Chapter 17
Cognitive Revival Through Nature by Investigating the Neuroactive Potential of Phytomedicines

Vivek Pazhamalai
https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2088-7545
Department of Bioengineering, Vels Institute of Science, Technology, and Advanced Studies, India

S. Ivo Romauld
https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0610-0646
Department of Bioengineering, Vels Institute of Science, Technology, and Advanced Studies, India

M. Suriya
https://orcid.org/0009-0008-5398-0221
Department of Bioengineering, Vels Institute of Science, Technology, and Advanced Studies, India

S. S. Meenambiga
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5445-525X
Department of Bioengineering, Vels Institute of Science, Technology, and Advanced Studies, India

V. Aarthi
https://orcid.org/0009-0004-0177-7716
Department of Bioengineering, Vels Institute of Science, Technology, and Advanced Studies, India

R. Chandrasekaran
Department of Biomedical Engineering, Vels Institute of Science, Technology, and Advanced Studies, India

N. M. Hariharan
Department of Biotechnology, Vel Tech Rangarajan Dr. Sagunthala R&D Institute of Science and Technology, India

ABSTRACT

This chapter explores the growing challenge posed by neurodegenerative and psychiatric disorders, which have underscored the limitations of conventional treatments. It focuses on the therapeutic potential of phytomedicines, particularly their antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, and neurotransmitter-modulating effects. Specifically, it examines the role of plant-derived compounds, such as terpenoids, alkaloids, and flavonoids, in mitigating symptoms of depression, anxiety, Parkinson's disease, and Alzheimer's disease. This chapter discusses the fusion of traditional

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wisdom with contemporary scientific methods, highlighting the need for rigorous standards and regulatory frameworks that prioritize ethical considerations. The integration of nanotechnology, AI, and personalized medicine is transforming phytomedicine, paving the way for innovative approaches to brain health and wellness.

INTRODUCTION

There is an increase in severity and prevalence of both neurodegenerative diseases like Alzheimer's and Parkinson's, as well as depression, anxiety, schizophrenia and other neuropsychiatric disorders. The complex nature of these disorders, their chronic progression, coupled with existing pharmaceutical treatment's limited effectiveness presents significant problems. Most conventional drugs tend to focus on singular pathways. This is coupled with undesirable side effects and limited long-term benefits (Przedborski, Vila, & Jackson-Lewis, 2003). In recent years, there has been an increase in focus towards nature- rooted and alternative therapies. Such herbal medicines are used in Ayurveda and Traditional Chinese Medicine, and are gaining recognition for their ability to target several neurological pathways at once with their neuroprotective, antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, and cognitive abilities, thus providing multi-faceted phytomedicinal support (Howes, Perry, & Houghton, 2003).

Some phytochemicals open new therapeutic avenues for neuroprotection and treatment of cognitive disorders. Flavonoids, alkaloids, terpenoids and polyphenols have shown the ability to modulate critical neurotransmitter systems, reduce oxidative stress, and enhance neurogenesis and synaptic plasticity (Goyal, Nagori & Sasmal, 2011). Such compounds have a marked ability to cross the blood brain barrier which is crucial for almost all neurological interventions (Aguiar & Borowski, 2013). With the increasing trust in efficacy of such compounds, focus has shifted to incorporate such and other natural compounds into contemporary neurotherapeutic approaches. This chapter focuses on the changing paradigm of brain disorder treatment by phytomedicine, analysing the pathophysiological phytomedicinal mechanisms, therapeutic possibilities, as well as problems dealing standardization, regulation and ethical issues. Phytomedicines may provide the integration of ancient knowledge and modern science into neural and mental health as well as offer more balanced and green solutions.

Overview of Neurological and Neuropsychiatric Disorders

The term neurological and neuropsychiatric disorders include a wide range of diseases that affect the central nervous system and the peripheral nervous system. They may be related to structural, biochemical, or electrical changes in the tissues making up the brain, spinal cord, or peripheral nerves, and are accompanied by symptoms such as amnesia, dementia, movement disorders, and affective disorders (Feigin et al., 2020). There is, however, a rising global burden of these conditions, adding markedly to the existing disability and mortality burden. Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease, major depressive disorder, schizophrenia, and stroke are commonly encountered disorders that each pose distinct diagnostic and therapeutic hurdles (Nestler & Hyman, 2010).

With consideration of these overlapping symptoms and the multifactorial etiology of these disorders, their classification and understanding needs an integrated clinical perspective, one that

takes all factors into account. As an illustration, one differential feature for most neurodegenerative diseases is the progressive loss of neurons, whereas neuropsychiatric disorders tend to be associated with neurotransmitter shifts and changed brain circuitry connections (Gorelick et al., 2011). In **Table 1**, included summarizing classification of the major brain disorders with their salient clinical features and the most up-to-date treatment approaches available to show their shortcomings. Also, provided the structural overview of the brain in relation to some disorders (shown in **Figure 1.** Summary of the brain disorders and affected areas) like Alzheimer's (which affects the hippocampus), Parkinson's (which affects the substantia nigra), and depression (which affects the prefrontal cortex), thus reinforcing the anatomical basis of their clinical manifestations. Both structural and functional aspects have to be understood to develop effective and complete strategies focused on the integration of various treatment modalities.

Neurodegenerative Disorders

Neurodegenerative diseases, or disorders of the neuron, consist of a range of progressive conditions characterized by the gradual degeneration, which involves the death or malfunction of neurons. Of the finest among the most prominent are Alzheimer's disease (AD), Parkinson's disease (PD), Huntington's disease (HD) and amyotrophic lateral sclerosis3 (ALS). These diseases share in common a pathological including protein aggregation, mitochondrial dysfunction, oxidative stress, and gradual neuronal loss (Kovacs, 2016). In Alzheimer's, the beta-amyloid plaques accumulating neurofibrillary tangles lead to synaptic dysfunction and cognitive decline, particularly affecting brain areas such as the hippocampus. Parkinson's disease is around characterized by the death of dopaminergic neurons in the substantia nigra, resulting in motor symptoms bradykinesia, tremors, and rigidity often blamed on synuclein aggregation forming Lewy bodies (Kalia & Lang, 2015). Huntington's disease, a genetic disorder due to CAG trinucleotide repeat expansion in the HTT gene, causes extensive brain. Atrophy, especially in the striatum, and manifests with choreiform movements, dementia, and psychiatric conditions. ALS causes motor neurons to slowly deteriorate in the brain and spinal cord resulting in muscle weakness, atrophy and eventually respiratory failure (Hardiman et al, 2017). These disorders have fun with intersecting mechanisms of neurodegeneration, still incompletely-understood and poorly treated by current medications.

Neuropsychiatric Disorders

Neuropsychiatric disorders are a category of mental illness that arise from issues with the brain function, typically involving neurotransmitter dysregulation, neuroinflammation and altered these are MDD, anxiety such as GAD, panic disorder, and phobias, and schizophrenia and bipolar MDD is associated with low serotonin, norepinephrine, and dopamine, resulting in persistent sadness, anhedonia, and cognitive dysfunction (Malhi & Mann, 2018). Anxiety disorders hijack the amygdala. HPA dysregulation, leading to too much fear autonomic arousal responses. Dopaminergic hallucinations are central to schizophrenia and glutamatergic signalling, producing hallucinations, delusions and compromised executive functioning, linked to synaptic pruning and cortical thinning. Manic-depressive bipolar illness, with its manic and depressive phases, is change. monoamine neurotransmitters and inflammatory markers plus brain abnormalities circuits regulating emotion and impulse control (Grande et al., 2016). Pharmacotherapy remains

the foundation of treatment including antidepressants, antipsychotics and mood stabilizers, many patients experience partial remission or side effects, highlighting requirement for more concentrated and synergistic therapies.

Neurodevelopmental Disorders

The neurodevelopmental disorders are the class of disorders that emerge in the initial developmental periods and are characterized by deficiencies in personal, social, academic, or occupational functioning. Most prominent among them are autism spectrum disorder (ASD), Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and intellectual disabilities. These disorders often result from multiple interactions between genetic, epigenetic, and environmental factors that produce disruptions in usual brain activity and maturation. Abnormalities of maturation of the synapses, connectivity, and neurotransmitter signalling underlie the deficits in social interaction, communication, and repetitive behaviors (Lord et al., 2020). ADHD is associated with dysregulation of dopaminergic and noradrenergic systems, most notably with the cortex, the area dealing with attention, impulse regulation, and executive function. Intellectual disabilities, that is, having serious impairments in intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior, are frequently linked with chromosome defects, disease of metabolism, and premature brain injury, and genetic mutations that affect the pathways of neurodevelopment (Rosenberg et al., 2019). Recent research centers on the synaptic dysregulation and altered neuronal plasticity underlying the disorders, and consequences for the timing of diagnosis and treatment. Present treatment is primarily symptomatic and includes behavior therapy, educational interventions, and pharmacologic help, but don't address the core processes of neurobiology, highlighting the need for novel therapeutic methods.

Cerebrovascular and Traumatic Disorders

Cerebrovascular and traumatic disorders comprise a range of disorders due to vascular or mechanical injury to the brain, stroke, Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), and vascular dementia being the most prominent examples. They very frequently share common pathological characteristics such as cerebral ischemia, neuroinflammation, excitotoxicity, and disruption of the blood-brain barrier. Stroke, either ischemic or hemorrhagic, leads to the rapid brain dysfunction due to interrupted supply of blood, which triggers the series of events including oxidative stress, cell death, and activation of the immune response (Doyle et al., 2008). TBI, resulting from external mechanical forces, causes both acute and delayed brain injury characterized by axonal injury, edema, and longstanding neuroinflammation, and able to cause impairment in cognitive and motor performance in the long term (Loane & Kumar, 2016). Vascular dementia, the second most common form of dementia after Alzheimer's disease, is caused by long-standing reduced cerebral blood flow and repeated microinfarcts, with accompanying slow loss of memory, judgment, and reasoning (Kalaria, 2016). The diseases emphasize the significance of cerebrovascular brain health integrity and the necessity of neuroprotective interventions that are able to decrease inflammation and preserve neuronal function following vascular injury.

Common Issues in Diagnosis and Management

The recognition and treatment of neurological and neuropsychiatric ailments provide specific clinical complexities with overlapping symptoms, delayed identification of the disease, and the limitations of treatments available. Most of the disorders share common features such as cognitive impairment, disturbances of mood, and behavior changes which often complicated differential diagnosis, particularly during the initial periods (Arciniegas & Beresford, 2001). Furthermore, the lack of clear biomarkers and reliance upon the individual clinical judgment explain proximal muscle weakness, delayed or misdiagnosis, particularly in diseases such as Parkinson's disease and others dementia (Postuma et al., 2015). Long-term pharmacologic therapy, while central to symptom management, is frequently associated with undesirable side effects such as cognitive blunting, metabolic disturbances, and drug tolerance, that lower quality of life and patient compliance (Haddad & Sharma, 2007). And the current therapy is still mainly symptomatic, offering limited reversal or disease modification, particularly for chronic neurodegenerative disorders. These kinds of problems underscore the need for holistically oriented and innovative techniques that enhance diagnostic precision, lower treatment-related complications, and the multifactorial character of brain disorders.

Figure 1. Summary of the brain disorders and affected areas

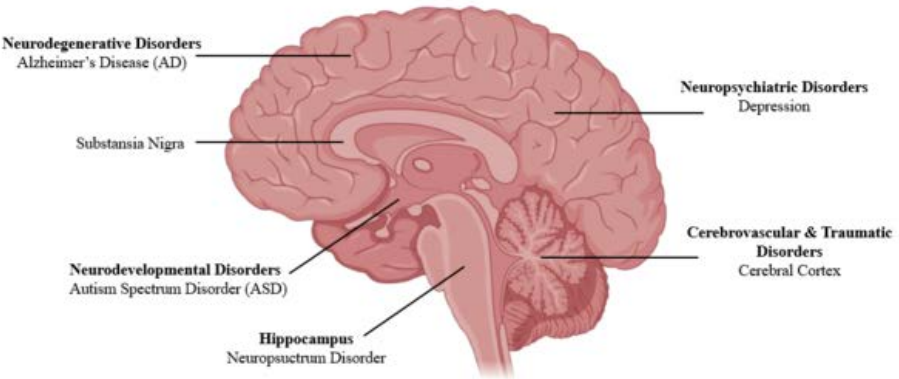

Table 1. Classification of major brain disorders

Category	Examples	Key Features	Current Limitations
Neurodegenerative	Parkinson's disease	Memory loss, motor dysfunction	Symptomatic treatment, no cure
Neuropsychiatric	Depression, Schizophrenia, Anxiety	Mood swings, delusions, anxiety	Drug resistance, relapse, side effects
Neurodevelopmental	Autism, ADHD	Communication problems, inattention	Restricted pharmacotherapy, behavioural focus
Traumatic	Stroke, TBI	Paralysis, cognitive impairment	Postponed neuro regeneration, rehabilitation is needed

Global Burden and its Effect on Quality of Life

These neuropsychiatric and neurological disorders are rapidly becoming an extremely serious worldwide public health problem, immensely contributing to the level of disability and mortality all over the world. Neurological disorders are the largest single source of Disability-Adjusted Life Years (DALYs) and the second most common cause of death, primarily due to stroke, Alzheimer's disease, and dementia (Feigin et al., 2019) Mental health conditions, including depression and anxiety, are among the most common causes of Years Lived with Disability (YLDs) too. They often begin at a very young age and remain undertreated over several years, mainly because of stigma and restricted care accessibility (Rehm & Shield, 2019). An aging population, changes in lifestyles, and higher exposure to environmental and psychological stressors have all helped increase the prevalence of the disorders.

The issue is most pronounced among Low- and Middle-Income Countries (LMICs), with under-resourced health systems that cannot provide timely diagnosis or effective care, driving burgeoning health inequities globally. Beyond physical symptoms, the disorders significantly compromise quality of life, with long-term cognitive, emotional, and social sequelae. This means loss of autonomy, increased burdens on caregivers, increased likelihood of unemployment, and alienation from society. Economically, the cost is twofold: countries and families pay both the direct costs such as long-term care and medications, and the indirect costs such as loss of productivity and home care costs. Emotionally and socially, the consequences like stigma, depression, and lowered well-being are too often overlooked in clinical visits as well. Management of the complex and growing crisis necessitates an integrated worldwide response of early identification, integrated care, and preventive public health methods (Dua et al., 2011).

Epidemiological Trends of Brain Disorders

The prevalence of neurological and neuropsychiatric disorders has grown substantially in the past couple of decades, and it is now a significant public health threat globally. Neurological diseases are known to affect over one billion people worldwide, and the most common among them are stroke, dementia, epilepsy, and migraine. Mental health disorders, including depression, anxiety, and schizophrenia, are still leading causes of global disability (GBD 2019 Diseases and Injuries Collaborators, 2020). The burden is unequally shared. LMICs are unduly affected due to weak health infrastructure, sparse mental health care, and higher exposure to dangers like malnutrition,

infectious illness, and trauma (Patel et al., 2018). Additionally, population shifts urbanization, physical inactivity, and higher psychological stress are driving the increase in prevalence of the disorders. This trend, which is occasionally referred to as the "epidemiological transition," and the ineffectiveness of available preventive techniques signify the need to adopt national and global health policies with an attitude of awareness, early management, and integrated care.

Disability and Mortality due to Brain Disorders

Brain disorders are among the most important causes of DALYs and YLDs and are most prevalent among the elderly and young adults. Mental and neurological disorders like depression, schizophrenia, stroke, Alzheimer's disease, and epilepsy account for more than 10% of total worldwide DALYs, and neuropsychiatric disorders alone account for nearly one-third of total worldwide YLDs (Whiteford et al., 2013). Apart from lowering life expectancy, the disorders increase the risk of acquiring secondary health issues such as heart disease, diabetes, and drug or alcohol abuse, and consequently raise their overall intensity. One of the major challenges is underdiagnosis, especially in the poor areas, where the stigma, ignorance, and lack of clinical experience exacerbate the challenge of properly identifying the disorders. There is still a huge treatment gap existing even at the level of diagnosis. 75% of the people with mental illness in LMICs still lack any sort of treatment (Kohn et al., 2004). Addressing the gap will require enhanced diagnostic infrastructure, community-level mental health services, and community-level education to avoid long-term disability and premature death.

Socioeconomic Consequences

The economic and societal costs of neurological and neuropsychiatric disorders are significant and multi-dimensional. The direct costs include hospitalization, medications, diagnostic tests, and long-term care. Indirect costs are due to lowered productivity, premature retirement, and premature death. These ailments often result in chronic disability, which decreases the patient's ability to work and independence most problematic in resource-poor regions. Caregivers, often the patient's own relatives, become physically, emotionally, and financially overwhelmed, if professional care is unattainable or beyond their financial reach. Most health systems worldwide are unprepared to meet the rising demand for neurological and psychiatric care, and this leads to stressed services and sparse availability of specialist care (Bloom et al., 2011). This is the experience in rural areas and LMICs, which are bedevilled with inadequacies in healthcare infrastructure, mental health literacy, and trained manpower (Bloom et al., 2011). These inequities perpetuate the disease and poverty cycle, and it is clear that there is a compelling need to supply equitable health policies and long-term investment in brain health services globally.

Conventional Pharmacological Therapy Limits

Though there has been considerable progress in the pathophysiology of brain disease, conventional pharmacologic therapy rarely provides long-term and holistic cures. Most available drugs are symptomatic and do not intend to cure or reverse disease course. For example, in neurodegenerative disease like Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease, drugs may briefly reverse or enhance cognition or motor skill but cannot reverse the loss of the underlying neurones. Psy-

chiatric medications such as antidepressants and antipsychotics, despite being helpful in select patients, take many weeks before their effectiveness becomes obvious and possess undesirable side effects from sedation and weight gain to metabolic impairment and flattening of emotion.

Additionally, the response to therapy is highly individual and locale-specific, and clinical therapy is primarily based on hit-or-miss therapy techniques. Long-term therapy with available drugs is frequently followed by tolerance, dependency, or withdrawal symptoms. Additionally, multiple medications or polypharmacy specific among elderly patients make the regimens of therapy cumbersome and increase the risk of drug interactions. There is an added concern also about the lack of innovation in the pipeline of neuropharmacology, and most pharma corporations are cutting investments in research because of the very huge number of failures during clinical trials and entry into regulation (Cummings et al., 2014). These inadequacies necessitate the unfolding of novel, multimodal, and patient-specific therapy techniques, including the ones based on natural and customary systems of therapy.

Rise in Demand for Plant-Based and Alternative Remedies

The expanding limitations and side effects of conventional pharmacologic therapies have driven the world toward plant and alternative therapies, primarily in the management of chronic neurological and neuropsychiatric disorders. As health consciousness increases and the population turns to holistically based therapies, interest in phytomedicine—natural plant-derived molecules with therapeutic value continues to expand. Many of these therapies possess multi-targeted mechanisms of action, improved safety profiles, and higher cultural acceptability. Historical traditional systems of medicine, such as Ayurveda, Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), and ethnomedicine, have long used herbs such as *Bacopa monnieri, Withania somnifera*, and *Ginkgo biloba* for the enhancement of cognition and the regulation of mood.

Contemporary pharmacologic research is now, however, fully documenting many of the historical uses of the herbal sector based on evidence-based techniques, and this has contributed to the renewed interest in incorporating herbal therapy into mainstream medical treatment. Additionally, the consumer may view the natural product as safer and body-compatible, making it more attractive, especially among patients disenchanted with the synthetically based medications. The World Health Organization has acknowledged the importance of customary therapeutics and has called for its incorporation into the nation's health systems as an integral component of the overall plan to advance the health endpoints (World Health Organization, 2013). This paradigm shift is more than merely an attitude adjustment, however, for it represents an increased recognition of the therapeutic value of nature in the management of the complex brain disorders.

Objectives and Scope of the Present Chapter

The chapter examines the neuroactive activity of phytomedicines in the management of neurological and neuropsychiatric disease. Set against the background of the global trend towards plant-based and holistic therapeutic approaches, the world faces an acute need to critically assess the therapeutic value of phytochemicals in brain health and disease. The chapter hopes to provide an overview of the major brain disorders and the limitations of the conventional pharmacological remedy. It goes on to outline the molecular pathways wherein plant-derived molecules might occasion their neuroprotective, antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, and neuromodulatory effects. In-

dividual herbs and their bioactive molecules are examined under the lenses of both the preclinical and clinical literature, with an eye towards their efficacy and safety profiles. The chapter goes on to address the regulatory, moral, and scientific barriers that militate against the standardization and admission of phytomedicines into evidence-based clinical practice. The bigger picture is the coming together of the world's traditional systems of knowledge and the modern science of neuroscience, with the aim to developing sustainably feasible and culturally acceptable and clinically relevant therapeutic modalities based on an integrated approach to therapy.

UNDERSTANDING PHYTOMEDICINES AND THEIR NEUROACTIVE PROPERTIES

Derived from different plant parts including bark, roots, seeds, and leaves, phytomedicines used for millennia in conventional medical systems including Ayurveda, Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) and native healing modalities. These plant-based treatments are coming back fame resulting from their wide variety of bioactive chemicals with therapeutic possibilities for sophisticated illnesses, especially those influencing the Central Nervous System (CNS) (Ekor, 2014). Unlike traditional single-target synthesized pharmaceuticals, phytomedicines usually several phytochemicals interacting synergistically on several biological processes. Addressing the multifactorial nature is especially beneficial with poly-pharmacological impact. of brain disorders, where oxidative stress, inflammatory reaction, neurotransmitter imbalances and often concurrent with mitochondrial dysfunction.

Among other types of phytochemicals include flavonoids, alkaloids, terpenoids, saponins, and significant neuroprotective, anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, and phenolic acids have been found. Neuro modulatory activities in preclinical and clinical trials (Kennedy & Wightman, 2011). These substances control a number of neuronal processes including scavenging reactive oxygen. species (ROS), regulating and improving Brain-Derived Neurotrophic Factor (BDNF) signalling pathways of neurotransmitters including dopaminergic, serotonergic, and cholinergic systems. The ability of certain phytochemicals to cross the blood-brain barrier is noteworthy. transforming them into potential candidates for treating central nervous system disorders (Aguiar & Borowski, 2013) There is a chance of phytomedicines being harmless, safe and effective. Enhanced therapies for brain disorders, or as an adjunct to existing pharmacological treatments.

Definition, History, and Traditional Uses of Phytomedicines

Therapeutic items produced from medicinal plants, phytomedicines include whole plants, portions of plants, or standardized extracts with bioactive phytochemicals. Traditionally, these natural chemicals have been used to cure a great number of ailments. including central nervous system disorders. Unlike artificial medicines that usually target because of their complex nature, phytomedicines often act on multiple targets single molecular pathways. chemical composition makes them especially good for treating multifactorial illnesses like neurological and neuropsychiatric diseases (Mukherjee et al., 2007). Traditionally, plant-based medicines have been employed thousands of years.

Ancient medical systems like Ayurveda in India, Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), Unani, and several other long acknowledged the therapeutic possibilities of indigenous customs

throughout the Americas and Africa. of herbs. Ayurvedic medicine has utilized plants like *Bacopa monnieri* and *Withania somnifera* for its therapeutic benefits. improve stress resilience, cognition, and memory. Likewise, TCM has included ginseng and *Ginkgo biloba* for brain function and mental clarity (Patwardhan et al., 2005). Importantly, certain phytochemicals show the capacity to traverse the blood-brain barrier only for symptom relief but also for disease prevention and restoration of health. Modern pharmacological studies are progressively confirming these customary applications, therefore pointing the therapeutic value of phytomedicines in modern neurotherapeutics (Heinrich & Gibbons, 2001).

Classes of Bioactive Phytochemicals with Neuroactivity

Neuroactive phytochemicals cover many different chemical groups, each showing particular methods of action on the neurological system. These chemicals react with Neurotransmitters regulate neuroinflammation, offer antioxidant capabilities, and advance neuroprotection. Knowing the main categories of neuroactive plant-based substances clarifies their therapeutic capacity in diseases of the nervous and neuropsychiatric systems.

The main categories are glycosides, phenolic acids, terpenoids, alkaloids, and flavonoids. Many bioactive substances extracted from several medical plants make up every class. Helping to improve cognition, neuroprotection, anxiolytic, and antidepressant effects.

Major Classes of Neuroactive Phytochemicals

Neuroactive bioactive phytochemicals include many important chemical groups, each using several processes to generate particular effects on the nervous system. Principally known for alkaloids, nitrogen-containing molecules like galantamine and berberine neuroprotection and acetylcholinesterase inhibition found in plants like *Galanthus* species found in *nivalis* and *Berberi*. Among polyphenols are flavonoids, including luteolin and quercetin. Substances with potent anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, and neuroprotective characteristics, often found *in Ginkgo biloba*, vegetables, and fruits. Terpenoids include ginkgolides derived from Ginkgo biloba and limonene derived from citrus peels help to control neurotransmitter systems and lower neuroinflammation. Found in coffee, cereals, and phenolic acids include caffeic acid and ferulic acid because of their antioxidant activity, fruits provide significantly to neuroprotection. Finally, well are glycosides bacosides from *Bacopa monnieri* and ginsenosides from *Panax ginseng* among others. Recorded for their cognitive improvement and advocacy of neuroplasticity (Santos & Ferreira, 2020) Along with these courses and their representative chemicals, their sources and **Table 2** is the basis for the historical application of medicinal plants in the treatment of neurological illnesses as well their developing role in contemporary neurotherapeutics.

Table 2. Major classes of neuroactive phytochemicals and their neuropharmacological effects

Class of Phytochemical	Representative Compounds	Primary Neuroactivity	Plant Sources
Alkaloids	Galantamine, Berberine	Neuroprotection, Acetylcholinesterase inhibition	*Galanthus nivalis*, *Berberi*'s species
Flavonoids	Luteolin, Quercetin	Antioxidant, Anti-inflammatory, Neuroprotection	Various fruits, vegetables, *Ginkgo biloba*
Terpenoids	Limonene, Ginkgolides	Anti-inflammatory, Neurotransmitter modulation	*Ginkgo biloba*, citrus peels
Phenolic acids	Ferulic acid, Caffeic acid	Neuroprotection, Anti-oxidant.	Coffee, cereals, fruits
Glycosides	Ginsenosides, Bacosides	Neuroplasticity, Cognitive enhancement	*Bacopa monnieri, Panax ginseng*

Mechanisms of Action on the Central Nervous System

These neuroactive phytochemicals act through several mechanisms to produce their prophylactic effects. Aimed at the Central Nervous System (CNS). Unlike synthetic drugs, which usually target one single receptor, the canonical TRPs are particularly interesting as they can be activated by diverse natural chemicals and mediate various physiological responses. Molecules, phytochemicals commonly influence cross-linked pathways multimodal strategy in the management of the sophisticated neurological and polytrauma injured, neurodegenerative conditions. Key mechanisms are a modulation of neurotransmitter systems, antioxidant effects, anti-inflammatory properties, inhibition neurotoxic enzyme, and the induction of neurogenesis and synaptic plasticity. These cooperative effects contribute to improvement of cognition, prevention of neural injury, modulate neurotransmission, and maintain brain repair mechanisms. Figure 2 illustrates the complex molecular interactions through which phytochemicals influence central nervous system (CNS) activity.

Figure 2. Mode of action of phytochemicals in the brain

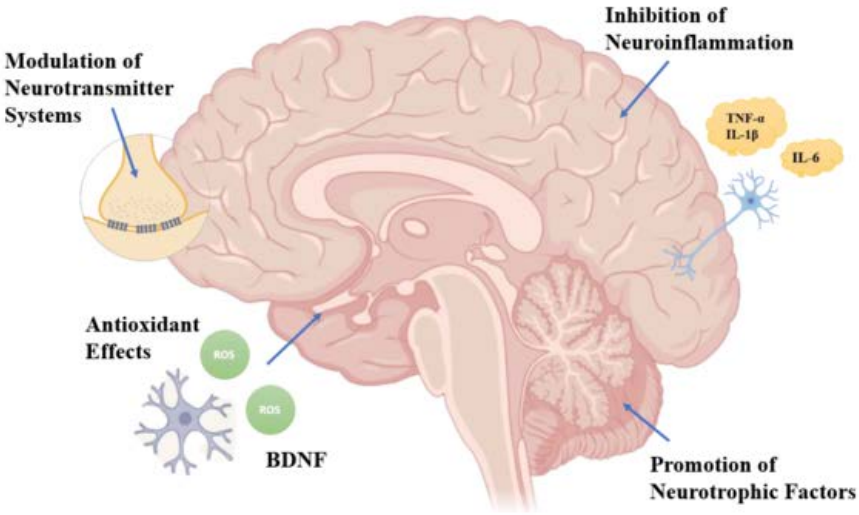

Figure 2. Mechanisms of Action of Phytochemicals on the Brain

Neurotransmitter Modulation

A number of the phytochemicals that are neuroactive exert their therapeutic activities through neurotransmitter functional modulation systems of the central nervous system. Such compounds act to modulate the levels of either-or receptor sensitivity to their respective neurotransmitters, to modulate synaptic transmission and neuronal signalling. For instance, alkaloids like galantamine function as acetylcholinesterase inhibitors, resulting in an increased concentration of acetylcholine in the synaptic cleft and increased cholinergic neurotransmission this latter action particularly useful in the treatment of Alzheimer's disease. Hyphenated to techniques in Environmental Analysis Similarly, flavonoids and terpenoids have been found to the effects of their inhibition. GABAA/serotonin receptor, exerting anxiolytic and antidepressant activities. Phytochemical-mediated dopaminergic regulation such as curcumin and berberine also participates in lifted mood, better cognition, and increased evidence of motor coordination. (Kennedy & Wightman, 2011) These multisided activities emphasize the importance of plant-origin molecules for the reversion neurotransmitter equilibrium and the improvement in brain conditions in a range of neuropsychiatric disorders.

Antioxidant Effects in Neurons

Oxidative stress plays a pivotal role in neuronal injury, neurodegeneration, and brain aging. Phytochemicals such as quercetin, curcumin, and caffeic acid permeate the blood–brain barrier

and can efficiently remove Reactive Oxygen Species (ROS) such as superoxide and hydroxyl radicals, within neuronal tissues. Additionally, these compounds upregulate endogenous radical scavenging enzymes SOD, catalase, and glutathione peroxidase, which together helps to protect neuronal the mitochondria, maintain the integrity of the membrane, and lower lipid peroxidation. By these ways phytochemicals act neuroprotective by RTVF reinforces our current understanding of drug discovery approach and mechanism of action. Stabilizing redox state and reducing oxidative damage of brain cells (Rehman et al., 2019).

Inhibition of Neuroinflammation

The chronic neuroinflammation is a key player in the neuroprogression of neurodegenerative conditions including Alzheimer's and Parkinson's. Phytochemicals like flavonoids, saponins, and phenolic acids has been shown to have the ability to inhibit the activation of microglia the immune cells in the central nervous system. By inhibiting microglial overactivation, the production and release of pro-inflammatory compounds are decreased by these compounds' inflammatory cytokines (tumor necrosis factor-alpha (TNF-α), interleukin-1 beta (IL-1β) and interleukin-6 (IL-6). This anti-inflammatory effect prevents any further damage to the neurons, maintains synaptic integrity and cognitive resilience (Vauzour et al., 2008).

Enhancement of Neurotrophic Factors and Neurogenesis

Phytochemicals, bacosides (*Bacopa monniera*), ginsenosides (*panax ginseng*) such substances interacting collectively have a synergistic therapeutic effect known as synergism and resveratrol (polyphenol found in grapes and berries) neurotrophins (as Brain-Derived Neurotrophic Factor (BDNF), and Nerve Growth Factor (NGF). These neurotrophins are crucial for the survival, synaptic growth, and plasticity of neurons basic mechanisms mediating learning, memory, and control of emotion. Enhanced BDNF, signalling is particularly tightly linked to the strongly associated with hippocampal, cognitive function. Through these pathways, the phytochemicals can be potential inhibitors of neurodegeneration and damage. Also, enhanced neuronal repair under conditions of aging and disease (Pallas et al., 2009).

Regulation of Intracellular Signalling Pathways

Many neuroactive phytochemicals harness their therapeutic potential through modulating. Cellular signalling cascades, including the PI3K/Akt, MAPK/ERK, and Nrf2/ARE. These pathways contribute to the regulation of neuronal survival, plasticity, and resistance to cellular stress. PI3K/Akt and MAPK/ERK Signalling Activation Contribute to the Neuroprotection via upregulation of anti-apoptotic gene expression and maintaining synaptic reorganization. At the same time, activation of Nrf2/ARE results in the up-regulation of antioxidant- and cytoprotective-related genes that oppose oxidative and inflammatory-mediated insults. Phytochemicals are thus, by these molecular pathways, involved in preserving neuronal integrity and function in both normal and disease states (de Oliveira et al., 2020).

Enzyme Inhibition Relevant to Neurodegeneration

Some plant-made chemicals protect the brain by stopping certain enzymes tied to brain diseases. Items like curcumin, resveratrol, and rosmarinic acid slow down Monoamine oxidase (MAO), this way cutting down harmful side products like hydrogen peroxide. Other substances, such as catechins and ferulic acid, go after β-secretase (BACE1), a main player in making amyloid-beta bits linked with Alzheimer's disease. Also, by holding back tyrosinase with flavonoids, it might stop too much bad dopamine which hurts nerve cells in Parkinson's disease. These actions by the chemicals help stop harmful build-ups and stress, slowing the disease (Figueira et al., 2017).

Blood-Brain Barrier Permeability of Plant Compounds

The Blood-Brain Barrier (BBB) acts as a careful screen that shields the brain, letting only needed stuff in and keeping bad things out. For plant chemicals to work on the brain, they need to get past this barrier. Some, like curcumin, resveratrol, quercetin, and ginsenosides can cross the BBB, helped by their design or special carriers. Features like their love for fats, size, and how they deal with exit proteins affect how well they cross. New tech in drugs, like wrapping them in small fat or plant-based capsules, is tested to better their entry and effect (Wohlfart et al., 2012). Knowing and boosting how well these can cross the BBB is key to making good plant treatments for brain issues.

Synergistic Effects in Polyherbal Formulations

Mixes of two or more plants for healing are key in old health ways like Ayurveda and Chinese Medicine. These mixes show strong shared effects, where the total health outcome is more than each plant on its own. This lift can start from many spots: better work of active parts, mixed health effects, changes in body paths, or fewer bad effects. For instance, mixing *Withania somnifera* with *Bacopa monnieri* has had better results on brain and mind boost in tests than using only one herb. This method also allows for using less of each herb, reducing the risk of harm while improving effectiveness. The complete impact on various brain systems with these herb combos provides a solid approach to tackle major brain issues like Alzheimer's and depression (Dhanani et al., 2013). More often, new drug studies find that these old combos work well using full-body and network drug methods.

PHYTOMEDICINAL INTERVENTIONS IN SPECIFIC BRAIN DISORDERS

Mind issues like Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, big sad times, fits, and worry are big head health problems all over the world. They often come with many causes like cell harm, brain swelling, messed-up brain signals, and bad nerve links. Usual drugs work, but can also have bad side effects or may not be enough in tough cases. In this light, plant meds give a full and many-way fix. They mix healing bits with power to guard against cell harm, lower swelling, protect nerves, and help fix them. Old plant cures like *Bacopa monnieri*, *Ginkgo biloba*, *Curcuma longa*, and *Withania somnifera* work well in fixing brain signals, stopping bad brain stuff, and helping nerve health. New drug studies back up these old uses, showing that plant bits like bacosides, curcumin,

quercetin, ginsenosides, and galantamine hit key points tied to each mind issue. The next parts look into these plant fixes with more focus, sorted by uses in certain brain problems, going over how they work and their help backed by science.

Alzheimer's Disease and Memory-Enhancing Botanicals

Alzheimer's disease (AD) is a neurodegenerative disorder characterized by a progressive cognitive deficit, deterioration, memory deficits, and behavioural deficits. The pathology involves β-amyloid plaque deposits, tau hyperphosphorylation, cholinergic impairment, mitochondrial impairment, oxidative damage, and chronic neuroinflammation. Conventional treatments like acetylcholinesterase inhibitors and NMDA receptor antagonists offer symptomatic treatment only are frequently associated with side effects. This has raised more concern about herbal drugs that have multi-target treatment effects and better safety properties. Several botanicals have shown very promising effects in improving memory and containing the progression of AD.

An Ayurvedic supplement Bacopa monnieri that is enriched with bacosides, has strengthen synaptic signalling, induce dendritic branching, and increase expression of brain-derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF), which sustains neurogenesis and cognitive resistance. Ginkgo biloba contains flavonoids, and terpenoids such as ginkgolides, which exhibit antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, and anti-apoptotic activity, as well as increasing cerebral blood flow and cholinergic transmission. Curcuma longa (turmeric) provides curcumin, which has been shown to inhibit amyloid aggregation inhibit free radicals, and inhibit neuroinflammation via the inhibition of NF-κB. Panax ginseng have also been found to possess memory augmenting potential through the modulation of ACH, the reduction of oxidative stress, and the improvement of synaptic plasticity (Howes & Perry, 2011).

Parkinson's Disease and Neuroprotective Plant Extracts

Parkinsons disease is a term condition that affects the nervous system and progresses, the condition is identified by the breakdown of dopamine producing neurons, in a region of the brain called the substantia nigra pars compact. The decrease, in dopamine levels results in motor symptoms like slowed movement and tremors while at rest. Rigidity and balance issues, along, with decline are symptoms to watch for depression and autonomic dysfunction are issues, in Parkinsons disease that are characterized by stress, among other pathophysiological factors. Pharmacological therapies, like levodopa and dopamine agonists along, with MAOB inhibitors present treatment options. Medications can provide relief from symptoms. They do not stop the progression of the disease and can sometimes result in motor issues over time.

Phytomedicines offer an approach, for protecting against neurodegeneration in Parkinsons disease. As an illustration, the leguminous plant *Mucuna pruriens* is known to contain natural levodopa, which works as well as synthetic forms. It also has less associated dyskinesia side effects. Green tea containing polyphenols like EGCG and *Curcuma Longa* (curcumin) also have antioxidant properties as well as anti-aggregatory actions that help conserve dopaminergic neurons. Moreover, Ginsenosides from *Panax ginseng* along with resveratrol, a polyphenol found in grapes that activates SIRT1 signalling, improve mitochondrial biogenesis and bolster the survival of dopaminergic neurons.

Additionally, Baicalein from Scutellaria baicalensis is recognized for lessening the α-synuclein associated microglial activation and fibrillation linked to the progression of Parkinson's disease. These phytochemicals target through various neuroprotective mechanisms i.e. inhibition of monoamine oxidase (MAO-B), reduction in the level of reactive oxygen species, downregulation of pro-inflammatory cytokines, and enhancement of the neurotrophic signalling i.e. BDNF. (Wang et al., 2021) this multiform action is not only useful for symptom relief but also promising to change the disease progression in Parkinson's Disease (PD).

Depression and Anxiety Treatment with Adaptogenic Herbs

Depression and anxiety are two of the most common mood disorders, which stem from dysfunctions of neurotransmitters involved in the regulation of mood (serotonin, dopamine, GABA), chronic stress, oxidative stress, and involvement of the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis. While traditional medicine (e.g., SSRIs, benzodiazepines) for symptom relief but the results are almost always varied. Related to late onset, side effects and treatment resistance in a large proportion of patients.

This has renewed interest in adaptogenic herbs, which help the body resist stress and the challenges of maintaining physiological balance while avoiding over-sedation and over-stimulation. A number of aphrodisiac and adaptogenic herbs have been found to be useful in mood disorders. *Withania sominera* (Ashwagandha) is one of the most excitingly studied one with an anxiolytic and antidepressant properties. It normalizes cortisol levels, can up-regulate GABAergic transmission, and improves resilience to stress-induced neurotoxicity. *Rhodiola rosea*, another well-established adaptogen, mood and cognitive function could be improved through monoamine regulation and inhibiting monoamine oxidase (MAO) enzymes.

Active compounds the active constituents of Rhodiola are the rosavin and salidroside are involved in neuroprotection and stress resistance. *Panax ginseng*, which is abundant in ginsenosides, restores mood and energy by maintaining HPA-axis activity and by increasing brain-derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF). In addition, *Ocimum sanctum* (Holy basil) and *Bacopa monnieri* show antidepressant-like effects by modulation of serotonergic and dopaminergic transmission and it decreasing oxidative and inflammatory pressure on the brain (Sarris et al., 2013). These herbs act via a neuroendocrine, anti-oxidant, anti-inflammatory measures, facilitating neural balance and emotion equilibrium stability. Their holistic effects make them especially useful in the treatment of the chronic stress-associated conditions and mood as changes with lesser side effects than conventional drugs (Panossian & Wikman, 2010).

Epilepsy and Anticonvulsant Phytocompounds

Epilepsy is a serious, chronic neurological disorder marked by recurrent, unprovoked seizures caused by unusual electrical activity in the brain. Affecting approximately 50 million people around the world, epilepsy has a serious impact on quality of life and cause cognitive disorder, distress, and endured social stigma. While conventional antiepileptic drugs (AEDs) can seizure-free many, approximately 30% of patients have drug-resistant epilepsy, with appreciable

side effects, such as drowsiness, confusion, and dose-dependent extrapyramidal effects (EPS) hepatotoxicity (Chen et al., 2018).

These restrictions were the motivation for growing interest in plant- anticonvulsant drugs that are effective on multiple targets with less adverse effects. Anticonvulsant activity of the phytochemicals isolated from the studied ethnomedicinal, potential via multiple pathways, such as regulation of GABAergic and glutamatergic neurotransmission, antioxidant and anti-inflammatory actions. Notable examples include retardant of central nervous system (CNS) excitatory neurotransmission *Withania somnifera* (Ashwagandha) and known to increase GABAergic tone and decrease seizure susceptibility in models of seizures.

Bacopa monnieri exhibits neuroprotective and anticonvulsant activity due to its active saponins; bacosides A and B (Bhattacharya et al., 2000). orticosa as well as Passiflora incarnata, Valeriana officinalis, and Centella asiatica have also exhibited. Promising preclinical results in animals' effect through sedative and inhibitory neurotransmitter pathways (Sharma et al., 2020). These phytoconstituents could be used as safer alternative or supplements treatments for the management of epilepsy, especially in subpopulations with restricted access to mainstream AEDs or in patients that are intolerant to treatment with these drugs.

Cognitive Decline and Age-Related Neuronal Dysfunction

Cognitive decline is the gradual loss of abilities to think and remember, including memory, attention, learning, and decision-making. Processes, often related to ageing and damage control in brain and neurological disorders such as retinal disorders like age induced macular degeneration. Alzheimer's disease. Given the increasing life span of the world population, age-related neuronal malfunction has increasingly a major public health issue, resulting in reduced quality of life and increased healthcare costs. The primary mechanisms regulating cognitive aging are oxidative. stress, neuroinflammation, mitochondrial dysfunction, synaptic degeneration, and in decrease of neurotrophic brain-derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF) and were associated with low levels of exercise, acetylcholine (Mattson & Magnus, 2006).

Phytomedicines have exhibited a potential in preventing cognitive decline as a result of their multi-targeted. Regular Expressions Term Let's mention the implication of phytomedicines in neurodegenerative disorders under these headings, mechanisms and favourable safety profiles. Several plant-derived compounds, including flavonoids, terpenoids and alkaloids possess neuroprotective, antioxidant and anti-inflammatory action of neuronal preservation and cognitive performance improvement. For example, *Ginkgo biloba* extract has been widely studied for its ability to improve cerebral blood flow, inhibit neurotransmission and attenuate ageing-related oxidative damage (Maclennan et al., 2002). Memory-enhancing effects of Bacopa monnieri are also observed through modulation of cholinergic pathways and on the development of antioxidant defence (Calabrese et al., 2008). Likewise, curcumin, the bioactive constituent of *Curcuma longa*, has potential for decreasing amyloid preventing plaque deposition and tau pathology in Alzheimer's models (Mishra & Palanivelu, 2008). These results corroborate the increasing attention paid to phytotherapeutics measures as a preventive or complementary interventions to retard cognitive decline and promotion of healthy brain aging.

CHALLENGES, REGULATORY FRAMEWORKS, AND ETHICAL DIMENSIONS

In spite of the increased interest in the use of herbal medicines for neurological disorders, there are many obstacles to their use in clinical practice. One of the greatest obstacles is the lack of standardization amongst herbal medicines. Variability in plant genetics, growing conditions, time of harvest, separation, and the process of extraction means that herbal products can vary widely in terms of phytochemical composition and thus efficacy and safety (Sahoo et al., 2010). This uncertainty limits replicability when researching herbal medicines, as well as regulatory approval for clinical use. Moreover, the lack of an internationally accepted quality-control regime for assessing herbal medicines creates an additional barrier to the work providing globally focused commercialization and medical integration (Wong et al., 2013).

Regulatory wise, herbal medicines occupy multiple classifications under regional laws, with some representing dietary supplements, others traditional medicines and even others therapies. These overlapping classifications inhibit coherent regulation and consistent safety and product information. For example, while both the European Medicines Agency (EMA) and U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) have issued specific guidance for botanical products most countries lack a clearly defined regulatory consideration (Tilburt & Kaptchuk, 2008); even in the case of clearly defined approaches, they have neither the mechanisms for enforcement nor a capability to widely inform and protect practitioners. Moreover, there are challenges, as phytomedicines typically encompass multi-component remedies, in using a monolithic drug evaluation process, which is designed to develop, appraise and approve single-molecule drugs.

Concerns about safety and toxicity remain evident, especially with long-term use and potential herb-drug interactions. Most phytomedicines are used and self-prescribed by users or patients, resulting in an increased potential for misuse or harm, especially with vulnerable groups, such as older adults or those with chronic conditions (Posadzki et al., 2013). Also, the limited number of substantial, randomized controlled studies on most herbal compounds limits the credibility of evidence on the effectiveness, and safety in the neurological context.

The 'ethical' aspects of research regarding phytomedicine, is also an important topic to consider. Most of the information on medicinal plants is based on collaborative work with traditional healers or indigenous peoples, but information is often derived and appropriated for scientific and commercial use without consent or benefit to the community, a process often called biopiracy. Ethical consideration would involve adopting the Nagoya Protocol and strictly adhering to access and benefit-sharing (ABS) mechanisms (Robinson et al., 2015). When traditional knowledges are used for commercial purposes, the implications of informed consent, preserving traditional contributions and information, and the preservation of biodiversity, must be considered and factored into ethical considerations.

Regulatory Requirements for Herbal Neurotherapeutics

The complex and diverse regulatory landscape regarding us of herbal neurotherapeutics makes it difficult to normalize or harmonize the procedures on a global basis. In the United States herbals are regulated primarily as dietary supplements under the Dietary Supplement Health and Education Act (1994). The DSHEA allows producers to market botanicals as long as no claims of specific disease are expressed and the products do not require pre-approval by the FDA (Tilburt

& Kaptchuk, 2008). If the intent of the herbal is to be used for therapeutic purposes of specific neurological disturbances, then the same drug development process will be followed as with a synthetic drug, including investigational new drug applications and clinical trials.

On the European continent, The European Medicines Agency has created a specific regulatory body the Committee on Herbal Medicinal Products (HMPC) for overseeing herbal medicines. The products will be marketed under either traditional use registration or well-established use authorization; the nature of registration based on history of use, with clinical findings for support. Each pathway allows for access to the market; however, the manufacturer is still responsible for product quality, safety, and consistency between batches.

Countries that have strong historically based medical systems such as India and China also apply an important integrated regulatory approach. In India, the Ministry of AYUSH governs Ayurvedic and herbal medicines to enforce standards as per pharmacopoeias and Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) certified manufacturers. The National Medical Products Administration (NMPA) of China includes aspects of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) in its framework, allowing for a broader recognition of herbal neurotherapeutics, based on established traditional medical use and contemporary pharmacological confirmation (Heinrich & Gibbons, 2001). However, achieving reproducibility and clinical standardization of herbal formulations remains a considerable barrier everywhere.

Issues of Standardization, Quality Control, and Dosage

The advancement of herbal neurotherapeutics is often limited by significant barriers to standardization, quality assurance, and dosage control. In contrast to pharmaceutical drugs that have wet chemical synthesis from a set of defined structures, phytomedicines tend to be complex mixtures of bioactive compounds, indicating variability of concentrations due to soil type and fertilization, seasonal variability in activities of the plants, and extraction methods, etc. This permeability makes it difficult to standardize and achieve reproducible results in therapeutic outcomes and clinical research (Mukherjee et al, 2017).

Quality control is relevant for establishing the safety and efficacy of herbal formulations, but is especially relevant for neuro-active preparations, since small changes in phytochemical concentrations will have a large impact on whether the preparation had an undertone stimulation or over-stimulation of a neuro-pathway. Various methods have been suggested as modalities for fingerprinting and verifying plant materials such as: high performance liquid chromatography (HPLC), gas chromatography-mass spectrometry (GC-MS) and DNA barcoding (Wang et al., 2018), but they are not always embraced in developing countries because of high cost and scant personnel trained in the methods.

Dosage is another problematic factor in herbal neurotherapy. The complexity of the synergistic activity of multiple phytoconstituents does not foster an appropriate dose-response relationship. Additionally, factors such as individual differences in metabolism, age, and gut microbiota can affect the absorption and bioavailability of phytochemicals, making standardized dosing problematic (Bent, 2008). While there are dozens of clinical studies with consistent pharmacokinetics for pharmaceuticals, most herbal products are shipped without the rigor of clinical dosing studies, suggesting a greater potential for undesirable outcomes or inadequate therapeutic effects.

Safety, Toxicity, and Pharmacovigilance Concerns

The safety and toxicity characteristics of herbal neurotherapeutics are a widening area of concern, especially due to the increase in use of herbal neurotherapeutics within traditional and integrative medical systems. Phytomedicines are sometimes considered to be safer alternatives simply because they are derived from nature. While it is true that many plant-based medicines are extremely potent with various biological activity, the notion that phytomedicines are naturally safe covers up the fact that adverse effects caused by excessive dosing, duration of use, or combination with other pharmaceuticals can range from mild gastrointestinal discomfort to serious hepatic or central nervous system toxicity (Ernst, 2004).

A key issue regarding the safety of herbal products is the ignorance or failure to conduct rigorous preclinical and clinical toxicology testing. Synthetic drugs undergo structured safety assessments in preclinical and clinical testing phases, and safety regulations from the Australian Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) can help with this process. Herbal formulations, however, many enter the marketplace and consumers use these products based on tradition or anecdotal evidence and therefore there are very few data on the toxicological thresholds, contraindications, and/or nervous system effects associated with herbal medications (Zhou et al., 2019). Moreover, health risks vary when herbal products are contaminated with heavy metals, pesticides, or other adulterants, such as corticosteroids and/or synthetic drugs, especially when standards of quality are not in place.

Pharmacovigilance, or the monitoring of adverse events after the marketing authorization of drug (in this case, herbal products), is another area that is clearly important for phytomedicine use but remains largely underdeveloped. There is a lack of countries with established reporting and monitoring systems for adverse events with herbal products, and due to the nature of what the body of evidence indicates regarding patient reporting, patients often do not inform physicians that they are using herbal products, leading to complication in recognizing herb–drug interactions or contributing causality of toxicities (Shi & Klotz, 2012). Neuroactive herbal compounds may have neuroactive effects via activity on neurotransmitter systems or drug metabolising enzymes so it is especially important to consider the potential for adverse effects and further interactions, especially with patients who have neurological disorders and have multiple medications (polypharmacy).

Ethical Considerations in Herbal Clinical Research

As more traditional plant-based therapies are integrated into evidence-based medicine, ethical issues in herbal clinical research may also become more apparent. One ethical issue related to study design is the need for informed consent in indigenous or rural settings. Participants in these settings may have little understanding of clinical trials or of what it means to participate in a trial (Langwick, 2011). Researchers must ensure this communication occurs in a culturally appropriate manner; the consent process remains voluntary and free from coercion or manipulation; and participants are not exploited.

Another major ethical issue relates to traditional knowledge. Much of the knowledge that sits behind herbal medicines comes from indigenous knowledge systems that have developed over time. Some of that knowledge is inappropriately used in research or commercialized without appropriately acknowledging the original knowledge holders, or compensating them or sharing the benefits. This raises ethical issues around biopiracy (Shiva, 2007). Frameworks exist that call

for equitable sharing of knowledge and benefits, including the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-Sharing, which focuses more on sharing benefits from genetic resources and traditional knowledge associated with the genetic resources.

Research transparency is critical. Many herbal clinical trials are designed poorly or have an issue with selective reporting or lack of peer-reviewed publishing which all undermine an ethical obligation to provide valid knowledge to the research community (Chan et al., 2014). Ethical guidelines should require that every research study, including herbal therapy, must comply with many international standards such as the Declaration of Helsinki, including, but not limited to the need for a pre-registered trial and full disclosure on pathways of outcomes.

One last point would be to respect levels of cultural and ecological sustainability in herbal research. Harvesting of medicinal natural plant sources or plants in therapy for research purposes as well as commercial purposes can negatively influence the environment and directly affect biodiversity. Ethical research must consider sustainability of plant sources and implement equitable partnerships with local communities to maintain cultural heritage and protect ecological resources (Hamilton, 2004).

Intellectual Property Rights and Traditional Knowledge

The intersection of intellectual property rights (IPR) with traditional knowledge (TK) in the field of herbal medicine raises difficult legal, ethical and cultural issues. TK, defined as knowledge sustained over generations through oral transmission within indigenous and local communities, is important to identify and engage in the use of medicinal plants. Academic research has found that modern intellectual property systems, to which TK is adapted, cannot maintain forms of knowledge that is collective, changing and contextually situational and such modern systems ignore procedures that offer a more equitable and justice solution to the concerns of providing benefits in making sure access to TK is not exploited and appropriated in more modern contexts (Posey & Dutfield, 1996).

Another key issue is the idea of herbal formulas or isolated active compounds that are put into the financial system through patent rights without the permission or benefit of the communities that their formulations arose from. This is discussed in academia as biopiracy and has been of significant importance to indigenous peoples across the globe and respond to issues concerning TK sustainability, rights and potential disinheritance of cultural and biological heritage (Gollin, 2001). And although there are numbers of important indigenous cultural and biological TK situations that are well documented, global multi-national corporations have had further strategies to restrict or limit indigenous peoples from accessing their TK. For example, some of the more frequently-discussed cases present concern around turmeric and healing for cuts and wounds and neem and toxic pesticides, which have raised debates about the boundaries of ethics in patent law as well as legal frameworks needed to protect TK.

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and global supplementary agreement, the Nagoya Protocol, seek to protect TK by putting legal frameworks, access and benefit-sharing (ABS), in place to pay indigenous peoples when their knowledge has been used for commercial or scientific advancements. However, implementation is poorly managed within countries and for many to have a legal regime that recognizes collective ownership or has enforcement mechanisms related ABS compliance is relatively limited (WIPO, 2020).

A wide variety of efforts have been made to establish sui generis systems localized to provide legal protections that recognize the unique culture of traditional knowledge. Sui generis systems provide a model that incorporates aspects of customary law with legislated legal protections that recognize and respect the intellectual contributions of indigenous peoples, while providing safeguards to maintain traditional knowledge as it exists for their ecology. Examples such as India's Traditional Knowledge Digital Library (TKDL) have created workable, defensive systems using legal systems to protect knowledge through documenting the ancient formulations and making this knowledge available to patent examiners around the world (Prathapan & Rajan, 2011).

FUTURE PERSPECTIVES AND INTEGRATIVE APPROACHES

As awareness of brain disorders continues to evolve and barriers to conventional treatments remain, the demand for phytomedicines in the field of neurotherapeutics continues to grow. Future directions must be informed by a hybrid healthcare system that has integrated traditional plant-based knowledge with novel developments in biomedicine to create a healthcare approach that amplifies the strengths of both. The ongoing changes in technology such as nano technology and systems biology have set the stage for a new generation of herbal formulations that can ameliorate the major limiting factors of bioavailability, targeted delivery, and efficacy (Tiwari et al., 2022).

An exciting area of development is the Nanoformulations of phytochemicals to overcome the issues of poor solubility and blood-brain barrier transport. Nanocarriers like liposomes, dendrimers and solid lipid nanoparticles can be or have been employed as drug delivery systems to effectively transport herbal molecules, such as curcumin, quercetin, and resveratrol, directly into the brain to enhance therapeutic approaches in neurodegeneration models (Ramesh et al., 2020). Additionally, drug discovery platforms utilizing artificial intelligence have been able to describe the messy interplays of phytochemicals acting on a neural target to facilitate multi-target drug design for diverse, complex disorders such as Alzheimer's and schizophrenia.

Personalized phytotherapy is also beginning to take shape as a frontier, by utilizing genetic, epigenetic, and metabolic profiles for individualization of herbal therapies. This approach is consistent with principles of precision medicine and may greatly advance the clinical efficacy of phytomedicines, especially in cases where the individual is suffering from treatment-resistant neurological disorders (Rasool et al., 2021).

Finally, interdisciplinary partnerships among ethnobotanists, neurologists, pharmacologists, and data scientists, are key to developing research evidence bases and clinical recommendations. Community-based studies where indigenous healers and traditional practitioners work together will also further minimize the research-to-practice gap, by ensuring that integrative care prescribing practices are respectful and accountable, as well as scientifically rigorous.

Advancements in Herbal Drug Delivery (e.g., Nanoformulations)

A scientific impediment in the employment of herbal medicines in neural applications is poor bioavailability and being able to cross the blood brain barrier (BBB). Recent improvements in drug delivery techniques especially Nanoformulations allow for better bioavailability and therapeutic benefit of phytomedicine for treating brain disorders. Non-technology carriers have also been identified such as liposomes, solid lipid nanoparticles, dendrimers, and polymeric nanoparticles

have been studied for encapsulation of herbal products to improve solubility, stability, and targeting of the central nervous system (Kumar et. al., 2021).

In preclinical studies of nascent Nanoformulations of neuroprotective phytochemicals including curcumin, resveratrol, quercetin, and bacosides, these carriers showed favourable outcomes in disease states including Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, and cerebral ischemia in animals. These agents provide sustained release of active substances and facilitate the transportation of phytochemicals across physiological barriers or the BBB (Mokhtari et al., 2022), resulting in improved therapeutic efficacy in smaller doses. Moreover, surface-modified nanoparticles, with ligands that were targeted to brain endothelial receptors, were able to deliver herbal compounds into the brain by receptor-mediated endocytosis, thus facilitating the concentrated delivery of the actives to affected neuronal tissues.

Integration of Phytomedicines into Modern Healthcare Systems

The increasing interest in phytomedicines and patient demand for natural therapies has stimulated worldwide initiatives to integrate and embed phytomedicines into the formal healthcare system. This integration commonly exemplifies a transition toward patient-centred, preventive healthcare that concentrates on the holistic health of the symptoms of people's disease. Countries throughout Europe, Asia, and Latin America are beginning to embrace and adopt traditional botanical medicines as a valuable asset in health care, specifically for chronic and neurological disorders that western pharmacotherapeutics often do not work or result in deleterious side effects (Bodeker & Kronenberg, 2002).

Several healthcare systems are now getting ready to prescribe regulated phytomedicines, as is now being encouraged in hospitals and primary care facilities. Germany has standard monographs for herbal medicines from its Commission E, while India is developing institutional practices in its Ministry of AYUSH, and offering evidence-based approaches for the incorporation of Ayurveda and other practices within its jurisdiction. Moreover, the World Health Organization supports the policies and encourages its members to support the development of national policies on traditional and complementary medicine, and to pursue research and regulatory and practitioner training initiatives" (World Health Organization [WHO], 2019).

Role of Personalized Medicine and Ethnopharmacology

The evolution of personalized medicine has transformed modern healthcare from a "one-size-fits-all" approach to a procedure that considers the individual genetic make-up, environmental circumstances, and lifestyle choices of a patient with respect to diagnosis and treatment plans. Consequently, the evolution of personalized medicine has given rise to exciting possibilities in the ability to personalize phytomedicine through patient biological profiles. The goal of personalized phytomedicine is to increase efficacy and safety of therapeutic effectiveness while employing pharmacogenomic principles and traditional plant medicine paradigms to determine which herbal compounds are most likely to be beneficial to any particular individual or subgroup of individuals (Hasan et al., 2021).

Ethnopharmacology plays an important complementary role by systematically investigating traditional medicinal knowledge and practices, exploring factors that give rise to cultural relevance, plant utilization, and bioactivity. Ethnopharmacology is also beneficial because it can produce

a wealth of information regarding the Indigenous formulations and their historical safety data informing contemporary drug discovery. With the emergence of novel analytical tools such as metabolomics, systems biology, and machine learning, ethnopharmacological data can now also be combined to identify bioactive compounds displaying multi-targeted neuroprotective activity that may be useful in complex disorders such as Alzheimer's disease and schizophrenia (Heinrich & Jäger, 2015). These approaches offer opportunities to acknowledge cultural diversity relating to healthcare and offer pathways to create awareness and engagement about the need to maintain and conserve biocultural heritage while generating new therapeutic leads.

The synergism of ethnopharmacology and personalized medicine is particularly relevant as it applies to various neurotherapeutic settings, where patient responses to traditional drugs often vary widely. An example of this is the polymorphisms in cytochrome P450 enzymes that affect the metabolism of herbal compounds so that certain patients have better clinical responses than others. The understanding of these genetic considerations gives clinicians the opportunity to adjust dosage or select prescription herbal formulas accordingly to minimise toxicity and improve outcomes.

Research Gaps and Priorities for Future Investigations

Although there is interest in using phytomedicine for brain disorders, there remain significant gaps in research that need to be filled to maximize the therapeutic applications and potential of phytomedicine. The most important restricting factor is the lack of robust evidence from clinical trials investigating efficacy and safety of phytochemicals in neurodegenerative conditions and neuropsychiatric disorders. Although there are many in vitro and animal studies demonstrating the neuroprotective effects of curcumin, resveratrol, ginsenosides and other compounds, and a few studies investigating phytochemistry in human subjects, translational studies in humans remain limited, and if not limited, they are stifled by small sample sizes, short duration and a lack of methodological rigor (Zhou et al., 2016).

Standardization of the herbal preparations remains yet another big challenge. Most phytomedicines show considerable variation in their chemical composition depending upon the source of the plant, methods of extraction, and conditions of storage. This variability tends to prevent reproducibility and hinder regulatory acceptance. Hence, future endeavours should be directed toward producing standardized extracts with validated dosage regimens and reproducible pharmacokinetic profiles to confer consistent therapeutic effects. (Walji et al., 2010)

Second, the mechanistic aspects of the interactions of the phytochemicals with the central nervous system are still evolving. Numerous compounds seem to exert multitarget actions, such as reducing oxidative stress, blocking inflammatory pathways, activating neurotrophic signalling, and modulating neurotransmitters. Yet a systems biology approach needs to be developed to delineate these complex interactions, which, in turn, would reveal synergistic activities among phytochemical combinations (Hasler et al., 2021). Likewise, employing tools such as network pharmacology, molecular docking, and omics could provide significant advances to this field of study.

Concluding Remarks on the Neurotherapeutic Promise of Nature

One of the features that nature offers is an unlimited abundance of substances for use in therapy, especially in cases of brain disorders where in reality neither conventional pharmacotherapy takes action as a curative agent for complex multifactorial disorders. Phytomedicines are broad spectrum neuroprotective agents working through modulation of oxidative stress, inflammation, neurotransmission, and cellular signalling, all believed to be involved in neurodegenerative and neuropsychiatric disorders. In such diverse actions, plant-based treatments warrant application in cognitive and psychiatric disorders both as methods of treatment and prevention.

To achieve full neurotherapeutic benefits from phytomedicines researchers must establish additional scientific evidence together with stronger policy support while implementing ethical frameworks for integrating traditional knowledge into modern medicine. The successful application of these treatments depends on standardization processes alongside individual patient needs and unrestricted public accessibility. Brain therapeutic advancements will depend on traditional botanical science and modern biomedical practices working together to establish universal healthcare solutions which are both effective and sustainable according to Newman and Cragg (2020).

CONCLUSION

The chapter delivered an extensive investigation into the neurotherapeutic abilities of phytomedicines through their relevance to rising worldwide neurological and neuropsychiatric disease prevalence. The paper began with a detailed review of brain disorders including Alzheimer's and Parkinson's as well as depression and schizophrenia and autism and ADHD and stroke to demonstrate their complexity and widespread effects. The paper analysed major obstacles in medical diagnosis and symptom confusion and treatment delays and the restricted success rates and adverse reactions from standard pharmaceutical protocols.

The chapter investigated the growing consumer interest in natural plant-based therapies especially phytomedicines which derive from traditional healing systems. These plant-derived compounds demonstrate multiple neuroprotective capabilities which consist of antioxidant effects as well as anti-inflammatory and anti-apoptotic properties and neurotransmitter-modulating actions. The chapter introduced specific phytochemicals with medicinal plants which show their value for enhancing cognition while stress reduction and nervous system protection and mood stabilization. The compounds show potential to treat complicated disorders by reaching different targets and crossing the blood-brain barrier for effective treatment.

The discussion explored multiple difficulties that hinder both the creation and public reception of phytomedicines including missing standardization protocols along with regulatory limitations and safety problems and issues about biopiracy and indigenous knowledge rights. The chapter presented new research directions through nanotechnology and personalized phytotherapy together with ethnopharmacological knowledge for enhancing future medical applications.

Phytomedicines present a realistic and beneficial alternative to traditional treatments as well as an additional option to conventional therapies for treating brain disorders. Evidence-based validation together with interdisciplinary collaboration and equal respect for indigenous knowledge systems are needed to bring phytomedicines into modern healthcare. Nature's pharmacy can become a fundamental component of future neurotherapeutics through appropriate regulatory

support alongside scientific development to establish a holistic inclusive sustainable healthcare system for mental and neurological care.

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