

Health professionals get special report on which natural weight loss supplements work and which ones to avoid.

March 30, 2007 – STOCKTON, CA – Millions of Americans who made New Year’s resolutions to lose weight are trying products containing hoodia, bitter orange, cha de bugre, and many others.

Patients often do not discuss these natural weight-loss products with their physician, pharmacist, or other healthcare provider due to fear of judgmental responses. Some patients don’t consider these products as medicines. They often assume that these products are natural, and therefore completely safe.

According to a new special report, *Natural Medicines in the Clinical Management of Obesity*, from *Natural Medicines Comprehensive Database*, most of these weight loss supplements do not work. Some of them might even be unsafe.

An increasing number of reports indicate that some of these products can cause serious adverse outcomes by interacting with conventional drugs or causing dangerous side effects.

Health professionals’ efforts to prevent these ill effects are stymied by not having adequate resources to determine the ingredients or potential adverse effects of these products.

The special report alerts medical professionals to the ingredients, mechanism of action, potential side effects, and potential interactions of these products. The report helps physicians, pharmacists, dietitians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants and other healthcare professionals to counsel patients knowledgeably, and help prevent serious problems. It gives evidence-based data to help professionals understand and manage patient care when these products are being used.

Bitter orange has replaced ephedra as the stimulant of choice in products promoted for weight loss. But reports suggest that bitter orange isn’t any safer than ephedra. Bitter orange has been linked to reports of heart attack, stroke, chest pain, and arrhythmias.

Hoodia has been wildly popular in recent years. It’s a succulent from Africa purported to suppress appetite. It was once studied by the drug giant Pfizer. But there is no reliable scientific evidence that hoodia actually works or that it is safe. Some products that list hoodia on the label don’t contain any hoodia at all.

Cha de bugre is an up-and-comer from Brazil. It’s contained in some popular “Brazilian diet pills.” Some of these Brazilian diet products have been found to be adulterated with amphetamines and other prescription drugs.

“No question, losing weight is difficult. It’s a lot easier to take a pill and be hopeful,” says Phil Gregory, PharmD, Editor of *Natural Medicines Comprehensive Database*. “The problem is that consumers often don’t know what they are getting. They don’t realize that some of these

products might not be safe.”

According to Dr. Gregory, there is often a shortage of reliable information about the safety and effectiveness of these products. “We often don’t know if a product is safe or effective because not much research is being done.”

Therapeutic Research, the publisher of *Natural Medicines Comprehensive Database*, *Prescriber’s Letter*, and *Pharmacist’s Letter*, has also developed the content of the new *Special Report* into an educational course that is available to medical professionals who subscribe to the *Database*. The course provides accredited continuing education credits for physicians, pharmacists, dietitians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants and other professionals.

Natural Medicines Comprehensive Database (www.naturaldatabase.com) was originally developed by 24 researchers over a two-year period. The reference now contains over 1,000 individual ingredient monographs and more than 20,000 brand name products. New information is added daily. *Natural Medicines Comprehensive Database* is available by subscription in book form, on the Internet, and is downloadable to PDA. Thousands of pharmacists, physicians, regulatory health agencies, educators and students worldwide rely on *Natural Medicines Comprehensive Database* regularly.

About Therapeutic Research

Therapeutic Research is a completely independent research and publishing organization that provides evidence-based information for physicians, pharmacists, and other medical professionals. Therapeutic Research also publishes *Pharmacist’s Letter*, *Prescriber’s Letter*, *Ident-A-Drug Reference*, and a variety of continuing medical education courses, including live courses. Therapeutic Research accepts no advertising and provides objective information for subscribers.

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