments are very expensive and have many side effects. Hence, various research focuses on using compounds from ginger for treating GI tract cancer. This is mainly because ginger is easily available, highly economical and it does not produce any severe side effects. Therefore, ginger comes under the category of cancer chemoprevention. The anticancer properties derived from plants, such as ginger, thus aid in destroying or disrupting the mechanism of tumour cells, hence leading to reduced cell proliferation.

Keywords: Ginger, Gastrointestinal tract cancer, 6-gingerol, 6-shogaol, Chemoprevention, Anticancer properties

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