

Foreword

An increasing interest in medicinal plants is being recorded nowadays by the industry, academia, as well as the health science. Many scientific branches are involved on the route from plant research to the final product used by the public. A very high percentage of the world's population relies on medicinal plants for their medicine. Fascinating plant folklore and ethnopharmacology lead to the discovery of often high medicinal potential. Current medicine has responded to some of the new development and is currently passing on up-to-date quality assurance methodologies in phytotherapy before final products are being allowed to practice.

Conferences devoted to medicinal plants research have a long-time history in Slovakia. One of these joint meetings was the **International conference on medicinal plants and their use in therapeutic practice**, which was held in Ľubovňa spa, from 14 to 16 May 2014. The Faculty of Pharmacy of Comenius University in Bratislava participated as one of the organisers.

The research on medicinal plants' perspectives in prevention and therapy of several diseases represents an integral part of pharmaceutical science at our faculty. Therefore, on behalf of our institution, we were pleased to welcome inland and outland scientists, who dedicated their work to the science of medicinal plants research. The conference was focussed on medicinal plants' and natural products' perspectives in therapeutic practice with the following objectives:

1. to discuss the situation of current natural resources and the utilisation status of medicinal plants,
2. to identify the factors affecting the quality of herbal drugs,
3. to discuss the quality and safety of botanical products,
4. to present new perspective medicinal plants and their biological activities.

The meeting attracted more than 80 participants from 5 different countries.

On this occasion, we decided to publish a special issue of the journal *Acta Facultatis Pharmaceuticae Universitatis Comenianae* and offer a place to authors, who presented their work at this conference. This special phytochemical issue provides information about new perspective plants from the Cornaceae family, informs about antioxidant properties of several coumarins and about the contents of anthocyanins in different fruits. Furthermore, it pays attention to variability of secondary metabolites in aromatic plants collections as *Mentha*, *Thymus* and *Salvia* and deals with the investigation of the influence of biotic and abiotic elicitors on *Melissa officinalis* L. suspension cultures production properties.

We would hereby like to emphasise the need of current pharmacognostical research in the field of modern pharmacy.

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