
P168. FORENSIC PROBLEMS CAUSED BY HERBAL PRODUCTS

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Plants have formed the basis of traditional medicine systems that have been in existence for thousands of years and continue to provide mankind with new remedies. Herbal medicines are used by an estimated 80% of the world's population. The term "herbal product" is generally used in the broader sense of the word as it would include herbal drugs/extracts and phytochemicals. They are readily available at a variety of stores including supermarkets, pharmacies and health food stores, as well as through online sites depend on their licensing standards. Due to the large number of herbal product users and the ease of access to those products, it is likely that a significant percentage of individuals who undergo medicolegal autopsies have ingested these substances in the days prior to death. The most common problems about these products are the risk of contamination, adulteration, toxicity and standardization of dose and accuracy of labeling and advertising. Direct intoxications related with these products as well as adverse effects due to drug interactions are also observed recently. There is a need about serious regulations and practice on manufacturing, licensing, sale and supervision of the herbal products offered to the market. On the other hand, herbal products or natural compounds can be used for the criminal purpose in some cases and this should be kept in mind during the investigation of the forensic cases and multidisciplinary investigations such as botanical, pharmacognostical, pharmacological, toxicological and biochemical are needed for the complete interpretation of the legal issues about herbal products.

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