Multifunctional saffron

Saffron is one of the well-known natural products and has been investigated widely. It also has a long eating experience of just about 3,000 years in Europe as a spice, coloring agent and herb medicine, and was listed in the Chinese Compendium of Materia Medica, Honzo-gangmoku published in 1590. Nowadays saffron has been authorized as Generally Recognized as Safe by the American Food and Drug Administration resulting that the most important issue for clinical use of saffron is safety without side effect. Huge *in vitro* and *in vivo* researches on saffron and its constituent have been accumulated to prove the wide pharmacological activities such as anticancer, antioxidant, anti-inflammation, anti-apoptosis, learning and memory, non-rapid eye movement sleeping and antidementia and recently concentrated to neurological fields, notably dementia of which no preventive drug is found in the world although the dementia population has been increasing quickly. Under this status "Multifunctional saffron" is seemed to be the best choice for converging accumulated knowledge for finding of preventive medicine for dementia.

The combinations of traditional Chinese medicine or Kampo formulas with saffron have been clinically used for mental disease. From this evidence its combination prescription may open a possibility of new therapeutic methodology for dementia patients. In fact, the combination of saffron and the other herb medicines has been developing to a new medicine against prevention of dementia. Hopefully more research on saffron and its constituent will be expanding and considered more including wide dimensions to create a preventive medicine for dementia in near future.

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