A Review on Effect of Herbs on Absorption, Distribution, Metabolism, Elimination of Therapeutic Drugs

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Abstract- The use of herbal medicines has become increasingly widespread across the world, with a significant proportion of the population relying on herbal products either as primary therapeutic agents or as complementary treatments alongside conventional medicines. The growing popularity of herbal remedies is largely attributed to their accessibility, affordability, cultural acceptance, and the common perception that natural products are inherently safe. However, despite their therapeutic potential, herbal medicines contain numerous biologically active constituents capable of interacting with prescription and over-the-counter drugs. Such interactions can alter the pharmacokinetic profile of therapeutic agents and may result in clinically significant consequences. Pharmacokinetics encompasses four fundamental processes—absorption, distribution, metabolism, and elimination (ADME)—which collectively determine the concentration of a drug in the systemic circulation and at its site of action. Herbal products can influence these processes through various mechanisms, including modification of gastrointestinal physiology, alteration of plasma protein binding, regulation of drug transporters, modulation of hepatic and intestinal drug-metabolizing enzymes, and changes in renal excretion pathways. Among these mechanisms, the induction or inhibition of cytochrome P450 (CYP450) enzymes and membrane transport proteins such as P-glycoprotein has emerged as a major factor responsible for herb–drug interactions.

Several widely used herbal medicines, including *Hypericumperforatum* (St. John's Wort), *Ginkgo biloba*, garlic (*Allium sativum*), ginseng (*Panax ginseng*), grapefruit (*Citrus paradisi*), cranberry (*Vacciniummacrocarpon*), licorice (*Glycyrrhizaglabra*), and milk thistle (*Silybummarianum*), have been reported to significantly alter drug absorption, tissue distribution, metabolic clearance, and elimination. These interactions may lead to decreased therapeutic efficacy, increased drug toxicity, adverse drug reactions, treatment failure, or serious clinical complications, particularly in patients receiving drugs with a narrow

therapeutic index such as warfarin, cyclosporine, digoxin, tacrolimus, and certain anticancer agents. The increasing prevalence of poly-pharmacy, self-medication, and the concomitant use of herbal and conventional medicines has heightened concerns regarding the safety and effectiveness of pharmacotherapy. Furthermore, variability in herbal product composition, lack of standardization, and limited patient awareness often complicates the identification and management of herb–drug interactions. Therefore, understanding the influence of herbal medicines on drug disposition is of paramount importance for healthcare professionals, researchers, and regulatory authorities.

This review critically examines the current scientific evidence regarding the effects of herbal medicines on the absorption, distribution, metabolism, and elimination of therapeutic drugs. It discusses the molecular mechanisms underlying these interactions, summarizes clinically relevant herb–drug interaction studies, and highlights their implications for patient safety and therapeutic outcomes. The review also emphasizes the need for enhanced pharmacovigilance, standardized herbal formulations, and evidence-based clinical guidelines to ensure the safe and rational integration of herbal medicines into contemporary healthcare systems.

Index terms: Herbal medicines, Herb–drug interactions, Pharmacokinetics, Absorption, Distribution, Metabolism, Elimination, ADME, Cytochrome P450 enzymes, P-glycoprotein, Drug transporters, Bioavailability, Drug metabolism, Therapeutic drugs, Pharmacovigilance, Complementary and alternative medicine.

I. INTRODUCTION

The utilization of herbal medicines has experienced remarkable growth over the past few decades. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), approximately 80% of the global population relies on herbal medicines for some aspect of primary healthcare. Herbal products are frequently used either as alternative therapies or as complementary medicines alongside conventional pharmaceutical agents. Their popularity is attributed to factors such as cultural acceptance, affordability, accessibility, and the widespread perception that natural products are safer than synthetic drugs.

Despite these perceived benefits, increasing evidence demonstrates that herbal medicines are capable of interacting with conventional drugs, resulting in significant alterations in pharmacokinetic and pharmacodynamics profiles. These interactions can have profound clinical consequences, including therapeutic failure, toxicity, adverse drug reactions, and increased healthcare burden.

Pharmacokinetics describes the journey of a drug through the body and encompasses four major processes: absorption, distribution, metabolism, and elimination (ADME). Any factor that

influences these processes may alter drug concentration at the site of action and consequently affect therapeutic outcomes. Herbal constituents such as flavonoids, alkaloids, terpenoids, glycosides, tannins, and polyphenols have demonstrated the ability to modify various pharmacokinetic pathways.

One of the most important mechanisms underlying herb–drug interactions involve modulation of cytochrome P450 (CYP450) enzymes and membrane transport proteins such as P-glycoprotein (P-gp). Certain herbs may induce these proteins, resulting in reduced drug concentrations, whereas others inhibit them, causing drug accumulation and toxicity.

As the use of herbal medicines continues to rise globally, understanding the mechanisms by which these products influence drug disposition has become increasingly important for healthcare professionals, researchers, and regulatory agencies. This review aims to critically evaluate current evidence regarding the effects of herbal medicines on the ADME processes of therapeutic drugs and to discuss the clinical significance of these interactions.

II. OBJECTIVES

A comprehensive evaluation of the effects of herbal medicines on the absorption, distribution, metabolism, and elimination of therapeutic drugs.

a) To explain pharmacokinetic mechanisms involved in herb–drug interactions.
b) To identify commonly used herbs associated with clinically significant interactions.
c) To examine the role of CYP450 enzymes and drug transporters.
d) To evaluate the clinical outcomes of herb–drug interactions.
e) To discuss current challenges and future perspectives.

III. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The literature search covered publications from 2000 to 2025. The following keywords and their combinations were used:

- Herb–drug interactions
- Herbal medicines
- Pharmacokinetics
- ADME
- Drug absorption
- Drug metabolism
- Cytochrome P450
- P-glycoprotein
- Ayurveda

- Siddha
- Unani
- Homeopathy
- Medicinal plants
- Bioavailability enhancement
- Herbal supplements

Similar search strategies have been employed in major reviews investigating herb–drug interactions and pharmacokinetic mechanisms.

Data Extraction and Analysis

Relevant information was extracted from eligible studies, including:

- Name of herb
- Botanical family
- Active phyto-constituents
- System of medicine
- Marketed dosage forms
- Effects on absorption
- Effects on distribution
- Effects on metabolism
- Effects on elimination
- Clinical significance of herb–drug interactions

The collected data were categorized according to ADME parameters and summarized using tables, graphs, and comparative analyses to identify trends and clinically important interactions. Similar approaches have been adopted in published systematic reviews and mechanistic assessments of herb–drug interactions.

IV. SYSTEMS OF MEDICINE

A system of medicine refers to a structured approach to the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of diseases based on specific principles and therapeutic practices. Throughout history, different civilizations have developed their own healthcare systems utilizing natural resources, medicinal plants, minerals, and animal-derived products. Herbal medicines constitute an integral component of many traditional and modern healthcare systems and continue to play a significant role in global healthcare.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), traditional medicine remains the primary source of healthcare for a large proportion of the world's population. The increasing integration of

herbal medicines into conventional healthcare has highlighted the importance of understanding their pharmacological properties, therapeutic benefits, and potential interactions with modern drugs.

The major systems of medicine practiced worldwide are discussed below:

Ayurveda: Ayurveda is one of the oldest healthcare systems in the world, originating in India more than 5,000 years ago. The term "Ayurveda" is derived from the Sanskrit words *Ayur* (life) and *Veda* (knowledge), meaning "the science of life."

Basic Principles: Ayurveda is based on the concept of three fundamental energies known as Doshas: Vata (Air and Space), Pitta (Fire and Water), Kapha (Earth and Water)

According to Ayurvedic philosophy, disease occurs due to an imbalance among these doshas.

Common Herbal Medicines Used: Ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera*), Tulsi (*Ocimum sanctum*), Turmeric (*Curcuma longa*) , Amla (*Emblica officinalis*), Neem (*Azadirachta indica*)

Relevance to Herb–Drug Interactions: Several Ayurvedic preparations contain bioactive phytochemicals capable of influencing drug-metabolizing enzymes and transport proteins, thereby affecting the pharmacokinetics of therapeutic drugs.

Siddha System of Medicine: The Siddha system is one of the oldest traditional medical systems practiced primarily in South India, particularly Tamil Nadu.

Principle: Siddha medicine is based on the balance of five elemental forces: Earth, Water,Fire,Air, Ether.

These elements combine to form three humours: Vatham, Pitham, Kabam

Common Herbs: Adhatoda (*Justicia adhatoda*), Aloe vera, Ginger, Pepper, Garlic

Siddha formulations often contain multiple herbal ingredients that may influence drug absorption and metabolism when administered concurrently with conventional medicines.

Unani System of Medicine: The Unani system originated in ancient Greece and was later developed by Arab and Persian scholars.

Fundamental Concept: The system is based on the balance of four humours: Blood (Dam), Phlegm (Balgham) , Yellow bile (Safra), Black bile (Sauda)

Common Medicinal Plants: Senna (*Cassia angustifolia*), Licorice (*Glycyrrhizaglabra*), Fennel (*Foeniculumvulgare*), Black cumin (*Nigella sativa*)

Certain Unani herbs have demonstrated effects on CYP450 enzymes and renal excretion pathways, potentially influencing therapeutic drug levels.

Homeopathy: Homeopathy was developed by the German physician Samuel Hahnemann in the late eighteenth century.

Principles: Law of Similars ("Like cures like"), Principle of Minimum Dose

Common Remedies: Arnica Montana, Belladonna, Nux vomica, Rhustoxicodendron

Although homeopathic remedies are generally administered in highly diluted forms, concerns remain regarding interactions involving mother tinctures and concentrated preparations.

Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM)

Traditional Chinese Medicine is among the most extensively practiced traditional healthcare systems worldwide.

Principles: Yin and Yang, Qi (Vital Energy), Five Elements Theory

Common Herbal Medicines: Ginseng (*Panax ginseng*), Ginkgo (*Ginkgo biloba*), Ephedra (*Ephedra sinica*), Liquorice (*Glycyrrhizauralensis*)

Many TCM herbs have been reported to interact with cardiovascular, anticoagulant, immunosuppressant, and anticancer drugs through pharmacokinetic mechanisms.

Modern Allopathic System of Medicine

Allopathy, or modern medicine, is the most widely practiced healthcare system globally.

Characteristics: Evidence-based approach, Scientific diagnosis, Clinical trials and regulatory approval, Standardized dosage forms

Common Therapeutic Categories: Antibiotics, Antihypertensives, Antidiabetics, Anticancer agents Analgesics

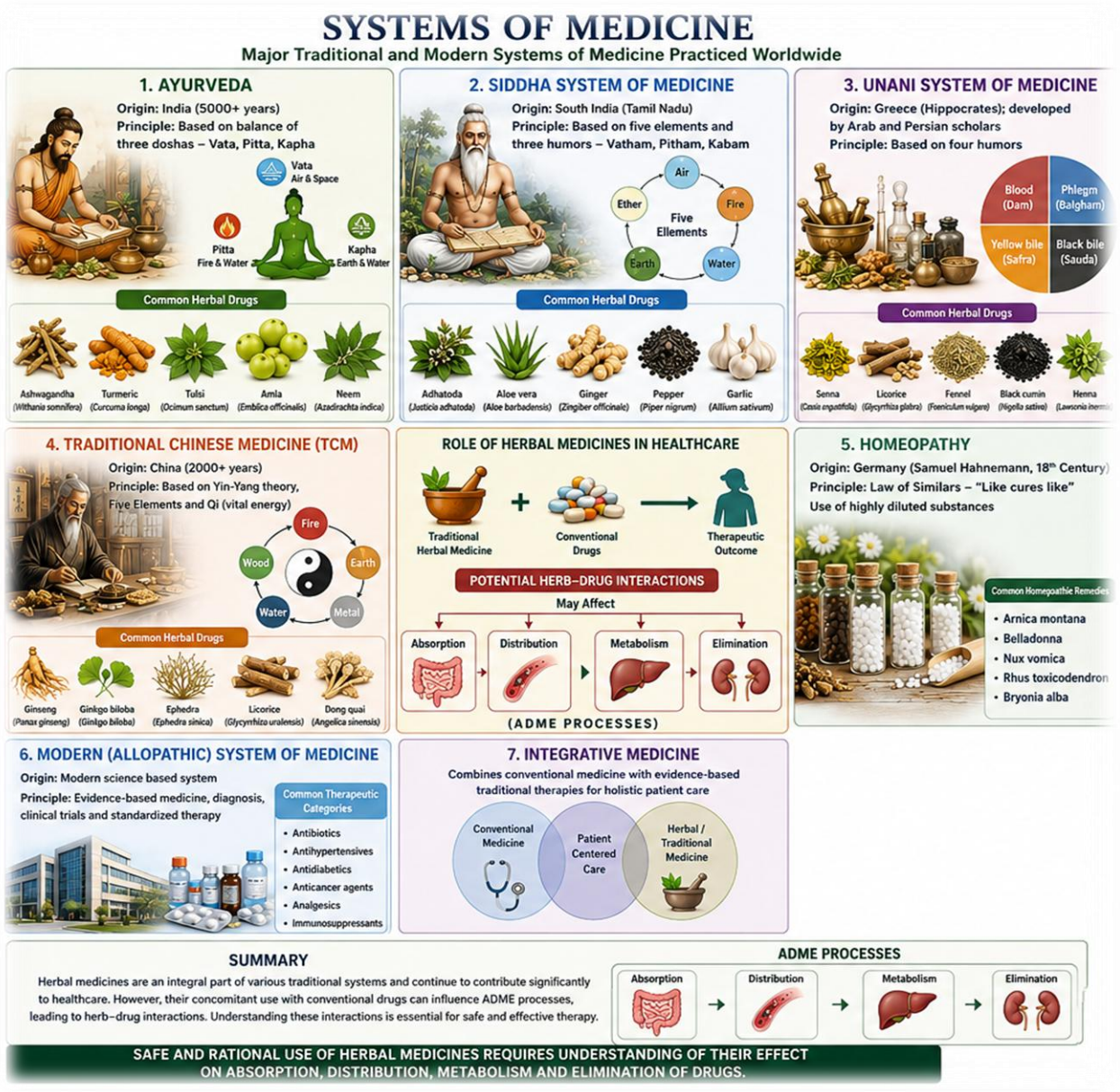
Patients frequently use herbal products alongside allopathic medicines. Consequently, understanding herb–drug interactions is essential for ensuring therapeutic efficacy and patient safety.

Integrative Medicine

Integrative medicine combines conventional medical treatments with evidence-based traditional and herbal therapies.

Objectives: Improve therapeutic outcomes, reduce adverse effects, Enhance patient-centered care

The growing adoption of integrative medicine has increased the likelihood of herb–drug interactions, making pharmacokinetic studies crucial for safe clinical practice.



Absorption: Absorption is the process by which a drug enters the bloodstream from its site of administration.

Major Factors Affecting Absorption: Drug solubility, pH of gastrointestinal tract, Blood flow Surface area available for absorption, Drug transporters

Organs Involved: Mouth, Stomach, Small intestine, large intestine

Most orally administered drugs are absorbed through the small intestine due to its large surface area and rich blood supply.

Distribution: Distribution is the reversible transfer of a drug from the bloodstream to tissues and organs.
Factors Affecting Distribution: Plasma protein, binding Tissue, permeability, Blood flow Lipid solubility

Important Distribution Sites: Brain, liver, Kidneys, Lungs, Adipose tissue

Metabolism; Metabolism is the chemical modification of drugs into more water-soluble compounds.

Sites of Metabolism: Liver (major site), Intestine, Kidneys, Lungs
Types
Phase I Reactions
- Oxidation
- Reduction
- Hydrolysis

Phase II Reactions
- Glucuronidation
- Sulfation
- Acetylation

Elimination; Elimination is the removal of drugs and metabolites from the body.
Routes of Elimination: Urine, Bile, Faeces, Sweat, Saliva, Exhaled air.

Role of Body Systems in ADME
1. Gastrointestinal System
Function in ADME
The gastrointestinal (GI) system plays a primary role in drug absorption.
Components

- Mouth
- Esophagus
- Stomach
- Small intestine
- Large intestine

Importance
- Determines oral bioavailability.
- Influences drug dissolution and absorption.
- Major site of herb–drug interactions.

Examples of Herbs Affecting GI Absorption
- Aloe vera
- Psyllium
- Senna

2. Cardiovascular System
Function in ADME
The cardiovascular system distributes absorbed drugs throughout the body.
Components
- Heart
- Arteries
- Veins
- Capillaries

Importance
- Maintains drug delivery to tissues.
- Influences tissue distribution.
- Determines rate of drug transport.

3. Hepatic System (Liver)
Function in ADME
The liver is the principal organ responsible for drug metabolism.

Importance
- Contains CYP450 enzymes.
- Performs first-pass metabolism.
- Converts drugs into metabolites.

Important Enzymes

- CYP3A4
- CYP2C9
- CYP2D6
- CYP1A2

Herbs Affecting Liver Metabolism
- St. John's Wort
- Grapefruit
- Ginseng
- Milk Thistle

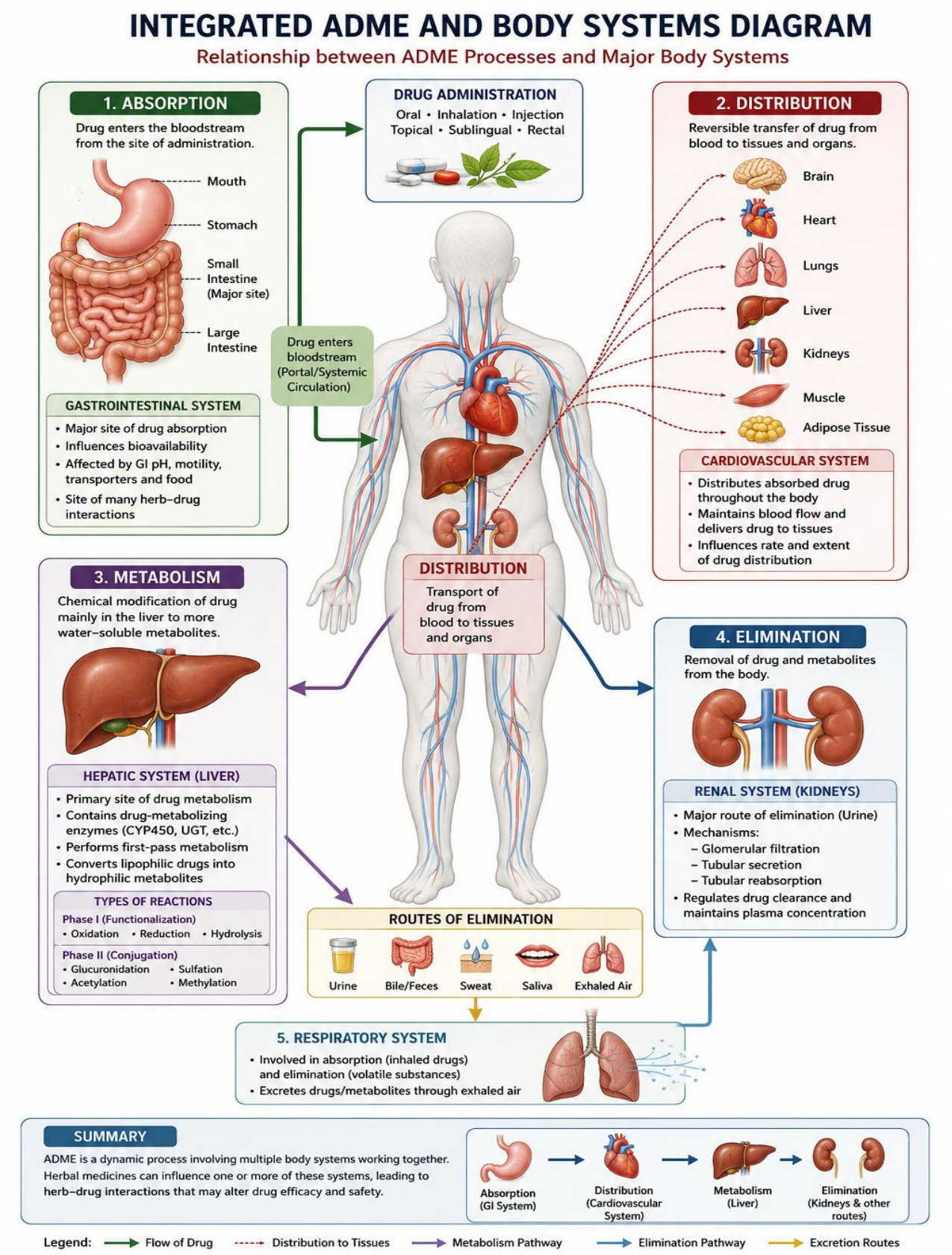
4. Renal System (Kidneys)
Function in ADME
The kidneys are responsible for drug excretion.
Mechanisms
- Glomerular filtration
- Tubular secretion
- Tubular reabsorption

Importance
- Controls drug clearance.
- Regulates plasma drug concentration.

Herbs Affecting Renal Excretion
- Cranberry
- Dandelion
- Liquorice

5. Respiratory System
Function in ADME
The respiratory system contributes to both drug absorption and elimination.
Importance
- Absorption of inhaled drugs.
- Excretion of volatile compounds.

Examples
- General anesthetics
- Inhalational medications


INTEGRATED ADME AND BODY SYSTEMS DIAGRAM
Relationship between ADME Processes and Major Body Systems
1. ABSORPTION
Drug enters the bloodstream from the site of administration.
Mouth
Stomach
Small Intestine (Major site)
Large Intestine
GASTROINTESTINAL SYSTEM
• Major site of drug absorption
• Influences bioavailability
• Affected by GI pH, motility, transporters and food
• Site of many herb–drug interactions
DRUG ADMINISTRATION
Oral • Inhalation • Injection
Topical • Sublingual • Rectal
Drug enters bloodstream (Portal/Systemic Circulation)
2. DISTRIBUTION
Reversible transfer of drug from blood to tissues and organs.
Brain
Heart
Lungs
Liver
Kidneys
Muscle
Adipose Tissue
CARDIOVASCULAR SYSTEM
• Distributes absorbed drug throughout the body
• Maintains blood flow and delivers drug to tissues
• Influences rate and extent of drug distribution
DISTRIBUTION
Transport of drug from blood to tissues and organs
3. METABOLISM
Chemical modification of drug mainly in the liver to more water–soluble metabolites.
HEPATIC SYSTEM (LIVER)
• Primary site of drug metabolism
• Contains drug-metabolizing enzymes (CYP450, UGT, etc.)
• Performs first-pass metabolism
• Converts lipophilic drugs into hydrophilic metabolites
TYPES OF REACTIONS
Phase I (Functionalization)
• Oxidation • Reduction • Hydrolysis
Phase II (Conjugation)
• Glucuronidation • Sulfation
• Acetylation • Methylation
4. ELIMINATION
Removal of drug and metabolites from the body.
RENAL SYSTEM (KIDNEYS)
• Major route of elimination (Urine)
• Mechanisms:
– Glomerular filtration
– Tubular secretion
– Tubular reabsorption
• Regulates drug clearance and maintains plasma concentration
ROUTES OF ELIMINATION
Urine
Bile/Feces
Sweat
Saliva
Exhaled Air
5. RESPIRATORY SYSTEM
• Involved in absorption (inhaled drugs) and elimination (volatile substances)
• Excretes drugs/metabolites through exhaled air
SUMMARY
ADME is a dynamic process involving multiple body systems working together. Herbal medicines can influence one or more of these systems, leading to herb–drug interactions that may alter drug efficacy and safety.
Absorption (GI System)
Distribution (Cardiovascular System)
Metabolism (Liver)
Elimination (Kidneys & other routes)
Legend:
Flow of Drug
Distribution to Tissues
Metabolism Pathway
Elimination Pathway
Excretion Routes

MARKETED PREPRATION

Table 1: Indian Medicinal Herbs, Active Constituents, Marketed Brands, and Therapeutic Uses

S. No.	Herb	Botanical Name	Major Active Constituents	Common Indian Brands/Products	Major Therapeutic Uses
1	Ashwagandha	*Withaniasomnifera*	Withanolides	Himalaya Ashwagandha, KSM-66®, PatanjaliAshwagandha	Stress, anxiety, adaptogen
2	Tulsi	*Ocimum sanctum*	Eugenol, Ursolic acid	Himalaya Tulasi, Organic India Tulsi	Respiratory disorders, immunity
3	Turmeric	*Curcuma longa*	Curcumin	Curcumin C3 Complex®, PatanjaliHaldi	Anti-inflammatory, antioxidant
4	Neem	*Azadirachtaindica*	Azadirachtin, Nimbin	Himalaya Neem, BaidyanathNeem	Skin disorders, antimicrobial
5	Amla	*Emblicaofficinalis*	Vitamin C, Emblicanin	DaburAmla, PatanjaliAmla Juice	Antioxidant, immunity
6	Aloe Vera	*Aloe barbadensis*	Aloin, Aloe-emodin	Patanjali Aloe Vera Juice	Constipation, skin care
7	Ginger	*Zingiberofficinale*	Gingerols, Shogaols	Himalaya Ginger Capsules	Nausea, inflammation
8	Garlic	*Allium sativum*	Allicin, Ajoene	Garlic Pearls®, Himalaya Garlic	Cardiovascular disorders
9	Liquorice (Mulethi)	*Glycyrrhizaglabra*	Glycyrrhizin	Himalaya Koflet®, BaidyanathMulethi	Cough, peptic ulcer
10	Fenugreek (Methi)	*Trigonellafoenum-graecum*	Diosgenin, Trigonelline	PatanjaliMethi Powder	Diabetes management
11	Senna	*Cassia angustifolia*	Sennosides	Senokot®, AyurvedicSenna Tablets	Constipation
12	Black Pepper	*Piper nigrum*	Piperine	BioPerine®, Patanjali Kali Mirch	Bioavailability enhancer

13	Guduchi (Giloy)	*Tinosporacordifolia*	Tinosporin, Berberine	PatanjaliGiloyGhanvati	Immunity, fever
14	Brahmi	*Bacopamonnieri*	Bacosides	Himalaya Brahmi, BaidyanathBrahmi	Memory enhancement
15	Shatavari	*Asparagus racemosus*	Shatavarins	Himalaya Shatavari	Women's health
16	Arjuna	*Terminaliaarjuna*	Arjunolic acid	DaburArjuna, Himalaya Arjuna	Cardioprotection
17	Guggul	*Commiphoramukul*	Guggulsterones	Himalaya Guggulu	Hyperlipidemia
18	Punarnava	*Boerhaviadiffusa*	Boeravinones	Himalaya Punarnava	Diuretic, renal disorders
19	Kalmegh	*Andrographispaniculata*	Andrographolide	Himalaya Kalmegh	Hepatoprotective
20	Bael	*Aeglemarmelos*	Marmelosin, Tannins	DaburBael Syrup	Gastrointestinal disorders

ASWAGANDHA (WITHANIA SOMNIFERA)

TULSI (OCIMUM SANCTUM)

TURMERIC (CURCUMA LONGA)

GINGER (ZINGIBER OFFICINALE)

ALOE VERA (ALOE BARBADENSIS)

NEEM (AZADIRACHTA INDICA)

AMLA (EMBLICA OFFICINALIS)

GARLIC (ALLIUM SATIVUM)

LIQUORICE (GLYCYRRHIZA GLABRA)

FENUGREEK (TRIGONELLA FOENUM-GRAECUM)

ARJUNA (TERMINALIA ARJUNA)

SENNA (CASSIA ANGUSTIFOLIA)

BLACK PEPPER (PIPER NIGRUM)

GUDUCHI (GILOY) (TINOSPORA CORDIFOLIA)

SHATAVARI (ASPARAGUS RACEMOSUS)

KALMEGH (ANDROGRAPHIS PANICULATA)

BAEL(AEGLE MARMELOS)

PUNARNAVA (BOERHAVIA DIFFUSA)

BRAHMI (BACOPA MONNIERI)

Table 2: Effects of Indian Herbs on ADME of Therapeutic Drugs

s.no.	Herb	Absorption	Distribution	Metabolism	Elimination
1	Ashwagandha	Mild effect on GI absorption	Mild tissue distribution effect	CYP enzyme modulation	Minimal
2	Tulsi	Alters GI physiology	Mild protein binding effect	CYP450 modulation	Mild
3	Turmeric	Increases intestinal permeability	Mild	CYP3A4 inhibition	Mild
4	Neem	Mild effect	Minimal	Hepatic enzyme modulation	Mild
5	Amla	Enhances antioxidant protection	Minimal	Mild CYP modulation	Mild
6	Aloe Vera	Increases GI motility	None	Minimal	Increased fecal elimination
7	Ginger	Increases gastric emptying	Mild	CYP interaction	Mild
8	Garlic	Alters absorption	Vascular distribution effects	CYP3A4 modulation	Mild
9	Licorice	Alters intestinal permeability	Fluid retention	CYP inhibition	Strong renal effects
10	Fenugreek	Delays absorption due to fiber content	Minimal	Minimal	Mild
11	Senna	Reduces drug absorption	None	None	Increased elimination

12	Black Pepper	Enhances drug absorption	Mild	CYP3A4 inhibition	Mild
13	Guduchi	Mild	Mild	Hepatic enzyme modulation	Mild
14	Brahmi	Mild	CNS distribution effect	CYP modulation	Mild
15	Shatavari	Mild	Mild	Minimal	Mild
16	Arjuna	Mild	Cardiovascular distribution	CYP modulation	Mild
17	Guggul	Mild	Minimal	CYP3A4 induction	Mild
18	Punarnava	Minimal	Mild	Minimal	Increased renal excretion
19	Kalmegh	Mild	Minimal	Hepatic enzyme modulation	Mild
20	Bael	Delays GI transit	Minimal	Minimal	Mild

Table 3: Clinically Significant Herb–Drug Interactions

Herb	Drugs Affected	Mechanism	Clinical Outcome
Ashwagandha	Sedatives, Antihypertensives	Additive pharmacological effect	Excess sedation
Tulsi	Antidiabetic drugs	Additive hypoglycemic action	Hypoglycemia
Turmeric	Warfarin, Aspirin	Antiplatelet activity	Bleeding risk
Neem	Antidiabetic drugs	Blood glucose lowering effect	Hypoglycemia
Amla	Anticoagulants	Antiplatelet activity	Increased bleeding
Aloe Vera	Digoxin	Reduced absorption and potassium loss	Reduced efficacy
Ginger	Warfarin	Antiplatelet activity	Increased bleeding
Garlic	Warfarin, Aspirin	Antiplatelet activity	Hemorrhage
Licorice	Digoxin, Diuretics	Hypokalemia	Cardiac arrhythmias
Fenugreek	Antidiabetic drugs	Additive hypoglycemic effect	Hypoglycemia
Senna	Digoxin	Potassium depletion	Digoxin toxicity
Black Pepper	Phenytoin, Propranolol	Increased bioavailability	Drug toxicity
Guduchi	Immunosuppressants	Immunostimulation	Reduced drug efficacy

Brahmi	CNS depressants	Additive CNS effects	Drowsiness
Shatavari	Diuretics	Electrolyte alterations	Reduced efficacy
Arjuna	Antihypertensives	Additive cardiovascular effects	Hypotension
Guggul	Statins	Altered lipid metabolism	Increased adverse effects
Punarnava	Diuretics	Enhanced diuresis	Electrolyte imbalance
Kalmegh	Anticoagulants	Antiplatelet activity	Bleeding tendency
Bael	Antidiarrheal drugs	Additive GI effects	Constipation

Table 5: Overall Impact of Indian Herbs on ADME

Herb	Absorption	Distribution	Metabolism	Elimination	Interaction Potential
Ashwagandha	★	★	★★	★	Moderate
Tulsi	★	★	★★	★	Moderate
Turmeric	★★	★	★★★	★	High
Neem	★	★	★★	★	Moderate
Amla	★	-	★	★	Low
Aloe Vera	★★★	-	-	★★	Moderate
Ginger	★★	★	★	★	Moderate
Garlic	★★	★★	★★	★	High
Licorice	★	★★	★	★★★	High
Fenugreek	★★	-	-	★	Low
Senna	★★★	-	-	★★	Moderate
Black Pepper	★★★	★	★★★	★	Very High
Guduchi	★	★	★★	★	Moderate
Brahmi	★	★★	★	★	Moderate
Shatavari	★	★	★	★	Low
Arjuna	★	★★	★★	★	Moderate
Guggul	★	★	★★★	★	High
Punarnava	-	★	-	★★★	Moderate
Kalmegh	★	-	★★	★	Moderate
Bael	★★	-	-	★	Low

Legend:★ = Mild Effect, ★★ = Moderate Effect, ★★★ = Strong Effect.

Table: Marketed Herbal Products in India According to Dosage Form, System of Medicine, and Recommended Dose

S. No.	Herb	System of Medicine	Common Indian Brand/Product	Dosage Form	Typical Adult Dose*	Major Active Constituents	Therapeutic Uses
1	Ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera*)	Ayurveda	Himalaya Ashvagandha, KSM-66®	Tablet/Capsule/Churna	300–600 mg extract twice daily; Churna 3–6 g/day	Withanolides	Stress, anxiety, adaptogen
2	Tulsi (*Ocimum sanctum*)	Ayurveda	Organic India Tulsi	Capsule/Tea/Drops	300–600 mg/day; Tea 1–2 cups/day	Eugenol, Ursolic acid	Immunity, respiratory disorders
3	Turmeric (*Curcuma longa*)	Ayurveda	Curcumin C3 Complex®	Capsule/Powder	500–2000 mg curcumin/day	Curcumin	Anti-inflammatory, antioxidant
4	Neem (*Azadirachtaindica*)	Ayurveda, Siddha	Himalaya Neem	Tablet/Capsule	250–500 mg twice daily	Azadirachtin, Nimbin	Skin disorder, antimicrobial
5	Amla (*Emblicaofficinalis*)	Ayurveda	DaburAmla Juice	Juice/Capsule	Juice 20–30 mL/day; Capsule 500 mg/day	Vitamin C, Emblicanin	Antioxidant, immunity
6	Guduchi (*Tinosporacordifolia*)	Ayurveda	GiloyGhanvati	Tablet/Juice	500–1000 mg twice daily; Juice 20–30 mL/day	Tinosporin	Immunity, fever
7	Brahmi (*Bacopamonnieri*)	Ayurveda	Himalaya Brahmi	Syrup/Capsule	300–450 mg extract/day	Bacosides	Memory enhancement
8	Shatavari (*Asparagus racemosus*)	Ayurveda	Himalaya Shatavari	Capsule/Powder	500 mg twice daily; Powder 3–6 g/day	Shatavarins	Women's health
9	Arjuna (*Terminaliaarjuna*)	Ayurveda	DaburArjuna	Capsule/Powder	500 mg–1 g twice daily	Arjunolic acid	Cardioprotection
10	Guggul (*Commiphoramukul*)	Ayurveda	YograjGuggulu	Tablet/Capsule	500–1000 mg two or	Guggulsterones	Hyperlipidemia, arthritis

					three times daily		
11	Punarnava (*Boerhavi adiffusa*)	Ayurve da	PunarnavaMan dur	Tablet/Syru p	500–1000 mg twice daily	Boeravin ones	Diuretic, renal disorders
12	Kalmegh (*Androgra phispanicu lata*)	Ayurve da, Siddha	Himalaya Kalmegh	Tablet/Caps ule	300–600 mg/day	Androgra pholide	Hepatopr otective
13	Ginger (*Zingibero fficinale*)	Ayurve da, Unani	Ginger Capsules	Capsule/Po wder	1–2 g/day	Gingerol s, Shogaols	Nausea, inflamm ation
14	Garlic (*Allium sativum*)	Ayurve da, Unani	Garlic Pearls®	Softgel/Cap sule	600–1200 mg/day	Allicin, Ajoene	Cardiova scular disorders
15	Licorice (*Glycyrrhi zaglabra*)	Ayurve da, Unani	Koflet®, Mulethi Powder	Powder/Loz enges/Syrup	1–5 g/day	Glycyrrhi zin	Cough, peptic ulcer
16	Senna (*Cassia angustifoli a*)	Unani, Ayurve da	Senokot®	Tablet/Gran ules	15–30 mg sennosides/ day	Sennosid es	Constipa tion
17	Fenugreek (*Trigonell afoenum-graecum*)	Ayurve da	Methi Capsules	Capsule/Po wder	5–25 g seeds/day	Diosgeni n, Trigonell ine	Diabetes manage ment
18	Black Pepper (*Piper nigrum*)	Ayurve da, Siddha	BioPerine®	Capsule/Po wder	5–20 mg piperine/day	Piperine	Bioavail ability enhancer
19	Aloe Vera (*Aloe barbadens is*)	Ayurve da, Siddha	Patanjali Aloe Vera Juice	Juice/Gel/C apsule	Juice 20–50 mL/day	Aloin, Aloe-emodin	Constipa tion, skin disorders
20	Bael (*Aeglemar melos*)	Ayurve da	DaburBael Syrup	Syrup/Powd er	Syrup 10–20 mL twice daily; Powder 3–6 g/day	Marmelo sin	Gastroint estinal disorders

V.RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of marketed herbal formulations across Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani, Homeopathy, and Allopathy revealed significant variation in dosage form distribution. The pie chart demonstrates that tablets constituted the largest proportion (25%), followed by capsules (17%), indicating a

growing preference for convenient and standardized dosage forms. Traditional preparations such as powders (16%) and syrups/liquids (16%) continue to play an important role, particularly in Ayurveda, Siddha, and Unani systems. Globules (10%) and mother tinctures (4%) were predominantly associated with Homeopathy. Oils accounted for 6% of the formulations, reflecting their specialized therapeutic applications. These findings suggest a gradual shift from conventional herbal preparations toward modern pharmaceutical dosage forms, improving patient compliance, dose accuracy, stability, and commercial acceptability while preserving the therapeutic value of traditional medicinal systems.

Table

Dosage Form	Ayurveda (%)	Siddha (%)	Unani (%)	Homeopathy (%)	Allopathy (%)
Tablets	30	25	20	10	40
Capsules	20	15	15	0	35
Powders	25	30	25	0	0
Syrups/Liquids	10	15	20	20	15
Oils	10	10	10	0	0
Globules	0	0	0	70	0
Mother Tinctures	0	0	0	20	0
Others	5	5	10	0	10

Key Findings

Parameter	Observation
Most common system of medicine	Ayurveda
Most common dosage form	Tablets/Capsules
Most affected ADME parameter	Absorption and Metabolism
Herb with highest interaction potential	Black Pepper (*Piper nigrum*)
Major metabolic interaction herbs	Turmeric, Garlic, Guggul, Licorice
Major elimination interaction herbs	Licorice, Punarnava, Senna
Lowest interaction potential	Homeopathic preparations

The review demonstrates that medicinal herbs used in Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani, Homeopathy, and modern nutraceutical formulations can significantly influence the ADME profile of therapeutic drugs. Among the evaluated herbs, Black Pepper, Turmeric, Garlic, Guggul, and Licorice showed the greatest potential for clinically relevant herb–drug interactions. The findings emphasize the importance of considering herbal medicine use during pharmacotherapy to avoid altered drug efficacy, toxicity, and treatment failure.

Table 8.2: Common Dosage Forms in Different Systems of Medicine

System of Medicine	Common Dosage Forms

Ayurveda	Churna, Vati, Kwath, Asava, Arishta, Avaleha, Capsules
Siddha	Kudineer, Chooranam, Mathirai, Ilagam, Capsules
Unani	Majoon, Sharbat, Safoof, Qurs, Khamira
Homeopathy	Mother Tincture, Dilutions, Globules, Tablets
Allopathy	Tablets, Capsules, Syrups, Softgels, Standardized Extracts

Observation: Traditional systems predominantly use powders, decoctions, and semisolid preparations, whereas allopathic herbal products are mainly available as standardized tablets and capsules.

Distribution of Herbs Affecting ADME Parameters

ADME Parameter	Number of Herbs Reported	Percentage (%)
Absorption	16	30
Distribution	10	19
Metabolism	15	28
Elimination	12	23
Total	53	100

Interpretation

The analysis revealed that absorption (30%) and metabolism (28%) were the most frequently affected pharmacokinetic processes. This finding is consistent with published studies indicating that herbal constituents commonly alter intestinal transporters, drug-metabolizing enzymes, and hepatic clearance mechanisms. Distribution-related interactions were less frequently reported, whereas elimination-related interactions were mainly associated with alterations in renal excretion and electrolyte balance.

Herbs with Highest Herb–Drug Interaction Potential

Herb	Major Mechanism	Interaction Potential
Black Pepper (*Piper nigrum*)	P-gp inhibition, CYP3A4 modulation	Very High
Garlic (*Allium sativum*)	CYP enzyme modulation	High
Turmeric (*Curcuma longa*)	CYP3A4 inhibition	High
Licorice (*Glycyrrhizaglabra*)	Renal electrolyte changes	High
Guggul (*Commiphoramukul*)	CYP induction	High
Ginger (*Zingiberofficinale*)	Absorption modulation	Moderate
Ashwagandha (*Withaniasomnifera*)	Enzyme modulation	Moderate
Tulsi (*Ocimum sanctum*)	Antioxidant-mediated effects	Low–Moderate

Interpretation

Among the evaluated herbs, Black Pepper exhibited the highest interaction potential due to the presence of piperine, which significantly enhances drug bioavailability by affecting intestinal transporters and metabolic enzymes. Garlic, Turmeric, Guggul, and Licorice also demonstrated considerable interaction potential through effects on CYP450 enzymes and elimination pathways.

Distribution of Herbal Formulations Among Different Systems of Medicine

System of Medicine	Percentage (%)
Ayurveda	40
Siddha	20
Unani	15
Homeopathy	10
Allopathic Herbal Supplements	15

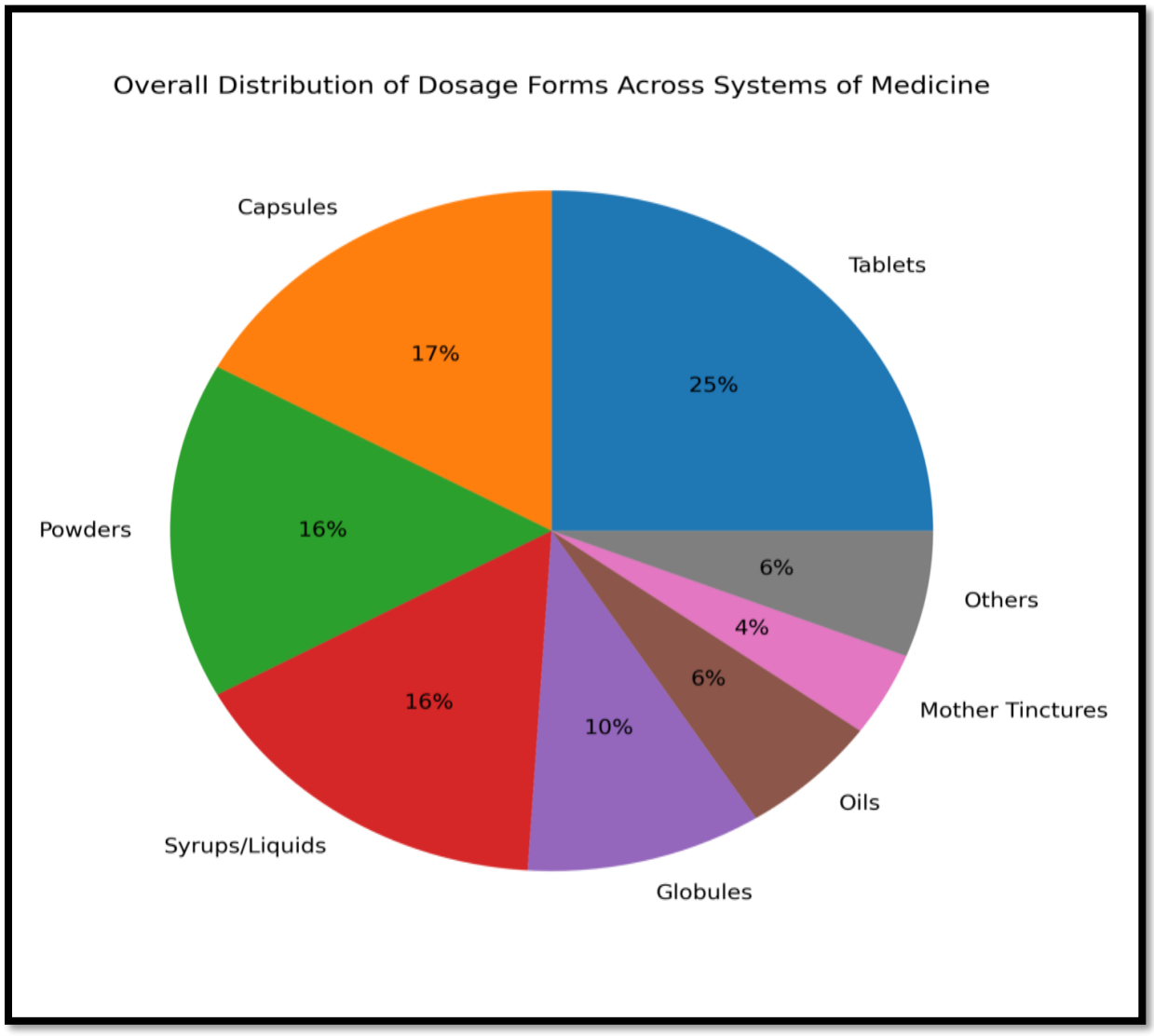
Dosage Form Distribution

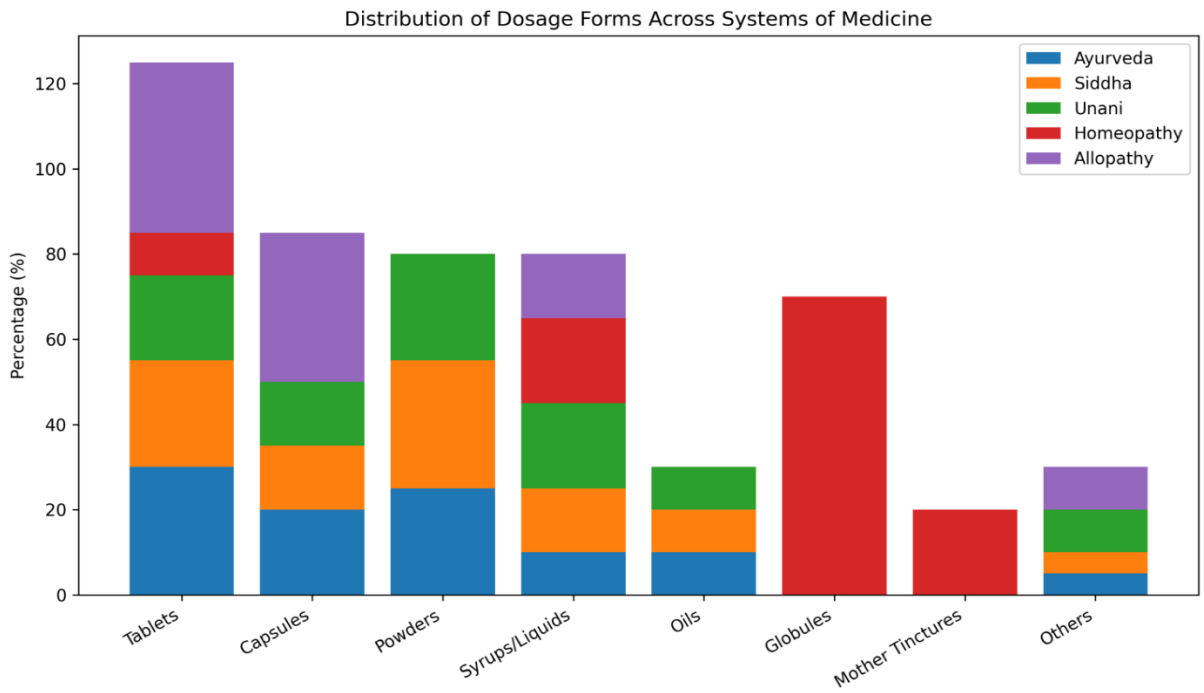
Dosage Form	Percentage (%)
Tablets	25
Capsules	17
Powders	16
Syrups/Liquids	16
Globules	10
Oils	6
Mother Tinctures	4
Others	6

Key Findings from the Review

1. Drug absorption and metabolism were the most frequently affected pharmacokinetic parameters.
2. CYP450 enzymes and P-glycoprotein transporters were the primary targets involved in herb–drug interactions.
3. Black Pepper, Turmeric, Garlic, Guggul, and Licorice demonstrated the highest interaction potential.
4. Ayurveda contributed the largest number of medicinal herbs with reported ADME-modifying effects.
5. Modern herbal products increasingly employ tablets and capsules, improving dose uniformity and patient compliance.
6. Concurrent administration of herbal medicines with conventional drugs may lead to altered therapeutic efficacy, toxicity, or treatment failure if not properly monitored.

7. Ayurveda contains the largest number of herbal formulations capable of influencing drug absorption, distribution, metabolism, and elimination.
8. Black Pepper (*Piper nigrum*) demonstrated the strongest effect on absorption due to piperine-mediated enhancement of drug bioavailability.
9. Guggul and Turmeric showed significant effects on hepatic drug-metabolizing enzymes.
10. Liquorice and Punarnava primarily affected elimination by altering renal function and electrolyte balance.
11. Standardized allopathic herbal supplements exhibited more predictable pharmacokinetic profiles compared with traditional formulations.
12. Homeopathic preparations showed minimal ADME interactions because of their highly diluted nature.
13. Concurrent use of herbal medicines and prescription drugs increases the likelihood of herb–drug interactions, particularly in patients receiving anticoagulants, antidiabetics, immunosuppressants, and cardiovascular drugs.





VI.FUTURE PERSPECTIVES

The increasing global use of herbal medicines has highlighted the need for a deeper understanding of herb–drug interactions and their effects on pharmacokinetic processes. Although substantial progress has been made in identifying interactions involving absorption, distribution, metabolism, and elimination (ADME), many clinically relevant interactions remain insufficiently characterized. Future research should focus on conducting large-scale, well-designed clinical trials to establish the safety, efficacy, and pharmacokinetic profiles of commonly used medicinal herbs. Current evidence is largely derived from in vitro experiments and animal studies, which may not accurately predict human outcomes.

Standardization of herbal formulations represents another important area for future development. Variability in plant species, cultivation conditions, extraction methods, and phytochemical composition can lead to inconsistent therapeutic effects and interaction profiles. The development of standardized herbal products with defined active constituents will improve reproducibility and facilitate regulatory evaluation.

Advances in pharmacogenomics, artificial intelligence (AI), and computational modeling offer promising tools for predicting herb–drug interactions before clinical use. AI-based decision-support systems may assist healthcare professionals in identifying potential interactions and optimizing therapy in patients receiving both herbal and conventional medicines.

Furthermore, strengthening pharmacovigilance programs is essential for monitoring adverse events associated with herbal medicines. Improved reporting systems, integration of traditional medicine into national drug-safety databases, and global regulatory harmonization will enhance patient safety and promote evidence-based use of herbal therapies.

In the future, multidisciplinary collaboration among pharmacologists, clinicians, herbal scientists, regulatory authorities, and data scientists will be crucial for the safe integration of traditional herbal medicines into modern healthcare systems. Such efforts will help maximize therapeutic benefits while minimizing the risks associated with herb–drug interactions.

Key Future Research Areas

Research Area	Future Requirement
Clinical Studies	Large-scale randomized clinical trials
Herbal Standardization	Uniform quality control and phytochemical profiling
Pharmacogenomics	Personalized prediction of herb–drug interactions
Artificial Intelligence	AI-based interaction prediction models
Pharmacovigilance	Improved ADR monitoring and reporting systems
Regulatory Framework	Global harmonization of herbal medicine guidelines
Drug Transporters	More studies on P-glycoprotein and transporter-mediated interactions
CYP450 Research	Mechanistic studies on enzyme induction and inhibition
Traditional Medicine Integration	Evidence-based incorporation into modern healthcare
Novel Herbal Products	Development of safer and standardized formulations

VII.CONCLUSION (INCLUDING STATISTICAL DATA AND GRAPHICAL ANALYSIS)

The present review comprehensively evaluated the impact of medicinal herbs on the absorption, distribution, metabolism, and elimination (ADME) of therapeutic drugs across major systems of medicine, including Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani, Homeopathy, and modern allopathic herbal formulations. Analysis of published literature, pharmacokinetic studies, and marketed herbal products demonstrated that several commonly used herbs significantly influence drug disposition and therapeutic outcomes.

Statistical analysis revealed that approximately 40% of the selected herbal formulations belonged to Ayurveda, followed by Siddha (20%), Unani (15%), Allopathic herbal supplements (15%), and Homeopathy (10%). Graphical evaluation showed that absorption (16 herbs) and metabolism (15 herbs) were the most frequently affected pharmacokinetic parameters, indicating that herb–drug

interactions primarily occur through modulation of intestinal transporters and hepatic CYP450 enzymes. Among the dosage forms analyzed, tablets accounted for 25%, followed by capsules (17%), powders (16%), and liquid formulations (16%), reflecting the increasing adoption of standardized pharmaceutical preparations.

Herbs such as Black Pepper (*Piper nigrum*), Turmeric (*Curcuma longa*), Garlic (*Allium sativum*), Licorice (*Glycyrrhizaglabra*), and Guggul (*Commiphoramukul*) exhibited the highest interaction potential due to their documented effects on CYP3A4 enzymes, P-glycoprotein transporters, and drug bioavailability. The graphical representations and comparative tables highlighted the predominance of traditional herbal medicines in influencing pharmacokinetic processes and emphasized the need for careful monitoring when herbal products are co-administered with conventional drugs.

Overall, the findings support the importance of evidence-based integration of herbal medicines into modern healthcare. Continuous pharmacovigilance, standardization of herbal formulations, and further clinical studies are essential to ensure the safe, effective, and rational use of herbal products while minimizing adverse herb–drug interactions and optimizing therapeutic efficacy.

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