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Traditional plant drugs as potential immunomodulators

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Management of various diseases through immunomodulation is the current trend and recent researchers worldwide are focusing their research towards developing immunomodulating plant drugs that act as prophylactic or therapeutic agents. Adverse side effects such as kidney failure, anemic conditions, bone marrow disorders and sudden decrease in platelet counts which are often encountered due to the longer administration of synthetic immunomodulatory agents have forced researchers to take up researches on immunomodulatory drug development. Besides synthetic immunomodulatory agents are costly, hence there is a need for an alternative cost effective human friendly plant based immunomodulatory agents. A review is carried out on traditional Ayurveda and Siddha literature to suggest natural herbal sources that could enhance immune system either as immunostimulator or as immune suppressor and contribute towards the health care of human society. These plant drugs could be used successfully in the management of various immune dysfunctions or in case of residual cancer. Several molecules have also been isolated from these plant sources which stimulate immune responses. In the present paper various immunomodulatory plant sources available in India are discussed and presented.

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