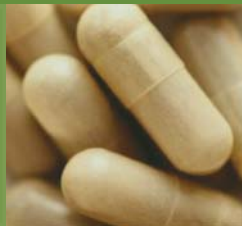


Stockley's Herbal Medicines Interactions

Edited by Elizabeth Williamson, Samuel Driver and Karen Baxter



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A guide to the interactions of herbal medicines, dietary supplements and nutraceuticals with conventional medicines

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Preface

This first edition of *Stockley's Herbal Medicines Interactions* is an exciting new addition to the Stockley family of products, and one that has been several years in the planning and execution. When researching *Stockley's Drug Interactions* we had noticed the growing wealth of experimental data on herbal medicines, which does not fall within the brief of Stockley, which is primarily a clinically based reference work. However, it seemed somewhat of an omission to overlook what is obviously valuable information in what can almost be considered a new field of drug interactions. We therefore reached the point where we decided that it was worth producing a book dedicated to this information; however, little did we realise what a journey we'd be taking ourselves on.

As a group dedicated to the study of drug interactions, and the provision of clinically relevant data (aided by the large number of practising pharmacists we have on our team), we felt well equipped to deal with the interactions data. The herbal medicines side of things was, however, not something that we were particularly familiar with, and we were greatly relieved to be approached by Elizabeth Williamson, with a very similar idea to our own, but with a wealth of knowledge on herbal medicines with which to guide us. Liz is widely published in the field of herbal medicines, and is a member of a number of bodies that consider many aspects of herbal medicine use, such as the British Pharmacopoeia Commission. Liz is the Chair of the Expert Advisory Group for Herbal and Complementary Medicines, which advises the BPC on standards for herbal drugs for the pharmaceutical industry. As a team therefore, we feel we have unrivalled experience in assessing herb–drug interactions, and we believe that ours is a unique collaboration.

Herbal medicines are, more than ever, receiving attention, both from the public and healthcare professionals alike, with many countries now undertaking registration schemes for traditional medicines. However, healthcare professionals still freely admit their lack of knowledge in this area, and surveys suggest that patients often rely on friends and family for advice about herbal medicines. Never has there been a more appropriate time to advise healthcare professionals so that they can provide balanced, helpful advice to patients wishing to take herbal medicines with their 'conventional' treatments. Our aim, as ever, has therefore been to critically evaluate the published literature and present it in a familiar, easy-to-handle format, so that the busy healthcare professional can quickly access the information and apply it to their clinical situation.

This publication attempts to answer the same questions that we address in *Stockley's Drug Interactions*, namely:

- Are the drugs and substances in question known to interact or is the interaction only theoretical and speculative?
- If they do interact, how serious is it?
- Has it been described many times or only once?
- Are all patients affected or only a few?
- Is it best to avoid these two substances altogether or can the interaction be accommodated in some way?
- And what alternative and safer drugs can be used instead?

Stockley's Herbal Medicines Interactions follows the same easy-to-read format as our other publications, with the text organised into a series of individual monographs, all with a common format. In addition, we have included sections on: nomenclature, to help users identify herbal medicines that they or their patients may be familiar with under a different name; uses, so that those less familiar with herbal medicines can put their use into context; and constituents, to allow us to address interactions that occur as a result of a substance common to several plants. A pharmacopoeia section is also included for those herbal medicines, dietary supplements and nutraceuticals that have entries in the latest editions (at time of press) of the *British Pharmacopoeia*, the *European Pharmacopoeia* and the *United States Pharmacopoeia*. An indication of the constituents that the herbal medicine may be standardised for is also provided where necessary, but note that this does not necessarily mean that all marketed products are standardised in this way. In addition, we have added the simple, intuitive ratings system that users of *Stockley's Interaction Alerts* and *Stockley's Drug Interactions Pocket Companion* will already be familiar with.

As with all Stockley products, the text is written for a worldwide audience. Terminology has been carefully considered and international terms have been added where it was thought helpful to do so. This and the inclusion of the synonyms and pharmacopoeia sections will, we hope, cater for the needs of healthcare professionals around the world.

As always, the Editorial team have had assistance from many other people in developing this publication, and the Editors gratefully acknowledge the assistance and guidance that they have provided. Of particular note are: the Digital Products Team led by Jane Macintyre; Ithar Malik, Ruchi Birla, Karl Parsons, Tom Whitaker and Darren Searson, who

have worked tirelessly in transforming our data into a useable output. Particular thanks are also due to the editor of *Martindale*, Sean Sweetman, who has acted as our mentor on a number of other projects, and continues to provide invaluable support. Thanks are also due to Tamsin Cousins, who has handled the various aspects of producing this publication in print. We are also grateful for the support of both Paul Weller and Charles Fry. Ivan Stockley remains an important part of all products bearing his name, and we are most grateful for the feedback that he provided on this new project.

Stockley's Herbal Medicines Interactions is available on the Pharmaceutical Press platform, *MedicinesComplete*, and

we are indebted to Julie McGlashan and Elizabeth King, and all those involved in the development of these products, for their advice and support. For more details about these digital products please visit: www.pharmpress.com/Stockley

We are always interested in hearing feedback from users of our publications, and have in the past received many useful comments, which help us to develop the product to best meet the needs of the end-user. Anyone who wishes to contact us can do so at the following address: stockley@rpsgb.org

Sam Driver, Karen Baxter and Elizabeth Williamson
London, February 2009