

# Pharmacovigilance of Herbal Medicines

Mrs. Badhe. N. S., Aditi Thorat, Bhakti Matkar, Mahek Shaikh, Dipali Kurkute

Samarth College of Pharmacy, Belhe, Pune, Maharashtra, India

**Abstract:** Pharmacovigilance is essential for developing reliable information on the safety of herbal medicines as used in Europe and the US. The existing systems were developed for synthetic medicines and require some modification to address the specific differences of medicinal herbs. Traditional medicine from many different cultures is used in Europe and the US which adds to the complexities and difficulties of even basic questions such as herb naming systems and chemical variability. Allied to this also is the perception that a 'natural' or herbal product must be safe simply because it is not synthetic which means that the safety element of monitoring for such medicines can be overlooked because of the tag associated with such products. Cooperation between orthodox physicians and traditional practitioners is needed to bring together the full case details. Independent scientific assistance on toxicological investigation, Botanical verification can be invaluable for full evaluation of any case report. Systematic pharmacovigilance is essential to build up reliable information on the safety of herbal medicines for the development of appropriate guidelines for safe effective use.

**Keywords:** Pharmacovigilance; herbal medicines; improved traditional medicine; regulation; research.

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