

## Editorial

### Natural Products of Therapeutic Potential

The use of herbs for healing and treating diseases precedes recorded human history probably by thousand of years. Over the ensuing millennia, humankind discovered and made use of an enormous range of natural compounds. In earlier research, many natural products helped us to reveal a novel aspect of physiology. For example, digitalis from foxglove showed the role of sodium-potassium ATPase, morphine pointed the way to the receptors affected by endogenous opioids, muscarine, nicotine and tubocurarine helped explore the different types of acetylcholine receptors and so on.

Despite a period in which pharmaceutical companies cut back on their use of natural products in drug discovery, there are many promising drug candidates in the current development pipeline that are of natural origin. Technical drawbacks associated with natural product research have been lessened, and there are better opportunities to explore the biological activity of previously inaccessible sources of natural products. With the increasing acceptance that the chemical diversity of natural products is well suited to provide the core scaffolds for future drugs, there will be further developments in the use of novel natural products and chemical libraries based on natural products in drug discovery campaigns.

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