For most, a painful headache will be followed with an over the counter analgesic pill. However, for many years in Brazil, inhabitants in the Amazonian rainforest have utilized the power of homeopathic medicine. They took advantage of trees, shrubs, and flowers that surrounded them and found practical uses for them. One of the more commonly used plant families, the Erythrina Genus, contains over 100 species of trees and shrubs. This genus includes not only the national flower of Argentina, or the E. Crista-galli, but also the Mulungu and Velutina trees which have exhibited many health benefits to humans.

The Erythrina Genus species contain flavonoids, triterpenes, and alkaloids, which are known to produce treatments for a range of medical problems. Mulungu and Velutina, trees of the Erythrina Genus, have been studied and proven to provide anxiolytic, antibacterial, and antidepressant effects. In a 2007 study published by Flausino OA Jr. et al at University of Sao Paulo, erythrin alkaloids are shown to cause anxiolytic effects in animal models of anxiety. In another study, published in 2006 by Ribeiro et al, both Mulungu and Velutina show anxiolytic and antidepressant effects in animal models of anxiety and depression. Another study, also published in 2006, by de Lima MR et al, shows that Mulungu as well as some other Brazilian medicinal plants show antibacterial activities. Specifically, the plants showed antibacterial activity in the presence of Staph and E. Coli. One other study published by Khaomk et al in 2008 reveals that flavonoids in Erythrina fuscus show antimalarial activity. All these studies, among many others, emphasize on the health benefits that alkaloids and flavonoids in Erythrina plants produce.

Homeopathic medicine has been controversial because many believe that it is not as effective as conventional medicines. However, it is important to remember that modern chemicals have natural origins. Aspirin is derived from salicylic acid, which was once used in the form of salicylate-rich willow bark. This can explain how there may be many other plants that are beneficial, yet we have not figured out a way to produce the chemicals they hold in a laboratory. Next time, think again before you reach for an aspirin. Homeopathic medicine shows promising results, and this is reflected by its use in history.

REFERENCES


