

Apitherapy in Primary Care

Birinci Basamakta Apiterapi

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ABSTRACT

Official traditional and complementary medical practices are regulated with the Traditional and Complementary Medical Practice Regulations of the Ministry of Health. Apitherapy is the use of the bee and its products as a complementary and supportive remedy in the treatment of some diseases. Honey, pollen, propolis, bee venom and royal jelly are used in apitherapy practice. Primary care physicians are generally concerned about complementary/supportive treatment. But in many publications the potential benefit of apitherapy are mentioned. Lack of scientific researches on apitherapy is an important gap in Turkey.

Key words: Apitherapy, primary care, complementary, supportive

ÖZET

Sağlık Bakanlığı'nın Geleneksel ve tamamlayıcı tıp uygulamaları yönetmeliği ile Türkiye'de resmi olarak uygulanabilecek geleneksel ve tamamlayıcı tıp uygulamaları belirlenmiştir. Apiterapi, arı ve arı ürünlerinin bazı hastalıkların tedavisinde tamamlayıcı ve destekleyici olarak kullanılmasıdır. Apiterapi uygulamalarında bal, polen, propolis, arı zehiri ve arı sütü kullanılmaktadır. Birinci basamak hekimleri tamamlayıcı/ destekleyici tedavi konusunda çoğunlukla endişe duymaktadır. Fakat birçok yayında apiterapinin potansiyel yararından söz edilmektedir. Türkiye'de apiterapi hakkında yeterli bilimsel araştırmanın yapılmaması önemli bir eksikliklerdir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Apiterapi, birinci basamak, tamamlayıcı, destekleyici

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Dear Editor,

Primary care physicians encounter dozens of patients of all age groups every day according to primary care demands. Definitely, protective and curative medical (chemical) suggestions suggested during this episode also might harm the body. Complementary/supportive treatments might be the right solutions at this point. And this traditional and complementary medical practices are regulated officially by the “Traditional and Complementary Medical Practice Regulations of the Ministry of Health”.¹ Apitherapy is one of these methods included in this regulation.

Apitherapy is the use of bee and bee products as a complementary and supportive practice in the management of some diseases. Honey, pollen, propolis, bee venom and royal jelly are used in apitherapy practice.

Primary care physicians are generally concerned about complementary/supportive treatment. But, World Health Organization recommends honey with its antimicrobial characteristics as an appropriate method for cough and cold.² Honey as a remedy is for example popular for upper respiratory tract infections in Germany, Norway, Spain, Venezuela and Middle East. And it is used traditionally as a remedy for a long time in India, Nigeria and Ghana.^{3,4} Evidence based literature (i.e. Cochrane review) reports potential benefit of honey in non-specific childhood coughs.⁵

Epidemiological studies and animal experiments report on the utility of pollen in prostate hyperplasia and allergic disease, bee venom for milder pain in rheumatic disease and in controlling multiple sclerosis attacks, propolis in cardiovascular disease and royal jelly in providing the flowability of red blood cells.⁶⁻⁸ The only contraindication of apitherapy are age (<1 years), and the presence of bee and bee product allergy.¹

There is an important research gap on apitherapy in Turkey, which is among the ten leading countries on beekeeping and honey production. The aim of this letter get primary care physicians and other scientists aware to consider apitherapy in their treatment choices and academic researches.

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