

Evidence-based innovative therapeutic medicine of Cretan plants: some encouraging specific functions and claims

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Abstract

The Island of Crete was the place where the use of herbal medicine has its roots since the Bronze Age period. Although, the consumption of aromatic plants as component in curing common diseases is still on population's practices, a new interest was appeared on the basis of studies with a focus on illness behavior as a mutual collaboration between the University of Crete and the University of Leiden, The Netherlands. The antioxidant activity of certain Cretan plants has been documented and it has been shown and reported that herbal extracts are possible to decrease lipid per oxidation in cultured lung cells exposed to iron or ozon. The biological effects and bioactivity of essential oils as well as their antibacterial properties have been previously discussed in the literature. **However, it was the first attempt in Europe when a double blind randomized controlled trial examined the effectiveness of an essential-oil extract of three Cretan aromatic plants (Origanum Dictamnus, Coridothymus Capitatus, Salvia Friticosa) designed and implemented in rural Crete on patients with upper respiratory tract infection. Descriptive differences were recently reported in favorable direction especially in the virus-positive population, while these results guide at the moment a series of actions for further research and discussion on the potentialities in the therapeutic medicine. An over-the-counter drug under the name of "Cretan lama" and as soft-gel capsules has recently circulated in Greece by the Olvos Science SA.** A recent joint attempt (Clinic of Social and Family Medicine and Department of Experimental Endocrinology at the School of Medicine, University of Crete) under the support of the National Strategic Reference Framework Program focused on the effectiveness of functional extract of Mentha Spicata encapsulated in yogurt with honey on lipids profile of health patients in rural Crete. The first reported results of a cross-over study which was designed and implemented recently were in a favorite direction and it was in agreement with the animal based study that was carried out in the frame of this project. In conclusion, the two first studies on the Cretan medicinal and aromatic plants support the potentialities of the use of Ethno botanical methodology to move the needle of innovation on viral infections and lipids metabolism.

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