

by Hamid Nasri, Azar Baradaran, Hedayatollah Shirzad, and Mahmoud Rafieian-Kopaei

Introduction

Nutraceutical is a term derived from “nutrition” and “pharmaceutics.” The term is applied to products that are isolated from herbal products, dietary supplements (nutrients), specific diets, and processed foods such as cereals, soups, and beverages that other than nutrition are also used as medicine.

In the US, the term “nutraceutical” products are regulated as drugs, food ingredients and dietary supplements. The term is not defined the same in different countries, but is usually defined as a product isolated from foods that is generally sold in medicinal forms not usually associated with food. A nutraceutical product may be defined as a substance, which has physiological benefit or provides protection against chronic diseases. Nutraceuticals may be used to improve health, delay the aging process, prevent chronic diseases, increase life expectancy, or support the structure or function of the body.

Nutraceuticals, in contrast to pharmaceuticals, are substances which usually have not patent protection. Both pharmaceutical and nutraceutical compounds might be used to cure or prevent diseases, but only pharmaceutical compounds have governmental sanction.

A dietary supplement is considered as a product that bears or contains one or more of the following dietary ingredients: A mineral, a vitamin, an amino acid, a medical herb or other botanical, a dietary substance for use by man to supplement the diet by increasing the total daily intake, or a concentrate, metabolite, constituent, extract, or combinations of these ingredients. Nutraceuticals are of these nutritional supplements which are used for health purposes other than nutrition.

Some popular nutraceuticals include ginseng, *Echinacea*, green tea, glucosamine, omega-3, lutein, folic acid, and cod liver oil. Majority of the nutraceuticals possess multiple therapeutic

properties.

Nowadays, nutraceuticals have received considerable interest due to potential nutritional, safety and therapeutic effects. A market research recently proposed that the worldwide nutraceuticals market is expanding and would reach US \$250 billion by 2018.

Recent studies have shown promising results for these compounds in various pathological complications such as diabetes, atherosclerosis, cardiovascular diseases (CVDs), cancer, and neurological disorders. These conditions involve many changes, including alterations redox state. Most nutraceuticals have antioxidant activity with the ability to counteract this situation. Hence, they are considered as healthy sources of health promotion, especially for prevention of life threatening diseases such as diabetes, infection, renal and gastrointestinal disorders.

In the present review much effort has been devoted to present new concepts about nutraceuticals based on their diseases modifying indications. Emphasis has been made to present herbal nutraceuticals effective on hard curative disorders related to oxidative stress, including allergy, Alzheimer, cardiovascular, cancer, diabetes, eye, immune, inflammatory and Parkinson's diseases, as well as obesity.

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