Garden Variety

A bouquet of botanicals used in HIV infection

May 1, 1998

GARLIC EXTRACT	BITTER MELON	GLYCYRRHIZIN (licorice root extract)	SIBERIAN GINSENG (not Panax ginseng)	SILYMARIN (milk thistle extract)	SPV-30 (European boxwood tree extract)
THE WORKS: Antimicrobial that in test-tube studies suppresses Cryptosporidium (cause of crypto), Candida (cause of yeast infections), Mycobacterim avium (cause of MAC) and Cryptococcus (fungus responsible for intestinal infections and meningitis).	THE WORKS: In the test tube, it blocks HIV infection of cells as well as replication of virus in already-infected cells.	THE WORKS: Has antiretroviral and immunomodular potential. In the test tube, prevents cell-to-cell and cell-to-virus binding of HIV and slows HIV reproduction in white blood cells. Also antioxidant.	THE WORKS: Immunomodulator. In lab tests, increases activity and number of lymphocytes, including CD4s.	THE WORKS: Antioxidant that can repair and regenerate liver cells.	THE WORKS: Antiretroviral and antioxidant. In the test tube, works as reverse transcriptase inhibitor, inhibiting HIV and slowing replication. May lower elevated tumor necrosis factor-alpha levels that can contribute to viral activation.

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THE PERKS: In a six-week study, a liquid extract of garlic's active ingredient, allicin, reduced diarrhea and prompted weight gain in 10 of 16 PWAs (average CD4 count: 18) with cryptosporidiosis. Four repeatedly tested negative for Crypto. A 12-week study of garlic extract in 10 PWAs found increased natural killer-cell activity and partial resolution of Crypto diarrhea and aggressive candidiasis.	THE PERKS: In a trial of six PWAs lasting many months (but no followup), bitter melon increased CD4 counts and resolved skin conditions and weight loss.	THE PERKS: In Japanese studies of both the tablet and IV forms, glycyrrhizin increased CD4 counts and slowed disease progression. Has long been used for liver disease in Japan, where it is an approved drug, based on many trials showing reversal of liver dysfunction with its use.	THE PERKS: Thirty years of Russian research has found it works as an "adaptogen," boosting resistance to toxins and stresses and balancing body functions. May help with fatigue and muscle weakness.	THE PERKS: Hundreds of anecdotal reports (from PWAs and health practitioners) of success in reducing elevated liver enzymes related to prolonged use of multiple pharmaceuticals. Numerous clinical trials, mostly abroad and in HIV negative people, have also reported improvements in liver function.	THE PERKS: In a phase II trial of 150 asymptomatic people by the French Health Ministry, SPV-30 maintained CD4 and CD8 counts, slowed disease progression and led to fewer significant viral load increases than seen in those on placebo (12 percent compared to 45 percent). No severe side effects.
BUT: Liquid has yucky smell and aftertaste, with a few reports of nausea; retention enema can be unpleasant.	BUT: As retention enema or drink, bitter melon must be processed: Leaves are boiled; fruit is juiced. The drink tastes awful; the enema can be unpleasant. Not for pregnant women--may induce abortion.	BUT: With regular use, elevated blood pressure, potassium deficiency, headaches and water retention may occur. Not for pregnant women or anyone with kidney problems, a weak heart, low blood potassium or elevated blood pressure.	BUT: Unstudied against HIV. Avoid in times of hyperactivity or anxiety because it can exacerbate these conditions. Most herbalists recommend use be intermittent, with periodic breaks.	BUT: Possibility of interactions between silymarin and protease inhibitors is unstudied.	BUT: As a monotherapy, antiretroviral effect is moderate. Most proponents recommend using it in combination with other antiretroviral therapies.
FORM: Capsule, enteric-coated tablet*, or liquid (for use in retention enema)	FORM: Capsule, fresh or frozen leaves, or fresh fruit	FORM: Intravenous solution or tablet	FORM: Liquid extract or capsules	FORM: Capsule or tincture (liquid containing alcohol)	FORM: Capsule

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* Enteric coating, which protects the contents to allow dissolution in the small intestine rather than the stomach, may minimize the unpleasant belching that sometimes follow consumption of non-enteric tablets.

Sources: Lark Lands'Positively Well Fact Sheets (Boston Buyers Club), DAAIR Treatment Information Packet, APLA Treatment Education Program.

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http://beta.docker.poz.com/article/Garden-Variety-12164-4106