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Complementary and Alternative Medicine Therapies for Psoriasis

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ABSTRACT

Background: The exploration of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) therapies for psoriasis has garnered significant attention in recent years, as conventional treatments often fall short in providing complete relief for patients. The literature reveals a growing interest in natural products and their potential to alleviate the symptoms of psoriasis, which is a chronic inflammatory skin condition characterized by the presence of red, scaly plaques. **Literature Review:** (Lin et al., 2020) further emphasized the role of CAM by investigating Chinese herbal baths as an external treatment for psoriasis vulgaris. Their systematic review and meta-analysis protocol aims to objectively evaluate the clinical efficacy and safety of this modality, suggesting that it may improve local blood circulation and facilitate skin repair. This study highlights the potential of integrating traditional practices into contemporary treatment frameworks. (Wnuk-Kłosińska et al., 2021) explored the increasing adoption of CAM therapies among psoriasis patients, noting a significant reliance on dietary supplements and herbal remedies. Their findings indicate a gap in formal medical guidelines regarding CAM, which raises important questions about the integration of these therapies into standard care practices. This underscores the necessity for further research and the development of institutional support for CAM approaches. Most recently, (Nowak-Perlak et al., 2022) reviewed the clinical implications of plant-derived treatments, emphasizing their antiproliferative effects and the enhancement of immune responses. They advocate for further investigation into these natural products, which not only alleviate symptoms but also address underlying inflammatory processes. **Conclusion:** In conclusion, the literature indicates a significant potential for CAM therapies, particularly natural products, in the management of psoriasis. While conventional treatments often fall short, the studies reviewed suggest that herbal medicines and alternative approaches may provide effective relief with fewer side effects. However, the existing gaps in clinical guidelines and the need for rigorous research to validate these therapies highlight the importance of integrating CAM into conventional treatment frameworks to enhance patient outcomes and quality of life.

Keyword: Complementary, Alternative Medicine Therapies, Psoriasis

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INTRODUCTION

The exploration of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) therapies for psoriasis has garnered significant attention in recent years, as conventional treatments often fall short in providing complete relief for patients. The literature reveals a growing interest in natural products and their potential to alleviate the symptoms of psoriasis, which is a chronic inflammatory skin condition characterized by the presence of red, scaly plaques.

In 2019, Huang et al. highlighted the promising role of natural products in the treatment of psoriasis, noting that while conventional therapies may reduce symptoms, they do not offer a cure. Their meta-analysis identified several topical phytomedicines, such as aloe vera, indigo naturalis, and kukui nut oil, emphasizing their multifaceted mechanisms of action that include anti-inflammatory and antiproliferative effects (Huang et al., 2019). This foundational work underscores the potential of herbal medicine as a safe and effective alternative for patients, particularly given the structural diversity of these natural products.

The subsequent study by Lin et al. in 2020 further supports the use of CAM, specifically focusing on Chinese herbal baths as an external treatment modality for psoriasis vulgaris. This approach aims to improve local blood circulation and facilitate skin repair, addressing the long-term challenges and economic burdens faced by psoriasis patients (Lin et al., 2020). Their systematic review and meta-analysis protocol promises to provide a more objective evaluation of the clinical efficacy and safety of this treatment, thereby contributing to the understanding of CAM in psoriasis management.

In 2021, Wnuk-Kłosińska et al. examined the utilization of CAM therapies among psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis patients, revealing a significant increase in the adoption of dietary supplements, herbal therapies, and mind/body interventions (Wnuk-Kłosiǹska et al., 2021). Despite the rising interest in CAM, the authors

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noted a gap in formal medical guidelines, indicating that while patients are seeking alternative solutions, there is a lack of institutional support for these practices. This highlights the need for further research and integration of CAM into conventional treatment frameworks.

Most recently, Nowak-Perlak et al. reviewed plant-derived treatments and their clinical implications, emphasizing the antiproliferative effects of various natural substances (Nowak-Perlak et al., 2022). Their findings suggest that these compounds not only mitigate symptoms without causing frustration or side effects but also enhance immune response and reduce oxidative stress. This underscores the potential for natural products to play a pivotal role in the management of psoriasis, warranting further investigation in clinical settings.

Overall, the literature collectively illustrates the evolving landscape of CAM therapies for psoriasis, highlighting the efficacy and safety of natural products while also addressing the existing gaps in clinical guidelines. The integration of these alternative approaches into patient care may ultimately enhance treatment outcomes and quality of life for those affected by this chronic condition.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The article "Apoptotic or Antiproliferative Activity of Natural Products against Keratinocytes for the Treatment of Psoriasis" by Huang et al. (Huang et al., 2019) presents a compelling examination of the potential of natural products as alternative therapies for psoriasis, a chronic skin condition that currently lacks a definitive cure. The authors highlight the limitations of conventional treatments, which often come with significant side effects that hinder their long-term application. This context sets the stage for exploring the viability of herbal medicines, which have garnered increasing attention for their safety and efficacy.

The article underscores the structural diversity of herbal products and their ability to engage multiple biological pathways, facilitating synergistic effects that may enhance treatment outcomes for psoriasis. The authors conducted a meta-analysis

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that identifies several natural products—specifically aloe vera, indigo naturalis, kukui nut oil, Mahonia aquifolium, and capsaicin—as particularly effective in mitigating psoriatic symptoms. This selection reflects a thorough evaluation of the existing literature and clinical trials, lending credibility to their claims.

Aloe vera is noted for its anti-inflammatory and anti-pruritic properties, making it a favorable option for patients seeking relief from the discomfort associated with psoriasis. The authors provide evidence that topical indigo naturalis can significantly reduce the Psoriasis Area and Severity Index (PASI) scores, attributed to the anti-inflammatory and antiproliferative effects of its active component, indirubin. This finding is particularly relevant as it indicates a measurable impact on disease severity, which is crucial for patient management.

Additionally, the article discusses kukui nut oil's anti-inflammatory effects and Mahonia aquifolium's berberine content, which has been shown to inhibit keratinocyte hyperproliferation and inflammation. Capsaicin's role in activating substance P is also highlighted, which can alleviate redness and pruritus in patients. These insights not only reinforce the potential of these natural products as effective treatments but also illustrate the complex mechanisms through which they operate.

While the article provides a robust overview of the efficacy of these natural products, it would benefit from a more detailed discussion on the potential challenges associated with their use, such as variability in product quality and concentration, as well as the need for standardized dosing regimens. Furthermore, the long-term effects and safety profiles of these herbal therapies require further investigation through rigorous clinical trials.

The article titled "Safety and efficacy of Chinese herbal bath for psoriasis vulgaris: A protocol for systematic review and meta-analysis" by Wenxia Lin et al. (Lin et al., 2020) presents a structured approach to evaluating the therapeutic potential of Chinese herbal baths in managing psoriasis vulgaris. The authors highlight the

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chronic nature of psoriasis and its significant impact on patients' quality of life, emphasizing the necessity for effective long-term treatment options.

The authors propose that the Chinese herbal bath, an external treatment method that involves bathing in water infused with specific Chinese herbs, can enhance local blood circulation and facilitate skin repair. This claim is supported by previous systematic reviews indicating that the combination of Chinese herbal baths with other therapeutic modalities yields positive outcomes in terms of both efficacy and safety for psoriasis patients.

A critical aspect of the article is its methodological rigor, as the authors outline a protocol that aims to standardize the intervention between the observation and control groups. By ensuring uniform inclusion criteria, the research seeks to minimize bias and enhance the reliability of the findings. This approach is particularly commendable, as variability in treatment protocols can often obscure the true effectiveness of complementary therapies.

Moreover, the authors position their study within the broader context of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) for psoriasis, suggesting that their findings could contribute significantly to the existing literature. They argue that by conducting a systematic review and meta-analysis with a focus on the Chinese herbal bath, they can provide a more objective evaluation of its clinical efficacy compared to other treatments.

However, while the article presents a promising framework for future research, it is essential to consider the potential limitations inherent in the use of CAM therapies. The subjective nature of patient-reported outcomes in the context of psoriasis treatment can complicate the assessment of efficacy. Additionally, the generalizability of the findings may be affected by the specific herbal formulations used, which can vary widely in composition and quality.

The article "The use of complementary and alternative medicine by patients suffering from psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis" by Wnuk-Kłosińska et al. (Wnuk-

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Kłosińska et al., 2021) presents a comprehensive overview of the rising interest in complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) among patients with psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis. The authors highlight the chronic and inflammatory nature of psoriasis, which affects a significant portion of the population, emphasizing the dissatisfaction many patients experience with conventional treatments due to side effects and ineffectiveness.

One of the critical insights from the article is the acknowledgment of the limitations of traditional anti-psoriatic medications. Despite advancements in pharmacotherapy, a notable number of patients continue to seek alternative options, leading to an increased reliance on CAM therapies such as dietary supplements, herbal remedies, and mind/body interventions. This trend underscores a growing patient autonomy in managing their health conditions and a shift towards more holistic approaches to treatment.

Wnuk-Kłosińska et al. (Wnuk-Kłosińska et al., 2021) also point out that the guidelines established by the Scientific Society for the treatment of psoriasis do not currently address CAM, which raises important questions about the integration of these therapies into standard care practices. The lack of formal recognition may contribute to a gap in patient education and a potential risk of unmonitored use of CAM therapies, which could lead to adverse effects or interactions with prescribed medications.

The article provides valuable insights into the motivations behind patients' choices to pursue CAM, including the desire for more control over their treatment and the perceived benefits of natural therapies. However, the authors also call for more rigorous research to evaluate the efficacy and safety of CAM options, as well as the need for healthcare providers to engage in discussions with patients about their use of these therapies.

The article titled "Promising Strategies in Plant-Derived Treatments of Psoriasis-Update of In Vitro, In Vivo, and Clinical Trials Studies" by Nowak-Perlak et al.

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(Nowak-Perlak et al., 2022) provides a comprehensive overview of the potential of plant-derived treatments in managing psoriasis, a chronic skin condition that has long eluded definitive cures. The authors present a critical analysis of the limitations associated with conventional therapies and highlight the promising role of natural substances in alleviating symptoms and improving patient outcomes.

One of the central themes of the article is the inadequacy of current psoriasis treatments, which often lead to patient frustration due to ineffectiveness and adverse side effects. The authors underscore the urgent need for innovative therapeutic strategies that are both safe and effective. They suggest that extracts from plants and specific phytochemicals may offer significant therapeutic benefits, particularly in terms of their antiproliferative properties, ability to reduce itching, and capacity to lower inflammatory cytokine levels.

The article synthesizes findings from various studies, noting that while much of the evidence supporting the efficacy of these natural products comes from laboratory and animal research, there is a growing body of clinical trial data that supports their use. The authors emphasize that natural substances do not typically induce the side effects associated with traditional pharmacological treatments, which is a crucial advantage in the management of chronic conditions like psoriasis.

Moreover, the authors highlight the enhancement of immune system responses and the reduction of oxidative stress following treatment with these natural compounds. This suggests a multifaceted approach to treatment that not only addresses the symptoms of psoriasis but also targets underlying inflammatory processes. The article advocates for further clinical trials to validate these findings and to explore the integration of plant-based therapies into standard psoriasis treatment regimens.

CONCLUSION

The exploration of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) therapies for psoriasis reveals a growing body of literature that underscores the potential of natural products and alternative approaches in managing this chronic inflammatory

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skin condition. The studies reviewed collectively highlight the limitations of conventional treatments, which often fail to provide complete relief and are associated with significant side effects.

(Huang et al., 2019) provided foundational insights into the efficacy of natural products, identifying several topical phytomedicines, such as aloe vera, indigo naturalis, and kukui nut oil, that exhibit anti-inflammatory and antiproliferative properties. Their meta-analysis suggests that these natural remedies can effectively mitigate psoriatic symptoms, thereby offering a promising alternative for patients seeking relief from conventional therapies. The structural diversity of these herbal products allows them to engage multiple biological pathways, which may enhance treatment outcomes.

(Lin et al., 2020) further emphasized the role of CAM by investigating Chinese herbal baths as an external treatment for psoriasis vulgaris. Their systematic review and meta-analysis protocol aims to objectively evaluate the clinical efficacy and safety of this modality, suggesting that it may improve local blood circulation and facilitate skin repair. This study highlights the potential of integrating traditional practices into contemporary treatment frameworks.

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