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# Scientists develop herbal antidote for diabetes

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**T**HIRUVANANTHAPURAM: A poly herbal formulation having multiple therapeutic properties including prevention and treatment of diabetes, liver ailments and an immune enhancer developed by Jawaharlal Nehru Tropical Botanical Garden Research Institute (JNTBGRI) here, with the help of a traditional healer awaits the Indian patent protection. After successful pre-clinical studies, a monograph on that was launched by chief minister Oommen Chandy the other day.

The chief minister has assured all government support to the scientific community to conduct clinical trials of the herbal antidote for many ailments including diabetes.

"Now, after the success of the pre-clinical studies on the plant extract-based formulation, which reveals its anti-diabetic, liver protective and anti-oxidant properties, it is planned to go for clinical studies," said JNTBGRI director Dr P G Latha. "Further phyto-chemical investigation of plants to treat diabetes is on and for that the Union government has approved to utilize the funds provided by department of biotechnology. Further, molecular level studies will be done by scientists at CSIR's National Institute of Interdisciplinary Science and Technology (NIIST) here," she added.

"In a classic revamp to the existing access and benefit sharing (ABS) model, the traditional healer is included as an inventor and not just an informant. He will be eligible for all the rights even later when the technology transfer gets complete and for a share of the royalty when the drug gets commercialized," said former head of ethno medicine and ethnopharmacology at TBGRI, S Rajasekharan.

"Around 20 years back, I had met this traditional healer Shahul Hameed who had treated patients with various ailments

including diabetes with herbal formulation. But he was not willing to disclose the method and herb used, saying that it would affect his livelihood," said Rajasekharan. "However, five years ago, he approached us and disclosed the herb and method for scientific validation of the formulation, after entering into a non-disclosure agreement with JNTBGRI," he said. "The herb, which is available in Kerala and easily cultivable, will be known only in a coded form and will not be revealed even to the lab performing tests based on plant extract," he said.

"This poly herbal formulation with multiple therapeutic effects to treat diabetes and cancer due to its anti-oxidant and immune enhancing properties will go for further clinical trials before its commercial launch. Last five years of pre-clinical studies on the formulation has proved 100% encouraging and the Indian patent is awaited soon. Further, it is also planned to go for an integrated international patent that offers protection in 20 countries," he said.

"According to the new guidelines of the health department and the WHO, before releasing a drug a series of clinical trials have to be conducted and the state government has assured to support that," said Rajasekharan.

NIIST senior scientist Dr P Jayamurthy said, "We are conducting bio-chemical assays on the poly herbal formulation initially with respect to the target of its therapeutic properties to treat diabetes".

Meanwhile, traditional healer Shahul Hameed said the herbal formulation is available with the code name 222 and is effective to cure type II diabetes, helps prevent diabetes, strengthens liver and immune system to fight many ailments.

The team of scientists who had conducted the pre-clinical studies on the formulation includes P G Latha, S Rajasekharan, N M Krishna Kumar, S R Suja, Mathew Dan, B Sabulal and M Navas with the support of T M Shahul Hameed.