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# Phytotherapies

Efficacy, Safety, and Regulation

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Edited by  
**IQBAL RAMZAN**

**WILEY**

# **PHYTOTHERAPIES**

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## **Efficacy, Safety, and Regulation**

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**IQBAL RAMZAN**

**WILEY**

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# PREFACE

This book focuses on many facets of the use of Phytotherapies in preventing or treating illness and disease internationally. Phytotherapies are variously defined by practitioners and scientists but include herbal therapies, therapies used by indigenous peoples around the world and alternative medicines as opposed to classical western medicines.

I had not considered editing a book on Phytotherapies as the focus of my scientific career has not been on Phytotherapies. However, in the last 10 years I have investigated some of the pharmacological and more specifically, the hepatotoxic effects of kava. This interest has arisen from my background in that I was born and educated in Fiji where kava is widely used for social and ceremonial functions for centuries.

I was very surprised to receive an invitation from Jonathan Rose at Wiley some 2 years ago to ask if I had an interest in editing such a book. Not having edited an entire book previously, I naively agreed, of course, not realizing the magnitude of the task ahead. I realize now that editing an entire book is exponentially more challenging than contributing to a Book Chapter or even publishing numerous journal articles.

The topic interested me for several other reasons. The Faculty of Pharmacy at the University of Sydney had for many years hosted a Herbal Medicines Education and Research Centre (HMREC) and the Faculty also offered a Masters degree in Herbal Medicines. This program was moderately successful financially and the Centre was closed following an external review that I instituted as Dean of the Faculty. However, I do believe that it is important to examine in a scientific manner, the various forms of Phytotherapies used around the globe as use of such therapies continues to increase.

Phytotherapies are at the heart of disease management in countries such as China and India where they are used instead of and alongside Western medicines.



In the west, the use of Phytotherapies continues to grow at a phenomenal rate. Whether this reflects the dissatisfaction with modern western medicine or the perception that Phytotherapies are natural and thus free of any adverse effects is open to conjecture. However, there is certainly a belief especially among younger people that Phytotherapies are promising alternatives to modern drugs not only in promoting well-being and preventing disease but also in managing some conditions.

Identifying suitable Chapter authors was very challenging due to the diverse and varied nature of the field. I believed it was important to identify suitable scientists with the research and scientific credentials to bring reputational credit to such a book and to ensure balanced and erudite debate. This was confounded by language and cultural sensitivities relating to Phytotherapy use and the evidence base for use in different cultural and ethnic contexts.

Having succeeded in identifying potential Chapter authors the other interesting observation was that while these authors have individually made a strong contribution to the evidence base for the use of Phytotherapies some were also philosophically committed to clinical paradigms that promote the use of Phytotherapies. Separating this attachment to the adoption of Phytotherapies from the scientific evidence for their use was an additional challenge that I had not anticipated in accepting to edit such a book.

If you, the reader, like this book and find it informative and useful in either your practice, for your students or indeed as a resource in your scientific library, then I hope I have been able to objectively separate out the evidence base and summarise some of the science in this vast field of Phytotherapies. The other issue which I wanted to come across in the book is the rightful acknowledgment of the breath of the topic and the variety of the evidence base that is available for the use of Phytotherapies.

I want to thank Angela Teklic for her tireless effort in assisting me with the formatting of the Chapters and making sure that the Book complied with the Wiley template. Both of us underestimated this mammoth task but the attention to detail displayed by Angela made my life more bearable. Eleanor Luntao was very valuable in making sure the contributor agreements were in place and that permissions to reproduce published material were obtained. Eleanor's dedication during the proof-reading stage was also exemplary. Finally, I would like to thank my wife, Dr Lynn Weekes AM, who had to spend many hours alone while I spent days editing this book.

Professor IQBAL RAMZAN

*The University of Sydney*  
*February 2015*

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