Plant Compound Inhibits HIV Enzyme Better Than AZT

Scientists were also able to synthesize the newfound compound, saving the trouble of relying on plant growth for any production.

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A compound derived from a plant found in Southeast Asia more greatly inhibited a key viral enzyme of HIV-infected human cells than AZT. Known as patentiflorin A, the chemical comes from the willow-leaved Justicia, a plant traditionally used for arthritis and rheumatism treatment.

Publishing their findings in the Journal of Natural Products, researchers screened more than 4,500 plant extracts in search for sources of new treatment for HIV, tuberculosis (TB), malaria and cancer.

Studying patentiflorin A's effects on HIV-infected human cells in a laboratory setting, the investigators found that it inhibited reverse transcriptase, an enzyme crucial to HIV's lifecycle, better than AZT.

The scientists also found a way to synthesize the compound, saving the trouble of having to rely on plant growth for any future production.

To read a press release about the study, click here.

To read the study abstract, click here.

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