

Herbal cure to Cancer

Researchers from Kolkata's Chittaranjan National Cancer Institute have found two plants frequently used in Ayurvedic medicines effectively battle our four types of cancer in lab.

They discovered the root extract of *Tiliacora racemosa* (Tiliacoru) and the nut oil of *Semecarpus anacardium* (Dhobi nut) eliminated cultured human tumour cells from acute myeloblastic (myeloblast is a bone marrow cell) leukaemia, chronic myeloblast (associated with bone marrow) leukaemia, breast and cervical cancers.

"The herbals preparation from T racemosa and S anacardium selectively force cancer cells to commit suicide, sparing healthy neighbouring cells," claims Madhumita Roy, who headed the team of researchers.

"The anti-cancer active compounds identified in the root extract of T racemosa are a number of bisbenzyl isoquinoline alkaloids, a type of organic compound and phenolic substances, also organic compounds, in the nut oil of S anacardium," writes the researcher in a recent issue of journal *Phytotherapy Research* (Vol 18, No 8).

"The finding of the research are indicative of a potential therapeutic role of these herbal preparations in human cancer," says co-author Sutapa Chakraborty.

To study the anti-cancer effects of the plant extracts, the team produced an ethanol (alcohol) extract of T racemosa root (TR), an alkaloid-containing root extract of T racemosa (TA) and extracted the S anacardium nut oil (SO) using Ayurvedic principles. When tumour cells were exposed to these extracts, TA annihilated all the four types of cancer cells. TR and SO only caused the demise of leukemia cells while breast cancer cells growth was partially inhibited by SO and TR.

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