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Is there any relationship between use of complementary and alternative medicine and deterioration of kidney functions in diabetic patients in India?

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Objectives: Diabetes is chronic disease where patient is supposed to consume the antidiabetic drugs for whole life. These drugs are not devoid of side effects. Many patients of diabetes start consuming over the counter available complementary and alternative medicines (CAM) because of influence of aggressive marketing strategies of CAM manufacturer in media claiming good effect with absolute safety. There are few case reports published recently suggested harmful effect of these drugs on kidney due to heavy metal contamination.

This study was conducted to evaluate the effect of CAM use of deterioration of kidney functions in diabetic patients.

Methods: This was a cross sectional study. All patients visiting outpatient clinic of endocrinology department were interviewed by a trained research associated and findings were recorded in the structured proforma. After all the investigations conducted the data related to the investigations and clinical findings also recorded in the proforma. All the subjects were asked about current and past use of CAM. Deterioration of kidney function was assessed based on the abnormal blood creatinine level. Multiple regression (Poisson) was used to evaluate the effect of current and past use of CAM on blood creatinine level. Age, gender, years since diabetes, blood pressure, random blood sugar, HbA1c, family history of kidney disease were other independent factors besides use of CAM.

Results: Total 628 diabetic patients were assessed for relationship between use of current and past use of CAM with deterioration of kidney function. Out of all independent factors only not having hypertension was associated with protection from the deterioration of kidney functions (Prevalence ratio = 0.243 (95% CI 0.070 – 0.853)). There was no relationship was found between use of current and past CAM with deterioration of kidney functions.

Conclusions: CAM use was not found to be associated with deterioration of kidney functions in diabetic patients.