MISTLETOE
(Viscum album)

Clinical Summary

Actions

- Immunomodulatory
- Antihypertensive
- Antioxidant
- Cytotoxic
- Antitumour
- Anti-inflammatory
- Antidiabetic
- Antimicrobial
- Sedative

Indications

- Hypertension, tachycardia, atherosclerosis
- Adjuvant for cancer therapy
- Depression, anxiety, sleep disorders, headache

Traditional Use

Mistletoe, originating from the Celtic name meaning 'all-heal', has been used as a traditional medicine in Europe for centuries to treat various diseases like cancer, cardiovascular disorder, epilepsy, infertility, hypertension and arthritis.

Energetics

Warming, drying, sweet, acrid and bitter.

Constituents

Current phytochemical studies have shown that lectins, hetero-dimeric glycoproteins, polysaccharides, viscotoxins, alkaloids, lipids, triterpenes, peptides, flavonoids, cyclitols and amines are principal bioactive phytochemicals of mistletoe.

The phytochemical profile of mistletoe depends on the host trees of this plant. Being a semiparasitic plant normally found growing on a variety of trees, especially pine, poplar, oak, apple trees, locust trees etc., mistletoe can biosynthesise its own compounds but it can also take some nutrients from the host trees. It has been suggested that pharmacologically active compounds may pass from the host trees to the parasitic plants. So far literature studies haven't revealed exactly what compounds are only biosynthesised by mistletoe and what could be taken from the host trees.

Use in Pregnancy

Contraindicated due to possible emmenagogue and abortifacient effects.

Contraindications and Cautions

None known.

Drug Interactions

Caution with immunosuppressant drugs. Monitor with antihypertensive and hepatotoxic drugs.

Administration and Dosage

Liquid extract 1:1 in 30% alcohol
20 to 60mL weekly